

TRENTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dr. Fred McDowell
Superintendent of Schools



Gene Bouie
Board President

SCHOOL COMMUNITY UPDATES

April 15, 2019

District Mission: All students will graduate with a vision for their future, motivated to learn continually and prepared to succeed in their choice of college or career.

DISTRICT PRIORITIES

Based on the feedback from a wide range of community stakeholders, school site visits, and data review, the District's Priorities for 2018-19:

1. INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

- a. Effective Data Culture
- b. Learning Focused Partnerships

2. COACHING & DEVELOPMENT

- a. Observations & Feedback
- b. Principal as Instructional Leader

3. CULTURE

- a. Establishing Future Ready Schools
- b. Empowering Parents as Partners

4. CENTRAL OFFICE TRANSFORMATION

- a. Customer Service & Continuous Improvement
- b. Networks of School Support

WHAT WE VALUE

The Trenton Board of Education and the District Leadership Team are committed to the following core values:

- 1. **STUDENTS:** We develop policies and practices that support the positive development of all children.
- 2. **COLLEAGUES:** We demonstrate our commitment by encouraging, supporting, and developing our colleagues to achieve excellence.
- 3. **PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, FAMILIES:** We acknowledge the importance of families as "1st Teachers" and understand the important role they play in children's development and learning.
- 4. **COMMUNITY:** We create opportunities to engage citizens and organizations on decisions that impact schools and the community.

POINTS OF PRIDE

National Chemistry Olympiad: Darrell Rodriguez will be representing TCHS in the United States National Chemistry Olympiad on Sunday, April 28th. He is the student of Mr. Raman Nadadur at West Campus. This is the 4th year in a row that a Trenton student has made the national finals for the United States National Chemistry Olympiad.

International Tea Update: The annual International Tea Day took place on Friday, April 12 at Wilson School. This community event highlights the rich culture and diversity of our school community and allows people to come together in celebration. The event was well attended and the displays from each country represented were outstanding. Special thanks to NJEA Family and Schools Together (F.A.S.T) and the Trenton Paraprofessional Association for organizing this tremendous community event.

Trenton Music Program Update: Trenton Public Schools received a significant boost today from Russo Music, which **donated more than \$100,000 worth of new Yamaha percussion and wind instruments** to the school’s music program. The generous gift from the local musical instrument dealer was made in support of the district’s growth of their instrumental music programs. The new instruments will impact more than 200 students who now participate in band, orchestra and marching band at Trenton Central High School (TCHS), Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School of the Arts, Luis Munoz Rivera Middle School, Grace A. Dunn Middle School, and Joyce Kilmer Middle School.

QSAC Update: Trenton Public Schools is pleased to announce that due to the hard work and collaboration from the Curriculum Office, the District **increased QSAC Scores in Curriculum & Instruction from 27% to 72%**. This is the highest score the District has ever received in this area. Trenton Public Schools is now 28 points away from scoring 100% in all (5) areas of the Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC). QSAC is the monitoring system that the NJ Department of Education uses to evaluate school districts. We still have a tremendous task in front of us of increasing proficiency on state assessments and graduation rates, but the Curriculum Team has helped us aggressively move into the right direction. We will continue to make the necessary improvements needed for all students to achieve. Special thanks to the Curriculum Office for their tremendous efforts.

School-Based Youth Services Parent Linking Program: The Trenton School-Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP) worked collaboratively with the Princeton Community TV Partner Project to develop a film that highlights the Parent Linking Program. This special program assists teen parents in ways that facilitate their continued schooling and development through childcare, transportation, training, and support. The film has been selected as a finalist and will be screened at the Nassau Film Festival (NassauFilmFestival.org) on May 18-19 in Princeton, NJ. Special thanks to Coordinator Melda Grant and the SBYSP Team at Trenton Central for leading this effort to support students. Please check out the “A Safe Place: Parent Linking Program” Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/320344787>

Humanities Fair Celebration: On Wednesday, March 27, our students were supported by over 300 family members, teachers, and administrators to celebrate their participation in the 2019 Humanities Fair, “Triumph and Tragedy in History”. Student projects included museum exhibits, video documentaries, live performances, and historical analyses. The 203 participants in this year’s event more than tripled the count of 62 participants in the 2018 event. Impressively, additional rigor, sophistication, and attention to detail were evident in every project that lined the walls of the new Trenton 9th Grade Academy on Perry Street. Special recognition to the Curriculum Office for organizing the extraordinary event.

Superintendent Chat & Chew: The Superintendent conducted lunch time focus groups with high school students this month to identify the types of investments the District should consider for the future. The meetings were very informative, and students provided a range of positive recommendations: (9th Grade Academy, Trenton Central)

Trenton 9 th Grade Academy	Trenton Central High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to see the world, travel outside of Trenton • More formal events to get dressed up (Military Ball) • More hands-on work, more project-based activities • Math: More real-world issues explored in class; more training in how to modify the new curriculum; ensure that different learning styles are supported • Address students demonstrating poor behavior in class • Mental Health: Provide more counseling and therapy for students; need people to talk to in a stigma-free environment • More student activities (sports, clubs, events, and etc.) • Increase access to world languages (French, Chinese) • Provide more bilingual teachers on campus • Increase healthy options and choices in school lunches; more fruits and vegetables • Provide more training to school security guards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology updates (1:1 environment needed) • Increase staff diversity, hire staff with deeper understanding of the lives of urban students • Increase the role of Student Council on campus • Add more college prep courses (College Summit) • Provide more AP classes • PUPP Program supports are needed for all students • Staff need to pay more attention to students, help to motivate students by going the extra mile • Stop picking and choosing who to invest in (all means all) • Develop student networks of support • Provide extra support for struggling students in class • Increase opportunities to motivate students with more events like College Acceptance Day • Implement advisory periods to increase student connections to teachers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More afterschool PARCC support for students; provide tutoring in core academics weekly • Address lack of email response from teachers • Increase school-based communication to students • Review hiring practices; address teacher absences and improve substitute availability • Ensure student ID cards have appropriate information • Ensure students don't tear up the new building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop student mentoring programs (Big Brothers/Sisters) • Increase student travel opportunities • Develop MS programs to prepare students for HS (study habits, early exposure to careers, HS expectations) • Develop MS programs to improve core class performance (Math/Science/PARCC Preparation) • Address transportation issues (additional routes needed) • Provide digital access to instructional materials at home
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CENTRAL OFFICE TRANSFORMATION

District Transformation: In order for school districts to transform, Central Offices must significantly strengthen the extent to which the office operates as a primary support system for helping principals improve teaching and learning at scale. According to research by the Wallace Foundation and conducted by the University of Washington, this requires Central Offices to:

1. **Create learning-focused partnerships** between Central Office and Schools
2. **Redesign the Central Office** so that it functions as a high performing customer service organization providing high-quality, relevant, and differentiated instructional, human resources, business, and other services that support learning-focused partnerships
3. **Lead by teaching and learning** – engage Central Office staff in continuously finding, designing, and implementing more effective services for district-wide teaching and learning improvement

Transforming Central Office is a major undertaking, requiring more than just making changes to the organizational chart, adding or eliminating positions, or improving long-standing operations. **It requires the organization to take a deep look at the current work of all positions** and determine to what extent can we show that this work is aligned to improving teaching and learning districtwide. And if not, **what do we do about it to improve outcomes for students?**

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

District Performance Reports Now Available: On March 12th, the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE) made publicly available School Performance Reports for the 2017-18 school year. Access to NJDOE reports can be found at www.njschooldata.org. Enhancements to the 2017-18 School Performance Reports include more information with one-page summaries, additional navigation tools, emphasis on student growth, and more information about staff demographics, discipline, progress towards English Language Proficiency, and College and Career Readiness. Data reviewed indicates that the District is showing improvements as Literacy proficiency is (20.3%) and Math proficiency is up seven percentage points (10.8%). **Student growth is in the 42nd percentile which indicates that the District Met Standard for 2017-18.** Special thanks to the Curriculum, Performance, and School Support Offices for supporting schools as they continue to improve. The District will continue to unpack the data and identify additional resources and strategies to rapidly improve student performance.

Addressing the Enrollment Challenge: As a District, we are seeing substantial boosts in enrollment. Given the fact that we have several buildings out of circulation, multiple classrooms throughout the District are oversubscribed. For the 2018-19 school year, the Trenton Public School district will be seeking to readjust in order to meet class size requirements outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:13-3.1(b). This is due in part to several school closures, including charter and private schools for the disabled. Additionally, we have seen a SIGNIFICANT increase in the number of students enrolling who have never attended school in the United States. We also have a number of students attending school(s) outside of their neighborhood catchment.

TRENTON ENROLLMENT STATISTICS (As of 4/12/19)	
New entrants since Jan 1, 2019	536
New to US School	253
From Other NJ Districts	103
From Other States	105
From Outside of the US	43
From Charters/ Home Instruction	20
From Other Institutions	12

The enrollment challenge before us REQUIRES the District to expand school options for families. We believe that a range of options will assist in supporting the growing needs of Trenton families. It is our intent to host a series of community meetings to present ideas and proposed solutions for stakeholder input before final decisions are reached.

Preschool Hotline Now Open: The Office of Early Childhood opened the 2019-2020 registration hotline citywide on Wednesday, April 3, 2019. During the opening day over 250 appointments were taken by the hotline. The preschool enrollment hotline will continue to serve interested parents/guardians throughout the school year on Mondays and Wednesday between the hours of 9:00am-12:00pm & 1:30-3:00pm. Our continued goal is to ensure that all Trenton families have access to high quality preschool. Special thanks to Director Carmichael and the Early Childhood Department.

Bilingual Program Update: Last year, the District brought in an expert to conduct an analysis of Bilingual Programs in Trenton. Based on the external evaluation, (3) areas of focus have emerged:

1. Bilingual Program Vision and Model Articulation
2. Professional Development & Growth Plan
3. Community Engagement & Strategic Partnership Plan

The Bilingual Department is working to identify solutions for the growing number of newcomers to Trenton through the development of a **High School Bilingual Program for Recently Arrived English Language Learners**. The current structure(s) are not sufficient, and the District has not successfully been able to sustain effective bilingual centers across multiple high schools. The District strives to get better everyday and therefore the learning environment for recent arrivals needs to account for the challenges associated with students transitioning to a new culture and language, but also includes: academics, social-emotional support/trauma, and workforce development/training. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the needs of all students are met.

ACCESS Test Preparation: All ESL Teachers are in the process of preparing for the ACCESS 2.0 Assessment. ACCESS is a computer-based, adaptive test that responds to student performance. It is given to students to determine English Language Proficiency in (4) Domains: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. The test window for schools is from Feb 14th through April 12th. Special thanks to our Bilingual/ESL Department for coordination of this effort to support over 2700 students.

Budget Planning for Success/ Charting Our Path Together: The Trenton Public School District (TPS) uploaded the 2019-2020 budget to the Mercer County Office of Education on March 11, 2019. The Accounting Staff worked long hours not only to prepare numerous detailed schedules, but to review data for accuracy and more importantly to make sure budget was aligned to instruction goals. This year's budget is a communications document that outlines the school district's priorities, goals, and path for moving forward. The Trenton School District Budget of \$339,147,779 was approved by the Mercer County Office of Education on March 22, 2019.

The budget process is broken into a six-steps that includes: Planning, Preparation, Adoption, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation. The process is driven by two objectives: to provide every child in the District with the best possible educational opportunities and to maximize the use of available resources. Within this framework, the Trenton Board of Education attempts to balance the educational needs of students and the resources available to the Trenton School District from local, state, and federal sources. A school district's budget that details the revenues and expenditures to

support educational programs and services, is a delicate balance of policy choices. Fiscal responsibility ultimately rests with the District Leadership Team, however, the majority of school-based decisions are determined by the Principal and the School Leadership Team. That means that discretion over resource allocations is also a balancing act between Schools and the District. Guiding principles for the development of the Trenton School District Budget are as follows:

- Ensure every possible dollar is invested in meeting student needs
- Empower staff members to grow through targeted professional development
- Thoughtful realignment and reallocation of resources
- Identification of operational efficiencies and reduce administrative costs
- Ensure spending is aligned to academic priorities
- Demonstrate continued commitment to facilities improvements

Budget Investments recommended for the 2019-2020 school year include the following areas:

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

- Enhance the Reader's and Writer's Workshop Instructional Model in Grades K-5
- Continue to utilize and enhance K-12 Math Programs (Eureka Math, Carnegie Math, and Agile Minds)
- Enhance online blended learning opportunities for students
- Relaunch NJ Center for Teaching and Learning Progression Science Initiative in Grades K-5
- Improve the effectiveness of intervention services for underperforming student groups
- Adopt a Universal Screener for Mathematics in Grades K-5
- Adopt a new Social Studies Program 6-12
- Adopt a new Health Education Program K-12
- Expand Career Academy offerings at the new Trenton Central High School

GIFTED & TALENTED

- Increase accelerated opportunities for students in Grades K-8
- Expand AP offerings in Grades 9-12
- Adopt a new Honors and AP Program for Grades 9-12

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Return more Special Education students to District schools in the least restrictive environment
- Implement a Restorative Program for students who have not been successful in a traditional educational setting
- Increase support for Child Study Teams to reduce caseloads
- Maintain funding for the position of Paraprofessional in Special Education Self-contained Classrooms

BILINGUAL /ESL

- Expand funding for Bilingual Centers and ESL Programs in Grades K-6
- Implement an Alternative Bilingual Program which will focus on restructuring the learning opportunities for recently arrived ELLs, SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education) and ESL students
- Fund an additional Sheltered Intervention Teacher to assist with the ESL/Bilingual Programing

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Provide ongoing professional development for teachers of general and special education students in collaborative teaching models
- Maintain a focus on best practices that will increase student achievement and growth in Literacy and Mathematics
- Offer extensive training in Curriculum, Cultural Competency, Sheltered English Instruction, and Restorative Practices
- Fortify Career and Technical Education Pathways

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

- Build capacity in all schools to support blended opportunities for students
- Expand the Google Classroom in order to enhance instructional delivery in core academic subjects
- Provide funding for installation and use of instructional technology

COUNSELING SERVICES

- Continue to utilize the American School Counselor Association National Model (ASCA)
- Enhance services to assist students and families in the areas of counseling and family support
- Expand School-Based Youth Services
- Implement the MTSS model (Multi-Tiered System of Support)

SUMMER SCHOOL

- Extend summer opportunities for Math and Literacy in order to decrease the achievement/opportunity gap
- Provide summer enrichment opportunities
- Offer summer transition program for middle school students entering the Ninth Grade Academy

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Maintain funding for Parent Liaisons District-wide
- Enhance job description to bridge the gap between home and school

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- Offer extended learning opportunities to provide intervention services as well as acceleration opportunities for our students
- Expand middle school sports
- Fund an Assistant Athletic Director to provide support for middle school sports

TRANSPORTATION

- Maintain funding for the transportation of all students who are remote beyond 2.0 miles for elementary and beyond 2.5 miles for secondary
- Purchase (15) additional busses and hire bus drivers to better serve our students and school programs

SECURITY & SAFETY MEASURES

- Implement newly structured security measures District-wide
- Fund the position of Class III Resource Officers in all middle and high schools
- Fund Restorative Justice and Bullying Prevention in all middle and high schools

FACILITY MAINTENANCE

- Repair, renovate, and provide general maintenance at every school
- Funding for evening cleaning company to support the cleaning environment for our students and staff
- Continue funding for the usage of green custodial and maintenance products
- Funding for implementation of the Facilities Reconfiguration Plan
- Complete the full purchase of the 9th Grade Academy

Behavioral Support Program Update: The District has been working with the Mercer County Executive Superintendent and County Supervisor for Special Education to address challenges associated with students with behavioral needs. We've also requested their support in the development of a **Trenton Restorative Center (TRC) Program** at Cadwalader Campus in preparation for the 2019-2020 school year. The TRC will be an alternative behavioral support program that serves General Education and Special Education students. The TRC is not a permanent placement for students as there will be an entrance and exit criteria. Students on long-term suspension and interim placement will also receive services at the TRC, which will reduce lost instructional time for students whose only current option is Home Instruction. Special thanks to Director Charles Koonce for leading this very important work to ensure that the District significantly decreases the number of students being sent to out of district placement and the school to prison pipeline.

Instructional Leadership Update: School Chiefs are working with Board-approved consulting firm to deliver rigorous professional development topics for School Leadership Teams, Choices for Book Study, and School-Specific Support(s). Valbrun will help the District **increase the instructional leadership capacity of schools** through targeted professional development that aligns to District Priorities, provides job-embedded coaching as driven by School Chiefs, and creates feedback loops to ensure schools are learning together in a constructive way with an emphasis on student growth.

Trenton Central High School Status Update: The new Trenton Central High School will be a 350,000 square-foot school designed to educate 1,850 students in grades 10 through 12. The New Trenton Central HS is being delivered through a Design-Build approach through the New Jersey School Development Authority. The anticipated opening of the high school is September 2019. Historically, Trenton Central has operated Small Learning Communities (SLC) offering Career & Technical Education (CTE) programming. The Trenton Board of Education approved the school as a Career Academy in 2008. To support this exciting new evolution to become a Model Career Academy High School, the District has hired a CTE Consultant to work with Trenton Central Staff and District Leadership to identify areas of improvement. The ultimate goal for every student graduating from the new Trenton Central High School would be that every student will graduate on time;

- Meeting all graduation requirements as established by the NJ Department of Education and the National Standards of Practice for Career Academies (<https://www.ncacinc.com/nsop>)
- Successfully completing a Structured Learning Experience (SLE) during their high school career.
- Successfully completing at least (1) Online Course.
- Earning a minimum of (3) Transferable College Credits while in high school.
- Attaining a minimum of (1) Industry Recognized Credential/Certification.
- Completing a Capstone Project which is a Project Based Learning Experience aligned with his/her academy.
- Entering a 4-year college or university, a 2-year community college or technical college, a certificate granting career training program, the United States military, or employment that provides continued training and advancement.

Career Academy Support: Educational Testing Service (ETS) is providing targeted, no-cost support to the District through their Institute for Student Achievement (ISA). ISA will work alongside the TCHS School Leadership Team and the District to ensure that school improvement capacity is built, and the new high school is on track to become a model career academy. Our upcoming community meetings will provide opportunities share additional information and seek community input into the additional supports needed.

Special Education Update: The original members of the Superintendent Special Education Advisory Committee worked directly with the Special Education Department to unpack the PCG Special Education Review. The Special Education Review recommended (5) Priority Areas:

1. **Support for Struggling Learners:** The District will develop a robust, multi-tiered system of support structure (MTSS) for all students and implement interventions with fidelity.
2. **Accountability:** The District will develop policies and procedures and create mechanisms for monitoring their implementation.
3. **High Quality IEPs:** The District will adopt protocols and conduct training for all staff, with the most intensive trainings for Child Study Teams, Special Education Case Managers, on the development of high quality IEPs.
4. **Data Quality, Access, and Training:** The District will develop protocols to ensure data in all systems are accurate and aligned. Data will be up to date, easy to access, easy to understand, and routinely monitored.
5. **Professional Development & Support:** Special Education personnel will receive training and support essential to strengthen their expertise in procedural compliance and on instructional strategies that help accelerate their students' academic and social/emotional growth.

The Special Education was tasked with identifying immediate steps to begin addressing some of the issues while planning for the long-term. Based on feedback from the Advisory Committee and the Superintendent, the Department drafted a Special Education 90-Day Strategic Action Plan that was closely monitored through January 1. The primary focus of this plan was professional development and training for school and district staff members.

Next Steps: The Superintendent Special Education Advisory Committee has been reorganized to include new Trenton Public Schools Special Education Leadership, Child Study Team Members, and Special Education Advocacy Organizations. Action Planning Team Members include: Board Members, Community Members, and Practitioners. Educational Testing Service (ETS) has agreed to provide technical assistance and meeting facilitation in the development of a long-term plan to rapidly improve Special Education in Trenton. ETS will use a methodology that allows the team to come up with ideas. This process continues until the team gets to an actionable response, which is then turned into an Action Plan. The Action Plan will be used to drive systemic improvements for the Trenton School District.

Parent Engagement Priorities: Trenton Public Schools believes that ALL students must graduate with a vision for their future, motivated to learn and prepared to succeed in their choice of college or career. The successful implementation of a District parent engagement strategy demonstrates our commitment to families as they play an important role in students' development and overall learning. Parent engagement in schools is defined as parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children. **Parent engagement in schools is a shared responsibility** in which schools are committed to reaching out to engage parents in meaningful ways, and parents are committed to actively supporting their children's educational journey. Parent Engagement Priorities for 2018-2019 include:

1. Establishing Parent University in the City of Trenton
2. Launching a Community-based Campaign to Address Chronic Absenteeism
3. Establishing Parent Teacher Organizations in Every School
4. Organizing a Spring Parent Summit
5. Supporting Parent Advisory Groups

UPCOMING EVENTS

Apr 17:	Earth Week Awards Ceremony @ City Hall (6:00PM)
Apr 29:	Trenton Central High School Parent Meeting @ West Campus (6:00PM)
May 15:	BPAC: Bilingual Parent Advisory Meeting (5:00PM) – TCHS West
May 31:	2019 Governor's Teacher and Educational Services Professional Recognition Program
June 5:	BPAC: Bilingual Parent Advisory Meeting (2:30PM) – DTHS
June 14:	Seal of Biliteracy Celebration (6:00PM) – TBOE Auditorium

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Tonight, Principal Zebbie Belton and Vice Principal Octavia Lee are proud to highlight their Visual Arts and Musical Departments. Under the instruction of Robbins Elementary School Visual Arts Teacher, Ms. Tracy Devlin, the students have developed various images that implement the 6 Elements of Portrait Sketching.

Lines, Tones, Textures, Shapes, Proportions and Planes are all illustrated by the student's artwork.

Robbins Elementary School's Music Department, led by their Music Teacher, Mr. Davon Wheeler will sing a beautiful song, What A Wonderful World, made internationally famous by the late great Jazz Trumpeter Louie Armstrong.

This song will be our theme for the Annual Visual and Performing Arts Festival, on June 13, 2019, at Columbus Elementary School beginning at 6:30pm.

Immediately following the song, the Robbins Elementary Students will perform on their Bucket Drums a Rondo and a Chant Alpha 6 Demonstration.

The buckets you see were donated by Home Depot. Bucket Drumming is a fantastic tool to teach Rhythmic Notation Literacy, Mental Focus, Anxiety Lowering, and is great preparation for the TCHS Marching Band Drum Line.