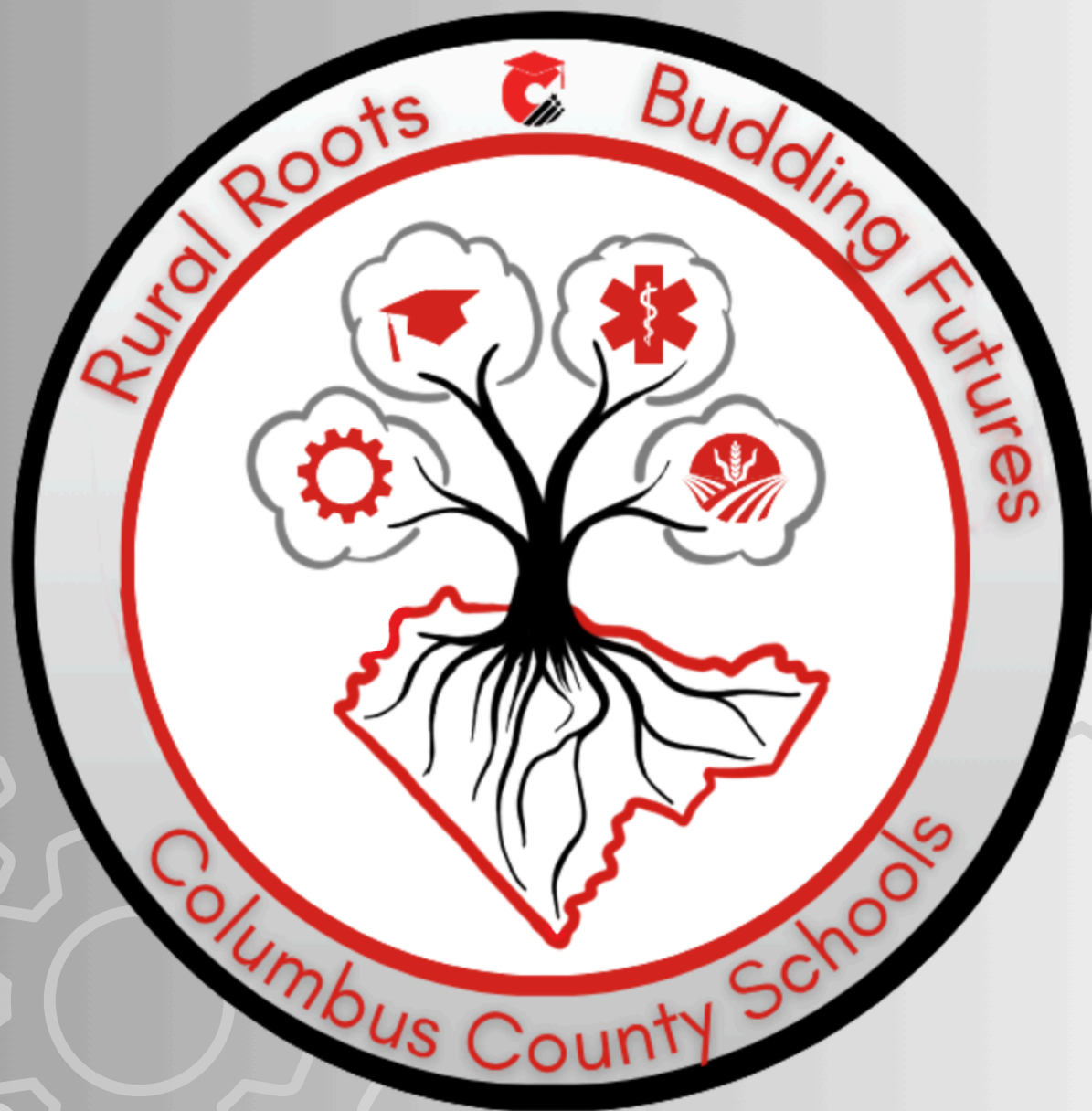




STRATEGIC PLAN

2026 - 2031

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



We are excited to share our updated strategic plan for Columbus County Schools. At the start of the 2025–26 school year, district leaders and stakeholders came together to examine how we are performing and to envision where we want to be by 2031.

This plan is our shared promise to students and families. It grew from months of listening to students, staff, parents, and community members. We studied our data, acknowledged our challenges, and affirmed our belief that all students can achieve at high levels.

We are a close-knit rural community where people look out for one another. At the same time, many students still struggle with reading, math, and consistent attendance. These challenges do not define who we are, but they make it clear that we must respond with focus and urgency.

Our core work is to help every student learn deeply, stay engaged in school, and graduate ready for college, careers, and life. By 2031, we aim for Columbus County Schools to be recognized as a model rural district where every graduate is prepared for life after high school.

Our work is organized around six strategic priorities: Culture, Success, Readiness, Support, Investment, and Empowerment. These priorities guide us as we build safe and welcoming schools, strengthen teaching and learning, develop real-world skills, support the whole child, recruit and retain excellent staff, and elevate student voice and leadership. Our values—purpose, belonging, relationships, growth, leadership, and challenge—will shape how we make decisions and use our resources.

We cannot do this work alone. It will take the commitment of teachers, staff, families, students, and community partners working together toward shared goals. Every person in our community has an important role in helping our students grow, meet high expectations, and achieve their dreams.

Thank you for your trust, your partnership, and your continued support. Together, we will ensure that every student in Columbus County Schools is known, cared for, challenged, and prepared for the future.

Sincerely,

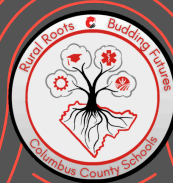
Jesse E Beck, II

Superintendent, Columbus County Schools



SETTING THE CONTEXT:

Our Community, Our
Students, Our Future



Community Snapshot

Columbus County is a rural community in southeastern North Carolina within the Fayetteville-Lumberton Prosperity Zone. With a population of 50,121 (2024), our community faces both challenges and opportunities as we work to prepare students for success in an ever evolving economy. Columbus County Schools serves **5,120** K-12 students across **12** traditional public schools, supported by a dedicated team committed to every student's success.

- **Median household income: \$50,837** (compared to \$70,838 statewide)
- **Child poverty rate: 26.1%** (state: 17.6%)
- **Single-parent households: 20.7%** (state: 17.0%)
- **Broadband access: 57.2%** of households (state: 77.1%)
- **First-generation college potential: 30.8%** of our students have parents with a college degree.

Current Performance: Opportunities for Growth

Academic Readiness:

- **75%** Pre-K Enrollment (**state goal: 75%**)
- **21.1%** of grades 3-8 students earned college-and-career-ready scores in reading (**state goal: 73%**)
- **24.3%** of grades 3-8 students earned college-and-career-ready scores in math (**state goal: 86%**)
- **24.7%** of grades 5-8 students earned college-and-career-ready scores in science

Student Engagement:

- **33.0%** chronic absenteeism rate (**state goal: 11%**)
- Student-to-counselor ratio: **372:1** (comparable to peer counties at 332:1)

Graduation and Beyond:

- **88.5%** four-year graduation rate (**state goal: 95%**)
- **54.4%** of graduates enroll in postsecondary education within 12 months (**state: 59.7%**)
- **317** graduates (**58.1%**) participated in Career & College Promise programs (**state: 36.0%**)
- **6.2%** of CTE credentials earned were industry-valued

Data Source: myFutureNC 2025 Attainment Profiles, Columbus County. Updated October 29, 2025.

OUR STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE



Columbus County Public Schools stand at a critical juncture. To break cycles of poverty, close opportunity gaps, and prepare students for economic mobility, we must:

- ✓ **Accelerate academic achievement** to ensure every student reads and performs mathematics at grade level
- ✓ **Eliminate academic disengagement** by addressing barriers to attendance and creating engaging learning environments
- ✓ **Expand pathways to credentials** through strengthened CTE programs aligned with regional workforce demands
- ✓ **Support postsecondary completion** by increasing enrollment rates and supporting students through the transition
- ✓ **Engage families and community partners** to address economic barriers, and support systems.

This strategic plan charts our course for the next five years, establishing clear priorities, measurable goals, and strategic actions that will transform outcomes for Columbus County students and strengthen our community's economic future.

Our Commitment: By 2031, Columbus County Schools will be recognized as a model rural school system where every student graduates prepared for college, career, and life success—contributing to our community's prosperity and our state's attainment goals.

Focus Group Information

Columbus County Schools would like to extend sincere appreciation to everyone that contributed to the eight months of strategic planning throughout the 2025-2026 school year. The feedback, input and data analysis was critical in defining the underlying values and future of Columbus County Schools through 2031.

Plan Development Timeline



Stakeholder Participant Groups

Board of Education Members: Chris Worley (Chairman), Emily Grice, Irvin Enzor, Steve Long, Dr. Ronnie Strickland

District Leadership Planning Members: Eddie Beck (Superintendent), Adam Thompson (Asst. Superintendent), Daniel Nolan, Kelly Jones, Tina Little, Kim Clonz, Jeffrey Greene, Tim Ward, Melonie McCready, Dr. Heather Piggett, Tamra Carter, Jamie Faulk, Adam Sellers, Laura Hunter

Focus Group Participants: Kristie Leinthal, Dr. Kalee Hill, Herman Bland, Dr. Peggy Hester, John Browning, Kelly Beck, Dr. Dale Norris, Shelly Cullipher, Leslie Faulk, Michelle Simmons, Christian Godwin, Sherone Hough, Rebecca Ham, Stephanie Thurman, Tyler Goodwin, Jennifer Davis, Christina Procida-Rush, Student Advisory: Reegan Hyatt, Colton Draper, Erica Diaz, Gabriel Beans, Myles Davis, Sarah Greene, Chloe Strickland, Antron McLaurin, Victoria Sanchez, Luke Duncan, Aiden Jordan, Angela Journey Sutton, Nathan George, Ava Grice, Jerome Lennon, Sara Coleman, Ella Clemmons, Devon Jenerette, Luis Calderon, Trinity Hunter, John David Stubbs, Sielo Mondragon-Reyes, Nathan Edwards, Malaysia Martinez, DaShyia Graham, Preston Dager, Luke Nance, Taylor Duncan, Brissa Matheson, JaMarius McLeod, Eli Brown, Chloe Longs, Nick Scott, Briley Bowen, Lillie Greene, Marc Johnson, Ethan Matheson, Kinzie Montgomery, Teacher Advisory: Ashley Young, Susan Carr, Nekeshia Lance, Constance Faulk, Karen Haley, Heather Tilley, Tonya Nobles, Michele Bolton, Darryl Spivey, Lisa Hamilton, Kimberly Watson, Janet Hewett, Parent Advisory: Treena Bigford, Samantha Sweeney, Regina Whitted, Denise Lee, Alexis Lewis, Brittany Wormouth, Shawna Greene, Tracey Chadwick, Meg Sellers, Cecile Debrosse, Kheddra Maynor, Alicia Brown, Anna Mabe, Valerie Pedro, Amanda Gore, Scott Babson, Lorena Baker-Loret, Tina Chestnutt, Brittany Lagunas, Amy Ward, Deanna Worley, Shalonda Stackhouse, Morgan McPherson, Sally Ward, Allison Watts, Gwen Smith, Kenny Simmons, Chrystal McCloskey, Deanna Nobles, Mark Brown, Paige Blackwell, Kiley Hinson, Brittany Canady, Darren Norris, Relynda Simmons, Shalonda Elmore, Noral Keel

CCS Values and Beliefs



LEADERSHIP

We believe students and adults are leaders in our system ...So we elevate voice, choice, and shared responsibility to influence decisions and shape the future of our schools



PURPOSE

We believe our schools purpose is to prepare students for college, careers, and life....So every graduate is ready to thrive in a changing world.



BELONGING

We believe students and staff learn best when they feel safe, respected, and included ...So we create schools where everyone is known, valued, and belongs.



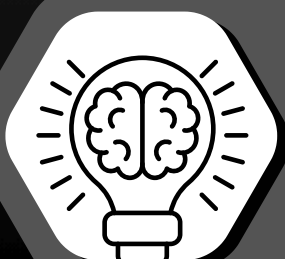
RELATIONSHIPS

We believe strong relationships among students, families, staff, and the community are essential to success... So we prioritize trust, open communication, and partnership in our organization.



GROWTH

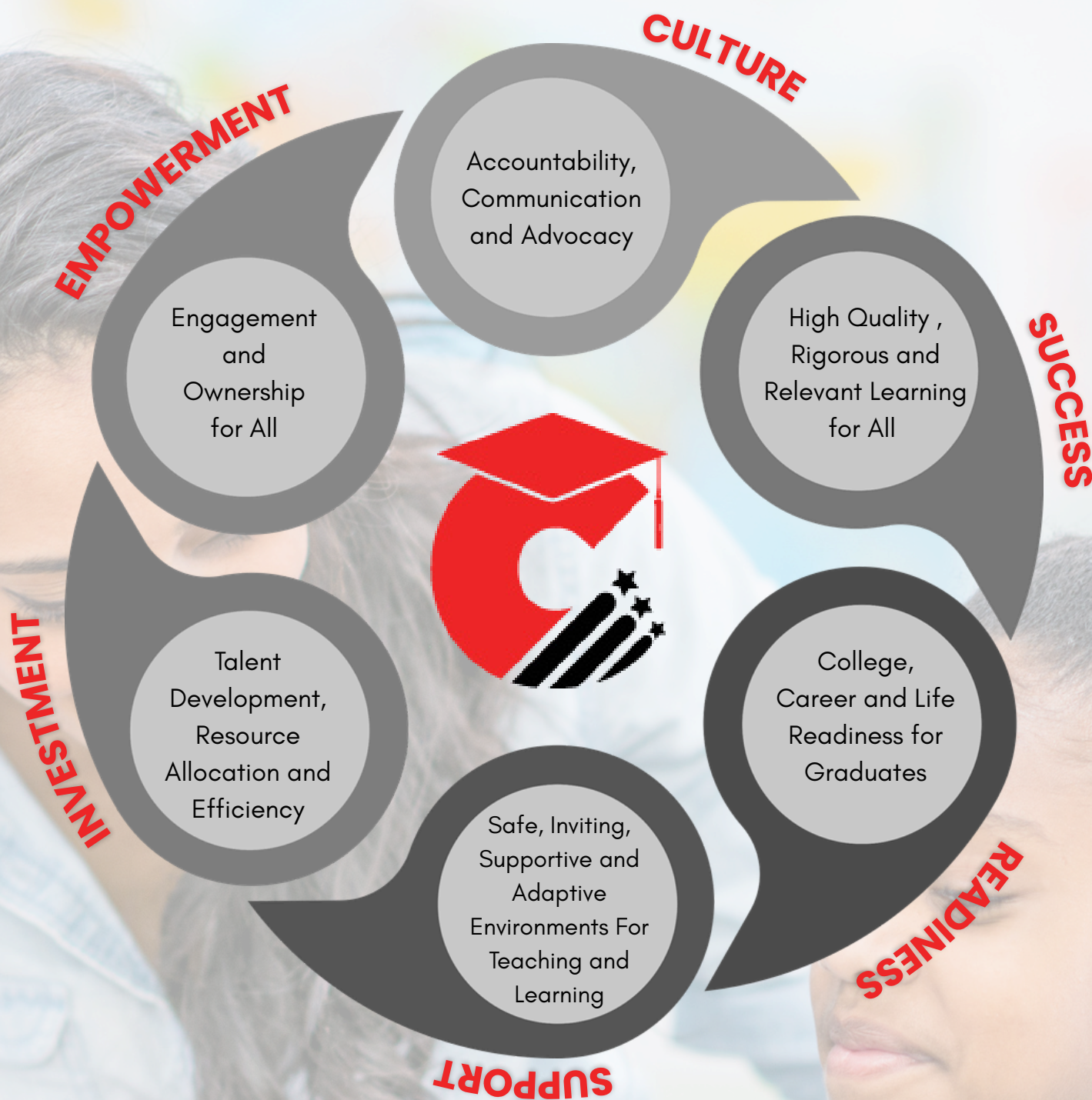
We believe all learners can grow with feedback and support...So we use reflection and data to continuously improve teaching, learning, and leadership.



CHALLENGE

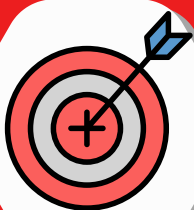
We believe every learner deserves challenging learning that builds deep thinking and problem-solving... So all students can make wise decisions and contribute to their communities.

Our Six Strategic Priorities



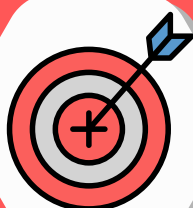
Columbus County Schools recognizes that emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), are reshaping learning, assessment, and the workplace. Over the life of this plan, CCS will develop guidance and supports that help educators and students use AI in ways that are ethical, safe, and aligned to our Learning Framework and Career-Readiness Vision.

Our District Strategic Goals



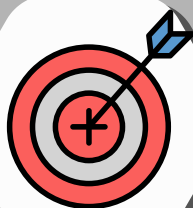
CULTURE

By 2031, Columbus County Schools will establish and sustain a **unified district culture** in which all schools and departments actively promote and model **shared district values and beliefs** in daily work.



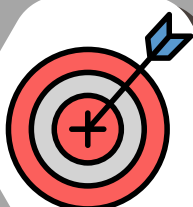
SUCCESS

By 2031, all Columbus County Schools will **meet or exceed growth** and will consistently **improve** progress towards **grade level mastery** for all learners.



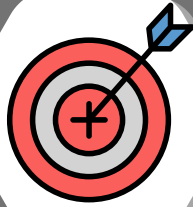
READINESS

By 2031, **all** Columbus County School learners will be actively engaged in a **career and life readiness framework** connecting their K-12 education to real-world experiences for career and life readiness.



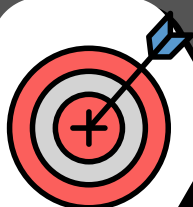
SUPPORT

By 2031, Columbus County Schools will ensure that all learners have have a **safe, supportive and adaptive environment** through a multi-tiered system of support focused on developing the whole child.



INVESTMENT

By 2031, Columbus County Schools will build and implement a **talent development plan** to actively recruit, train and retain highly effective staff and will implement **fiscal and operational systems** promoting efficacy and effective resource management.



EMPOWERMENT

By 2031, Columbus County Schools will build a culture of agency and shared ownership across all school campuses by empowering students and staff to take active roles in decision-making, leadership, and continuous improvement within their schools and the district.



Culture: Goals & Metrics

GOAL

By 2031, Columbus County Schools will establish and sustain a unified district culture in which all schools and departments actively promote and model shared district values and beliefs in daily work.

Leadership - Purpose - Belonging - Relationships - Growth - Challenge

METRICS

Focus	Baseline	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Implementation Metrics						
% of schools and central services departments scoring a "proficient" or higher on the CCS Culture implementation rubric for daily practice	Schools 0/12	33% 4/12	58% 7/12	78% 9/12	100% 12/12	100%
	Departments 0/11	45% 5/11	82% 9/11	100% 11/11	100%	100%
Primary Outcome Metrics						
5 Star Rating on an annual CCS climate and culture survey.	Students 2.6/5.0	3.0/5.0	3.25/5.0	3.5/5.0	3.75/5.0	>4
	Staff 2.6/5	3.0/5.0	3.25/5.0	3.5/5.0	3.75/5.0	>4
	Community 2.8/5	3.0/5.0	3.25/5.0	3.5/5.0	3.75/5.0	>4
Staff Retention Rate	Certified Staff Spring 2026 87.6%	88%	89%	90%	<90%	<90%
	Classified Staff Spring 2026 94.4%	95%	Maintain >95%	Maintain >95%	Maintain >95%	Maintain >95%
Student Enrollment	2025-26 Enrollment 5,099	5,149	5,199	5,250	>5,250	>5,250



Culture: Action Steps

- **Clarity:** Develop, adopt, and maintain a clear **CCS Values and Beliefs Framework** that defines core commitments and explicitly aligns with existing strategic goals for Success, Readiness, Support, Investment, and Empowerment (Agency).
- **Branding:** Create and manage a district-wide branding plan that consistently communicates CCS values and beliefs to staff, students, families, and community partners, providing schools with adaptable templates and materials for school and departmental use. The district will provide ready-to-use tools, visuals, and talking points so schools and departments can consistently communicate and apply these values.
- **Alignment:** Embed CCS values and beliefs into district-level strategic plans, School Improvement Plans, handbooks, and onboarding materials, and provide sample language and templates that schools and departments can adapt, ensuring consistent messaging with minimal duplication of effort.
- **Alignment:** Conduct a recurring district audit of policies, procedures, and traditions to ensure alignment with CCS values and beliefs; partner with schools and departments to revise or sunset misaligned practices.
- **Implementation:** Develop and share standard protocols and tools for incorporating CCS values into agendas, decision-making templates, and initiative-vetting processes at the district and school levels, so that major decisions are consistently screened for alignment to our values and impacts on staff and students.
- **Alignment:** Establish a common process in which all new initiatives, programs, and resource allocations include an explicit alignment statement to CCS values and beliefs, and use this process to prioritize or pause initiatives to protect school and department capacity.
- **Implementation:** Provide annual, job-embedded professional learning for district and school leaders on leading culture, modeling CCS values, and coaching staff toward aligned behaviors.
- **Implementation:** Implement and continuously refine a leadership expectation matrix that embeds CCS values into principal evaluations, district leader goals, and leadership team norms.
- **Implementation:** Establish and support a district Culture Leadership Team with cross-role and diverse representation (district, school, certified and classified staff, and where appropriate, student and family voice) to monitor implementation, review climate and culture data, and recommend adjustments and supports.
- **Implementation:** Develop and share tools, exemplars, and look-fors that illustrate what CCS values and beliefs look like in classrooms, PLCs, and student interactions, aligned to the CCS Learning Framework, so that staff have concrete models of desired practice.
- **Implementation:** Align and streamline recognition programs (student of the month, staff awards, school spotlights) to highlight individuals and teams who exemplify core values and beliefs across the district, ensuring diverse and equitable representation in who is recognized.



Success: Goals & Metrics



By 2031, all Columbus County Schools will meet or exceed growth and will consistently improve progress towards grade level mastery for all learners.

METRICS

Focus	Baseline 2024-25	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
% of Schools Meeting or Exceeding Growth	83% (10/12)	92% 11/12	100% 12/12	100% 12/12	100% 12/12	100% 12/12
% of Subgroups Meeting or Exceeding Growth	Reading 88% (8/9)	100% (9/9)	100% (9/9)	100% (9/9)	100% (9/9)	100% (9/9)
	Math 44% (4/9)	56% (5/9)	67% (6/9)	78% (7/9)	89% (8/9)	100% (9/9)
	Science 66% (6/9)	78% (7/9)	89% (8/9)	100% (8/9)	100% (8/9)	100% (8/9)
% of Students Proficient in Reading, Math and Science	Reading (43.3%)	47%	50%	53%	56%	60%
	Math (42.9%)	47%	50%	53%	56%	60%
	Science (43.2)	47%	50%	53%	56%	60%



Success: Action Steps

- **Framework:** Phase in and support full implementation of all phases of the [Columbus County Schools Learning Framework](#), with district-developed tools, model units, and professional learning.
- **Curriculum:** Partner with schools to implement adopted core curriculum for tested subjects in grades K-12, with district-provided pacing supports, aligned assessments, and exemplar lessons.
- **Data Protocols:** Develop and support implementation of standard data analysis protocols to proactively track student growth and progress towards grade level proficiency, using district-generated reports and dashboards so schools can focus on analysis and action, not data extraction.
- **Academic Intervention:** Implement the district Literacy and Math Intervention Plans across K-10 with district-provided intervention menus, scheduling guidance, progress-monitoring tools, and coaching support, ensuring equitable access to effective interventions for students who need them.
- **Rigor:** Conduct an annual access-focused audit of honors and other advanced courses to ensure rigorous content and assessment practices and to monitor access and representation of historically underserved student groups.
- **Curriculum Implementation:** Provide ongoing, job-embedded professional learning and coaching for core curriculum throughout the lifespan of the adoption, including model lessons, collaborative planning support, and just-in-time refreshers that recognize staff turnover and changing needs.
- **Fidelity Monitoring:** Use common classroom walkthrough protocols to gather information about implementation of core curriculum and Learning Framework priorities and to guide coaching, resource allocation, and celebration of strong practice.
- **Implementation:** Align all professional development to the Columbus County Schools Learning Framework, prioritizing high-impact practices and protecting staff time by limiting stand-alone initiatives that do not directly support this framework.
- **Review Protocols:** Develop and implement a standard, district-supported protocol for bi-annual transcript review that checks for on-track graduation status, access to rigorous coursework, diploma endorsements, and alignment to students' postsecondary goals.



Readiness: Goals & Metrics

GOAL

By 2031, all Columbus County School learners will be actively engaged in a career and life readiness framework connecting their K-12 education to real-world experiences for career and life readiness.

METRICS

Focus	Baseline	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Increase % of students that demonstrate "readiness" in core competency skills outlined in the CCS Learning Framework	2025-26 % of Students Engaged in Success Plan Goal Setting	2 Grade Levels 8 th and 10 th	4 Grade Levels 8 th - 11 th	6 Grade Levels 7 th - 12 th	7 grade levels 6 th - 12 th	Maintain full implementation
	2025-26 0% of Students that Complete Competency Portfolio	Implementation Year	25%	50%	75%	100%
	2025-26 % of HS Graduates that earn 1 or more of the 7 NC High School Diploma Endorsements	5% Increase	5% Increase	5% Increase	5% Increase	Greater than 25% Increase in 5 years
	2025-26 # of students enrolled in AP and or CCP Coursework	5% Increase	5% Increase	5% Increase	5% Increase	Greater than 25% Increase in 5 years
Increase % of students that engage in a "completer" Arts Pathway in high school.	2025-26 % of student that take 2 or more Arts courses in a pathway in high school.	5% Increase	5% Increase	5% Increase	5% Increase	Greater than 25% Increase in 5 years
Increase % of student engagement and participation in CTE Programmatic elements related to career readiness.	2025-26 Credential Attainment 52%	56%	60%	64%	68%	70%
	2025-26 CTE Concentrator Completion Rate 95%	97%	98%	99%	100%	Maintain 100% Rate
	2025-26 23 Internships, Pre-Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships	20% 28 total	20% 34 total	20% 41 total	20% 49 total	20% 60 total



Readiness: Action Steps

- **Framework:** Partner with stakeholders to develop, adopt, and maintain a Vertical K-12 College, Career, and Life Readiness Pathway that clearly outlines grade-level expectations, experiences, and competencies, and provide schools with ready-to-use guidance, maps, and tools so the framework can be implemented consistently throughout the district.
- **Competency Attainment:** Develop and implement a Readiness Competency Portfolio process aligned to the CCS Learning Framework and the NCDPI Portrait of a Graduate competencies. All students in grades 6-12 will complete portfolio components annually, with completion as a graduation requirement by 2031. The district will provide portfolio structures, exemplars, and digital tools (including guidance on appropriate use of AI-enabled tools) so schools and students have clear models of high-quality evidence.
- **Program Audit:** Conduct an audit to evaluate current CTE and Arts program enrollment and pathway completion and alignment with workplace competencies and industry needs in the community and to identify and address inequities in access and participation across schools and student groups
- **CTE Program Growth:** Set and monitor growth targets for CTE program enrollment and participation on each campus, and provide district-level support (marketing, scheduling guidance, staffing advocacy, partner outreach) to help schools reach those targets, with a focus on expanding access for underrepresented student groups.
- **CDP Support & Planning Tools:** Maximize access and effective use of academic and career planning tools (Infinite Campus, CFNC, Careers.org, Xello, and future AI-enabled tools as appropriate) across all 6-12 environments so all students develop and maintain a Success Plan aligned with their strengths, interests, and career goals.
- **Arts Program Growth:** Launch and manage a district-wide branding and marketing initiative for Arts pathways to increase engagement and enrollment, providing schools with shared materials and tools that reduce local planning demands and highlight a broad, inclusive range of student work.
- **Work-Based Learning:** Increase and coordinate work-based learning opportunities (job shadowing, internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships) aligned with CTE pathways and academic/career goals. The district will lead partnership development, logistics, and documentation processes so schools can focus on matching students to high-quality experiences, with particular attention to equitable access.
- **Adult Advising Support:** Provide professional development and tools for school counselors and teachers on advising students about career pathways, CTE, CCP, college-preparatory pathways, and work-based learning opportunities, and integrate advising into existing structures (advisory, counseling, registration) so comprehensive student advising does not create additional stand-alone programs.
- **MS Advisory:** Develop district-supported middle school advisory structures aligned to Career, College, and Life Readiness preparation, including shared lesson frameworks, activities, and planning tools so schools can implement advisory without extensive curriculum development.
- **HS Advisory:** Develop district-supported high school advisory structures aligned to Career, College, and Life Readiness preparation, including guidance on embedding Success Plan work, portfolio tasks, and postsecondary planning into advisory time.
- **Alignment - The "E's":** Partner with schools to ensure all graduating students have declared their 'E' (Enrollment, Enlistment, Employment) and have a documented, supported next-step plan, including FAFSA completion. The district will supply common tools, communication templates, and progress-monitoring dashboards to track and support this work.



Support: Goals & Metrics



By 2031, Columbus County Schools will ensure that all learners have have a safe, supportive and adaptive environment through a multi-tiered system of support focused on developing the whole child.

METRICS

Focus	Baseline	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Increase % of schools that maintain an average daily attendance average of 95% or above annually	2025-26 0% of Schools maintained 93% attendance Rate	25% 3/12	50% 6/12	75% 9/12	83% 10/12	>90%
Decrease the number of instructional hours lost annually per student	2025-26 Average # of Instructional hours Lost 71.5 hours 11 Days	10% Reduction 64 hours 10 days	10% Reduction 57 hours 9 days	10% Reduction 51.3 hours 8 days	10% Reduction 46.2 7 days	10% Reduction 41.6 6 days
Increase in the number of active community partnerships that provide students and families access to additional whole child supports beyond core school services.	2025-26 #30 Parental Supports	10% Expansion 33	10% Expansion 36	10% Expansion 40	10% Expansion 44	10% Expansion 48
	2025-26 #40 Medical Supports	10% Expansion 44	10% Expansion 48	10% Expansion 53	10% Expansion 58	10% Expansion 64
	2025-26 #20 Mental Health Supports	10% Expansion 22	10% Expansion 24	10% Expansion 26	10% Expansion 29	10% Expansion 32
	2025-26 #40 Community Volunteer & Enrichment Supports	10% Expansion 44	10% Expansion 48	10% Expansion 53	10% Expansion 58	10% Expansion 64
Increase % of schools that implement complete cycles of progress monitoring across all grade levels aligned with the K-12 Intervention Framework.	2025-26 Fidelity in progress monitoring 0/12	33% 4/12	58% 7/12	75% 9/12	100% 12/12	16



Support: Action Steps

- **Framework:** Develop, adopt, and maintain a [districtwide climate and culture framework](#) that includes structures for positive behavior supports, restorative practices, trauma-informed approaches, and annual plans that promote welcoming, inclusive environments and positive relationships.
- **Training:** Provide ongoing, job-embedded professional learning and coaching on implementation of the Climate and Culture Framework, including modeling of practices, co-planning, and feedback cycles that help staff translate the framework into daily routines.
- **Standards Alignment:** Adopt and communicate a set of universal SEL competencies for all grade spans and provide curriculum supports, sample lessons, and family resources so schools can ensure explicit instruction and reinforcement of social-emotional skills for all students.
- **Training:** Provide staff training and tools for a consistent system for writing and processing discipline referrals, ensuring accurate reporting, tracking, and early intervention in discipline, bullying, and safety concerns, and monitoring for access in discipline outcomes across student groups.
- **Partnerships:** Build, coordinate, and maintain community partnerships that expand access to health, mental health, mentoring, and enrichment opportunities, with district-level support for outreach, MOUs, and logistics so that high-need schools receive priority access.
- **Framework:** Develop, adopt, and maintain a comprehensive **K-12 Intervention Framework** that integrates academics and behavior, including clearly defined tiered interventions (Tier 1, 2, 3) with entry, progress-monitoring, and exit criteria, aligned with a comprehensive K-12 MTSS Plan. The district will provide menus of interventions, decision-rules, and data tools so schools are not building MTSS systems from scratch.
- **Protocols:** Support schools in using common MTSS problem-solving protocols and data review cycles, aligned with existing data analysis practices used for Success and Readiness goals, and provide facilitation guides and sample agendas to streamline meeting preparation.
- **Standardization:** Develop and maintain a documented menu of district-approved tiered interventions and supports aligned to whole-child needs and ensure each school has access to this menu, along with guidance on scheduling, staffing, and progress-monitoring.
- **Coaching and Support:** Create and sustain coaching and support structures (e.g., MTSS coaches, regional MTSS support teams, office hours) to assist schools with implementing, refining, and troubleshooting MTSS practices, with intensified support for schools facing the greatest challenges.
- **Monitoring:** Develop and use a district MTSS implementation rubric to monitor implementation and whole-child outcomes and to identify where additional support, resources, or adjustments are needed. Summaries will be shared annually with the Board and stakeholders, highlighting both bright spots and areas for improvement.



Investment: Goals & Metrics



By 2031, Columbus County Schools will build and implement a talent development plan to actively recruit, train and retain highly effective staff.

METRICS

Focus	Baseline	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Reduction in annual staff attrition rate.	2025-26 Certified Vacancy Rate 12.4	1% Reduction 11.4	1% Reduction 10.4	1% Reduction 9.4	>10% Annual Attrition Rate	>10% Annual Attrition Rate
	2025-26 Classified Vacancy Rate 5.54%	<5%	<5% Attrition Rate	<5% Attrition Rate	<5% Attrition Rate	<5% Attrition Rate
Increase the ratio of initially license teachers to alternatively licensed teachers in the district Beginning Teacher Program	2025-26 Ratio 20:38 34% Initial 66% Alternative	2% Shift 36% : 64%	2% Shift 38% : 62%	2% Shift 40% : 60%	2% Shift 42% : 58%	2% Shift 44% : 56%



Columbus County Schools will ensure that all facilities are efficiently supported and resourced by auditing and tracking systems and operational structures.

METRICS

Focus	Baseline	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Cost Reduction in operational services	2025 - 26 Annual Operations Costs	0.25% Reduction	0.25% Reduction	0.25% Reduction	0.25% Reduction	Maintain Efficiency Measures
Reduction in response time to request for service tickets by department	2025 - 26 Facilities 74.9 hrs (3.1 days)	2% Reduction 73.4 hours (3.1 days)	2% Reduction 71.9 hours (3 days)	2% Reduction 70.5 hours (2.9 days)	2% Reduction 69.1 hours (2.9 days)	Maintain Efficiency Measures
	2025 - 26 Technology 2.45 Days	5% 2.33 Days	5% 2.16 Days	5% 2.05	5% 1.95 Days	Maintain Efficiency Measures
Successful financial audit completion without significant findings	2024-25 5 Audit Findings	> 3 Audit Findings	>1 Audit Finding	100% Clean Audit	100% Clean Audit	100% Clean Audit



Investment: Action Steps

Resource Allocation Goal:

- **Plan:** Create and annually update a **Facilities and Capital Improvement Plan** that aligns maintenance and renovation priorities to student enrollment trends, program needs and safety requirements.
- **Data Tracking:** Develop a Facilities Funding Dashboard that tracks operating and capital expenditures, grants, and restricted funds, and connects spending to specific facilities projects and outcomes
- **Procedures:** Establish and follow clear fiscal management procedures for district-level controls ensuring purchasing processes are followed and all general ledger accounts are properly reconciled monthly.
- **Efficiency Audit:** Conduct an annual audit of utilities usage (electric, water, gas,) by facility to identify inefficiencies, set reduction targets, and prioritize investments in energy-saving upgrades.
- **Operations Audit:** Continue to implement a districtwide Facilities and Operations Audit Protocol that annually reviews building conditions, capacity, safety systems, and equipment for all campuses, with clear rating scales and timelines for remediation.
- **Assets and Inventory:** Continue to refine the centralized Facilities and Resource Asset Inventory System that tracks major equipment, furniture, instructional technology, and vehicles for every school and department, including purchase date, warranty, lifecycle, and replacement schedule.
- **Walkthroughs:** Implement quarterly Facilities Walkthroughs at each site using common checklists aligned to safety, cleanliness, accessibility, and learning-environment expectations, with results used to prioritize work orders

Talent Development Goal:

- **Framework:** Develop and adopt a **CCS Talent Development Framework** that defines competencies, growth pathways, and expectations for all staff roles.
- **Data Tracking:** Create a Talent Data Dashboard that tracks key indicators (vacancy rates, time-to-fill, retention by role and school, years of experience, effectiveness ratings, and participation in development programs) to guide decision-making.
- **Incentives:** Prioritize, through the budget process, opportunities to provide financial incentives for hard to staff positions ie EC, Math, Science
- **Monitoring:** Create an annual Talent Review process at the district and school levels to identify high-potential staff, prioritize development opportunities, and plan for succession in critical roles.
- **Branding:** Develop and implement a districtwide Recruitment and Branding Plan that highlights Columbus County Schools' values, supports, and growth opportunities through website, social media, job fairs, university partnerships, and community events.
- **Celebration:** Develop and implement a comprehensive Staff Recognition Program that celebrates excellence in instruction, leadership, support services, and innovation, aligned to CCS values and beliefs.
- **Input:** Create regular listening structures (staff surveys, focus groups, advisory teams, exit surveys) to gather feedback on working conditions, professional learning, and leadership support, and use results to inform action steps at the district and school levels
- **ATR and OC:** Continue to implement opportunities for teacher leadership roles (Advanced Teaching Roles) with defined responsibilities and, where feasible, stipends or other forms of recognition



Empowerment: Goals & Metrics



By 2031, Columbus County Schools will build a culture of agency and shared ownership across all school campuses by empowering students and staff to take active roles in decision-making, leadership, and continuous improvement within their schools and the district.

METRICS

Focus	Baseline	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2023-31
Increase in opportunities for student engagement, advocacy and leadership distributed across all school campuses	2025-26 Student Participation rate in extracurricular events	10% Increase	10% Increase	10% Increase	10% Increase	10% Increase
	2025-26 School student led conference events 2/12 (17%)	33% 4/12	50% 6/12	75% 9/12	100% 12/12	
	2025-26 52.6% of students report that they partner with adults to make school improvement decisions	55.6%	57.6%	60.6%	64.6%	>70.0%
	2025-26 21.1% of students reporting involvement in classroom level decision-making	25.3%	30.4%	36.5%	43.8%	52.6%
	2025-26 57.9% of students who believe that school leaders take action on student ideas related to school improvement.	69.5%	83.4%	>90%	Maintain >90%	Maintain >90%
Increase in opportunities for staff engagement, advocacy and leadership distributed across all school campuses	2025-26 86.57 Cumulative Response TWCS for Teacher Leadership	Off Year for TWCS	88%	Off Year for TWCS	>90%	Maintain >90%
	2025-26 % of certified and classified staff engaged in school leadership experiences	5% Increase	5% Increase	5% Increase	5% Increase	Greater than 25% increase over 5 Years



Empowerment: Action Steps

- **Framework:** Develop, adopt, and maintain a **CCS Agency and Shared Ownership Framework** that defines what student and staff voice, choice, and leadership look like in classrooms, schools, and district decision-making.
- **Student Leadership:** Partner with schools to establish and sustain student leadership structures—such as student government, student advisory councils, and student ambassador programs—with district-provided role descriptions, sample bylaws, election/selection guidelines that promote diverse representation, and model meeting schedules.
- **Student Advisory:** Establish student advisory groups at the school and district levels that meet regularly with principals and district leaders to provide feedback on school climate, instruction, schedules, and initiatives, with district support for facilitation guides, student preparation, and transparent follow-up on how feedback is used.
- **Ambassador Program:** Create and support a Student Ambassador Program on each campus, using a district-developed Ambassador Toolkit (selection processes, training modules, sample roles) to elevate student leadership in welcoming new students, leading tours, supporting family events, and representing the school at community functions.
- **Input Protocols:** Develop district-wide ‘You Said, We Did’ communication protocols and templates for schools and central services to share how student and staff input is used in decisions, building trust and transparency while minimizing additional communication design work.
- **Student Data Conferences:** Develop and provide templates and exemplars for student-led data and improvement routines (e.g., student data notebooks, student-led conferences, student problem-solving teams) so schools can adopt structures that build student ownership for academic progress and school improvement.
- **Recognition:** Align and expand recognition programs to highlight classrooms, schools, and teams that demonstrate exemplary practices in student and staff agency, and create structured opportunities (showcases, panels, resource banks) for them to share models and tools with peers across the district.
- **Feedback:** Implement regular, district-supported feedback cycles (surveys, focus groups, listening sessions) to gather staff perspectives on key initiatives, with the district responsible for designing instruments, analyzing data, and sharing accessible summaries that schools can use to adjust plans.
- **Representation:** Incorporate student and staff representatives into key school and district committees (e.g., School Improvement Teams, calendar committees, code of conduct review groups) using district guidance for selection, roles, and norms that support inclusive participation so major decisions reflect those most impacted by them.

NC Strategic Alignment



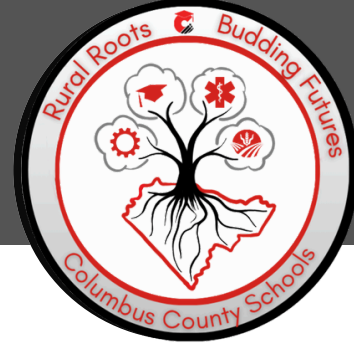
In 2025 the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the State Board of Education (SBE) launched a new strategic plan to guide North Carolina's public schools through 2030. Columbus County Schools has aligned its strategic plan goals to the broader vision outlined in the strategic plan outlined by the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.



The table below maps the alignment between our strategic plan and NCDPI's strategic plan. This alignment is intentional and strategic. It allows Columbus County Schools to leverage state resources and funding, collaborate effectively with DPI and regional partners, and strengthen our advocacy by connecting local priorities to statewide goals.

CCS Plan Goal	NC Strategic Plan Alignment	Crosswalk with Columbus County's Strategic Plan
Culture	Pillar 7: Celebrate the Excellence in Public Education Pillar 8: Galvanize Champions to Fully Invest in and Support Public Education	CCS Climate and Culture Framework
Success	Pillar 1: Prepare each Student for Their Next Phase in Life Pillar 2: Revere Public School Educators	Learning Framework, core curriculum implementation, data protocols, intervention systems.
Readiness	Pillar 1: Prepare each Student for Their Next Phase in Life Pillar 5: Lead Transformational Change	Pathways, portfolios, work-based learning, advisory, postsecondary planning.
Support	Pillar 3: Enhance Parent, Caregiver and Community Support Pillar 4: Ensure Healthy, Safe and Secure Learning Environments	Climate and culture framework, MTSS, community partnerships.
Investment	Pillar 2: Revere Public School Educators Pillar 5: Optimize Operational Excellence	Talent development, recruitment, retention, facilities and operations systems.
Empowerment	Pillar 1: Prepare each Student for Their Next Phase in Life Pillar 2: Revere Public School Educators Pillar 5: Lead Transformational Change Pillar 8: Galvanize Champions to Fully Invest in and Support Public Education	Student and staff voice, leadership, advisory structures, student-led conferences.

District Commitment Statement



This strategic plan is a support plan for schools. It is designed to focus our work collectively as a Columbus County team. For each priority, the district leadership team will clarify what it will own, what it will support, and what it will simplify or stop. Our goal is to create the conditions—time, tools, staffing, and partnerships—that make high-quality implementation possible and sustainable.

For every district-level requirement, Columbus County Schools will:

- **Build and maintain the enabling systems:** The district will own the development and upkeep of key systems (frameworks, protocols, data tools, and templates), providing ready-to-use resources so schools can focus on implementation with students.
- **Support Capacity Building:** The district will invest in building the knowledge, skills, and confidence of educators and leaders through job-embedded professional learning, coaching, and collaborative planning structures.
- **Balance Coherence:** The district will regularly review and reduce competing initiatives, adjust timelines, and align expectations so that schools are not asked to implement too many new priorities at once.
- **Partner in Monitoring & Support:** The district will support and monitor implementation and outcomes in partnership with schools, using evidence to offer differentiated support, remove barriers, and celebrate progress—not simply to check for compliance.



