BIRMINGHAM
CITY SCHOOLS
BUILDING LEADERS. IMPACTING THE WORLD.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

bhamcityschools.org



Vision Statement

Birmingham City Schools will be a recognized leader in public education, meeting the needs of a diverse population prepared to succeed in a global society.

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To our community ...

We are pleased and honored to present to you the 2024-2029 Birmingham City Schools Strategic Plan. This is a living document that details our pathway forward for continued success. It will guide the important work of the district to prepare ALL students for successful careers, lifelong learning, and civic engagement.

This new strategic plan represents Birmingham City Schools commitment to community input and equitable outcomes. It aligns the district's priorities with a plan of action that will better position our students for the world they will face in the future and support our employees as they guide our scholars.

We are proud of the work leading up to this point. Hundreds of parents and stakeholders attended community meetings. Focus groups including individuals from almost every corner of the community provided feedback. Working committees met regularly to assess our progress toward academic achievement goals and evaluate community feedback.

The presentation of this plan is just the beginning of our new strategic plan. We will be transparent, and we will be accountable as we work together to achieve the goals set forth in our 2024-2029 Birmingham City Schools Strategic Plan.

In closing, we wanted to thank all the staff, families, students and community members for their participation in this process. Your feedback has been integral to the development of a robust strategic plan. By working together to implement this plan, we will have a solid pathway to a better future for our scholars and employees, and we will be BCS Strong for years to come.



Sincerely,

Dr. Mark Sullivan

Dr. Mark Sullivan, Superintendent
Birmingham City Schools

DISTRICT FAST FACTS

20 Elementary Schools

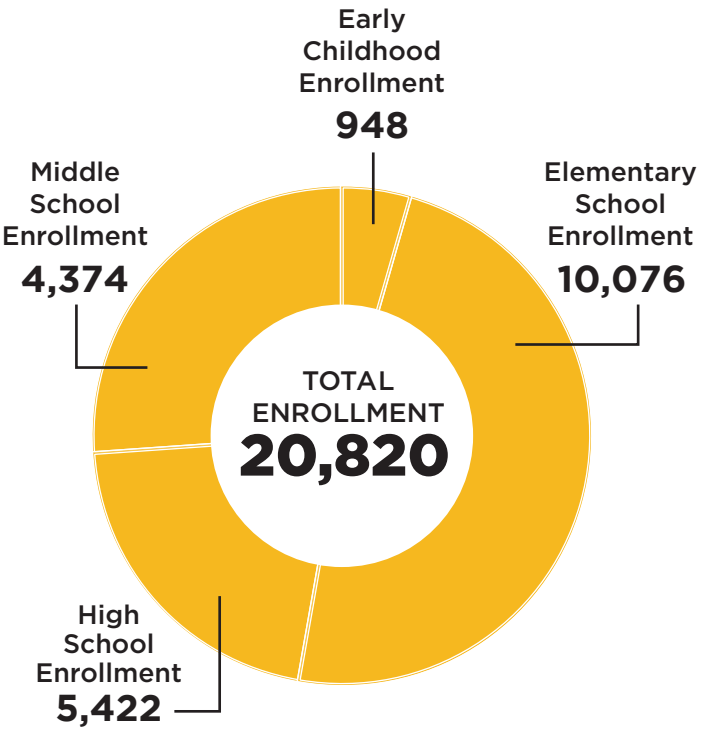
7 K-8 Schools

8 Middle Schools

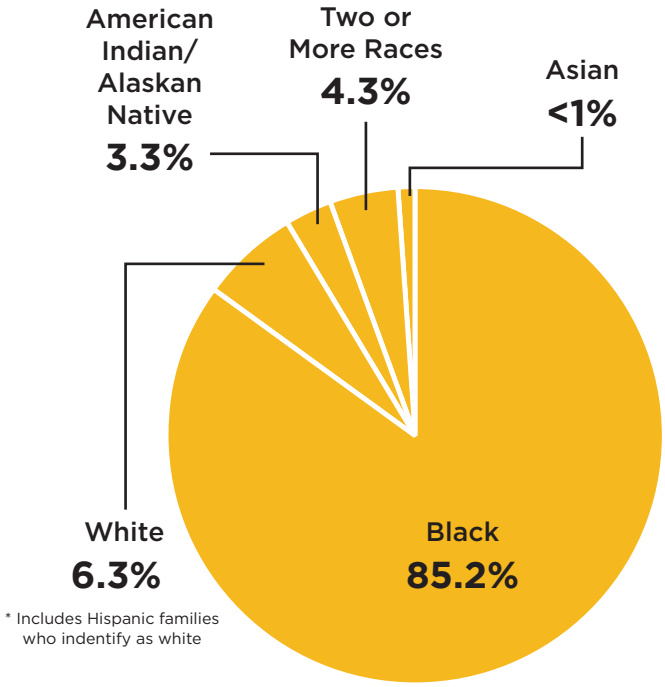
7 High Schools

1 Virtual School

PRE K-12 ENROLLMENT



RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS



* Includes Hispanic families who indentify as white

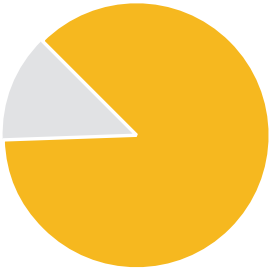
Scholars identifying as Latino/Hispanic
12.8%



English Language Learners scholars
9%



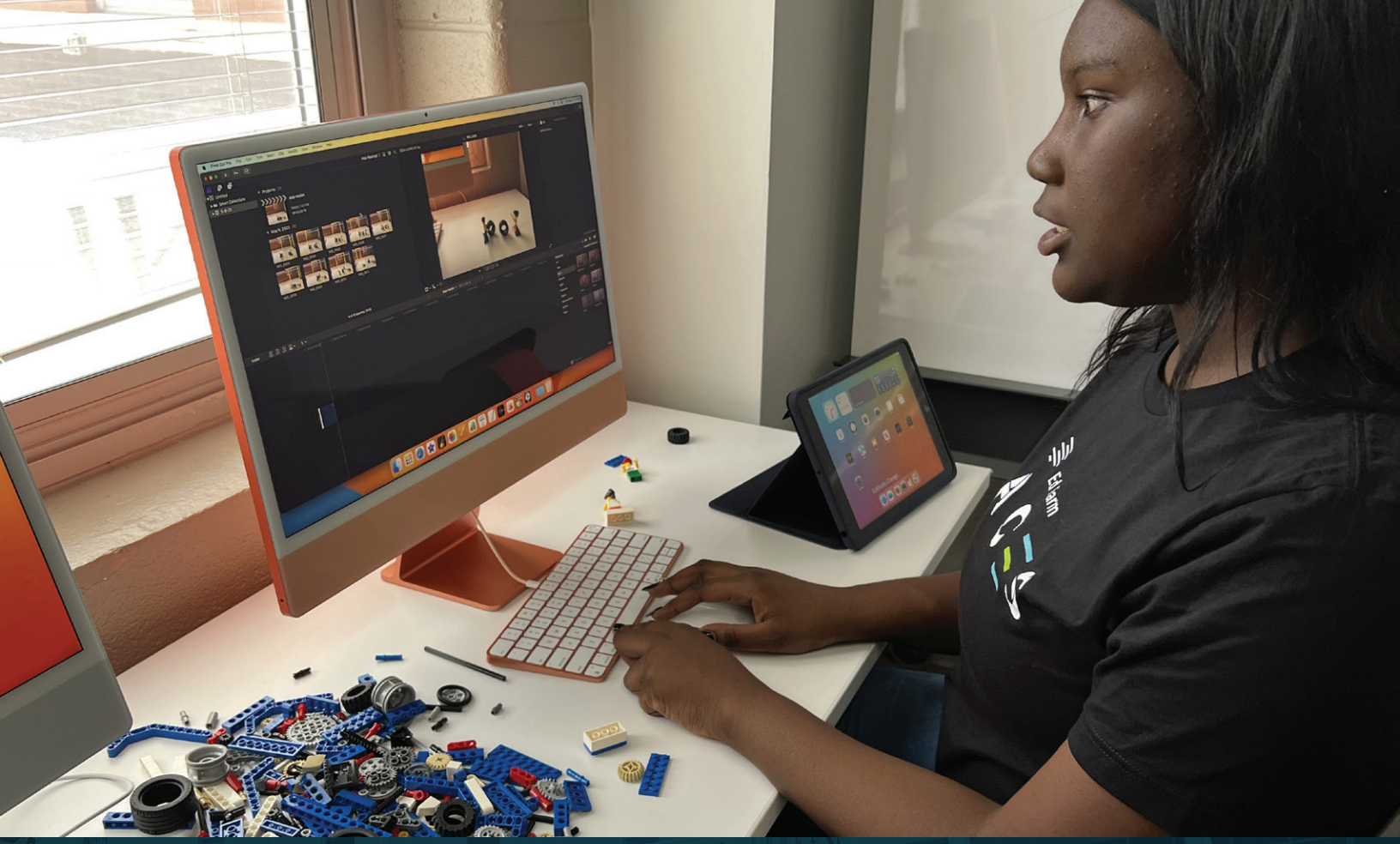
Participating in Free/Reduced Lunch Program
87%



Number of scholars served in Special Education
12.4%



Source: District Data - Spring 2024



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Overview of the Strategic Plan

The goal of the strategic planning process in Birmingham City Schools was to build a long-term, cohesive set of priorities and goals that the school district would build initiatives and goals that would be the district's foundation for initiatives and actions that ensure student success. To help with unifying the district's strategy, the BCS Board of Education and district leaders partnered with the organization District Management Group (DMGroup) to ensure that the strategic plan was a living and actionable document that would guide day-to-day district decisions.

The first goal of the process was to form a deep understanding of district needs through a robust community engagement process and quantitative analysis. The second goal was to craft a theory of action that served as a shared understanding of what will produce change for Birmingham City Schools. With a strong understanding of the district's most pressing needs and a clear theory of action, priorities were identified to help guide district initiatives and actions for the next five years.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW



Strategic Planning Working Committee

BCS formed a working committee to guide the strategic planning process to garner stakeholder input and contribute to the language and drafting of the plan. The 15-member Working Committee included the following members:

- **Jason Meadows**
  Board President
- **Dr. Mark Sullivan**
  District Superintendent
- **Dr. Spencer Horn**
  Former Chief of Staff
- **Dr. Kecia Chapman**
  Executive Director of Assessment, Accountability, and Research
- **Adrienne Mitchell**
  Former Coordinator of Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement
- **Adrianne Marbury**
  Coordinator of Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement
- **Dr. Pamela Williams**
  Chief Academic and Accountability Officer
- **Constance Burnes**
  Instructional Superintendent for Student Supports Services
- **LaKesha Douglas**
  Parent and Family Engagement Program Specialist
- **Sherrel Stewart**
  Strategy and Communications Officer
- **Donald McCrackin**
  District Operations Officer
- **Dr. Corvetta Clasberry**
  Human Resources Officer
- **Ann Jemison**
  Principal Coach
- **Lula Maria Glover**
  Chief School Financial Officer
- **Dr. Joanne Stephens**
  Technology Officer

Strategic Planning Process

The strategic plan development process was organized into four phases. These phases allowed for a thorough review of existing data and stakeholder feedback as well as opportunities to engage community members. The final version of the strategic plan was refined utilizing feedback from multiple stakeholders and ensured that the language captured the intent of the district.

PHASE I: CONDUCT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

AUG - OCT 2023

- Form and convene Strategic Planning Design Working Committee
- Conduct needs assessment
- Gather quantitative data (examples include: enrollment data, standardized testing data, attendance data, financial data, etc ...)
- Conduct stakeholder focus groups and interviews to better understand the root causes of district challenges
- Collect community and stakeholder input
- Analyze data and share findings from needs assessment

PHASE II: DEVELOP DRAFT PLAN & ENGAGE COMMUNITY

NOV 2023 - FEB 2024

- Develop a preliminary proposed strategic plan draft based on emerging themes and solicit feedback from the community

PHASE III: DEVELOP FINAL PLAN

FEB - MARCH 2024

- Review stakeholder feedback and finalize the 2024-2029 BCS Strategic Plan

PHASE IV: IMPLEMENTATION

APRIL 2024 & BEYOND

- Implement the 2024-2029 BCS Strategic Plan

Phase I: Needs Assessment and Initial Community Engagement

DMGroup conducted a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the district by reviewing data related to student outcomes, staff outcomes, and operations in order to develop a needs assessment for the district. This analysis relied heavily on both qualitative and quantitative data - including interviews, focus groups, and community meetings to elicit feedback from a diverse and broad set of stakeholders. Stakeholders included, but were not limited to, board members, district leaders, principal and teacher advisory groups, local elected officials, non-profit and business leaders, and students. Below is a summary of all stakeholder engagements from this stage of work



These engagements served as the first phase of a two-part community engagement plan. Insights gleaned through these meetings served as preliminary inputs prior to drafting the strategic plan. Through this analysis, the working committee aligned on five themes that served as the foundation for the full strategic plan:

ANALYSIS THEMES

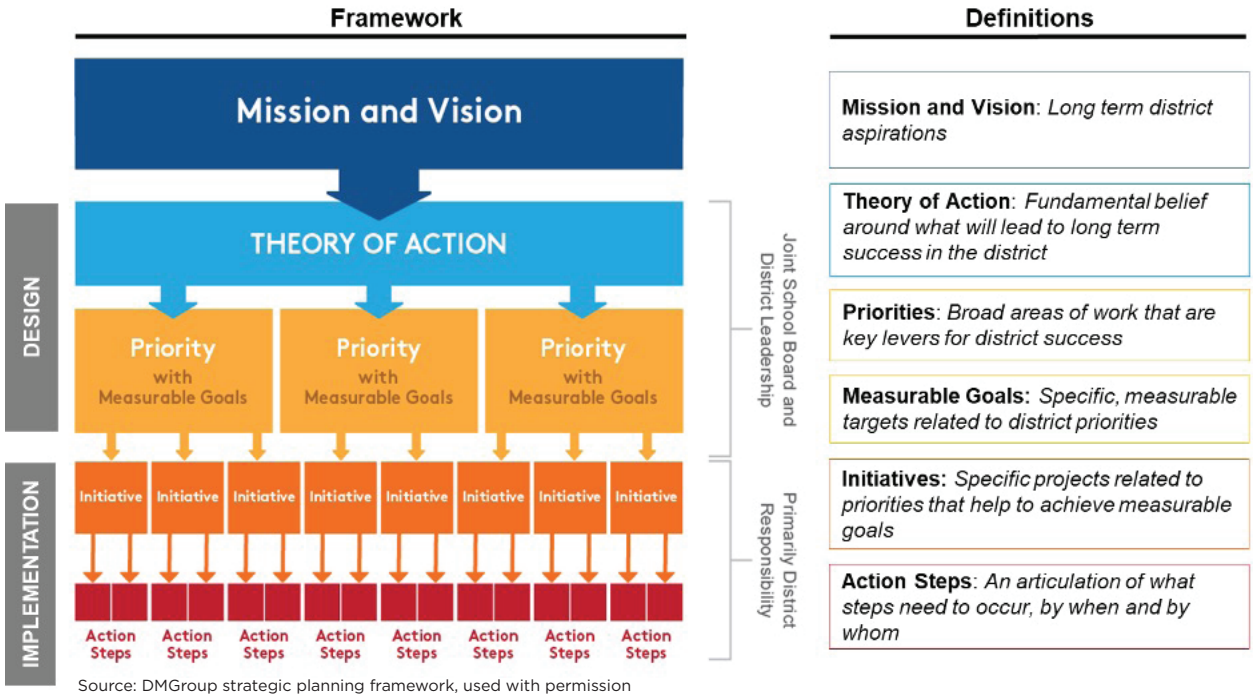
1. Enrollment and Attendance
2. Student Academic Outcomes
3. Student Wellbeing
4. Human Capital
5. Family and Community Engagement



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Phase II: Develop Draft Plan & Engage Community

Based on the findings of the needs assessment, initial language for the strategic plan was drafted. This draft utilized DMGroup's strategic planning framework and focused on the foundational aspects of the strategic plan: mission and vision, theory of action, priority areas, and metrics. The district will explore and draft measurable SMART goals, initiatives, and action steps during the implementation phase of the plan.



Source: DMGroup strategic planning framework, used with permission

Based on the findings of the needs assessment, initial language for the strategic plan was drafted, feedback was elicited from the community through two additional community engagement sessions. Over 150 attendees participated in the sessions, which were facilitated in two languages. Time was also designated for each Board of Education member to share their feedback and ensure that their diverse perspectives and the perspectives of their constituents were incorporated into the strategic plan language.



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Phase III: Develop Final Strategic Plan

After concluding the second round of community engagement meetings, the DMGroup team carefully analyzed the feedback gathered from community stakeholders to identify themes and proposed modifications to the initial strategic plan draft. Subsequently, the BCS working committee integrated this feedback into a revised version of the strategic plan, which underwent workshopping prior to receiving approval from the Board of Education. This detailed, problem-solving process allowed for the inclusion of various stakeholder perspectives and enabled multiple rounds of refinement, ultimately guaranteeing that the final strategic plan accurately addressed the community's feedback.



BIRMINGHAM CITY SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

Mission Statement

The mission of Birmingham City Schools is to guide all students to achieve excellence in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment.

Vision Statement

Birmingham City Schools will be a recognized leader in public education, meeting the needs of a diverse population prepared to succeed in a global society.



Theory of Action

IF DISTRICT LEADERS ...

- **Coherence** - Provide clear and cohesive direction to schools on delivering high-quality instruction from kindergarten to graduation through centralized decision-making with input from school leaders and teachers;
- **Core** - Focus time, effort, and resources on schools providing excellent core academic instruction and social-emotional learning supports over other additional programming;
- **Consistency** - Provide school leaders with autonomy to use specific identified resources (e.g., Title I funds) aligned to school needs.

THEN ...

- The district will enable schools to focus on foundational skills critical for student success;
- Schools will meet the academic and social-emotional needs of their student population and every student will be prepared to succeed after graduation;
- Families will be confident in sending their children to Birmingham City Schools.

Priority Areas



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



STAFF EFFECTIVENESS



STUDENT WELLBEING



CUSTOMER SERVICE



DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY AND COHESION



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

BCS will provide excellent academic, core instruction focused on the following areas:

- Early literacy and numeracy in the early grades in order to lay a strong foundation for all subjects and grades
- Supports for students with disabilities to ensure equitable opportunities
- Supports for English Language Learners to ensure academic proficiency and language acquisition
- Academic outcomes for students in middle school
- Post-secondary readiness to ensure success in college and career

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

- Increase in the percentage of K-2 students on grade level in ELA and math
- Increase in the growth percentile for students with disabilities
- Increase in English language proficiency levels for English Language Learners
- Increase the percentage of 8th grade students scoring proficient in ELA and math
- Increase in the percentage of students who are college and career-ready



STAFF EFFECTIVENESS

BCS will develop and maintain a highly effective teaching staff to support long-term teacher retention of highly qualified, passionate staff and school culture.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

- Increase the percentage of staff retained in the district over three years
- Increase the percentage of staff rated 'effective or highly effective'
- Increase the percentage of hires from recruitment engagements



STUDENT WELLBEING

BCS will focus on student wellbeing to ensure students feel safe, valued, and ready to learn.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

- Increase the percentage of students who report feeling safe at school
- Increase the percentage of students who report feeling a sense of belonging at school
- Decrease the percentage of students who are chronically absent

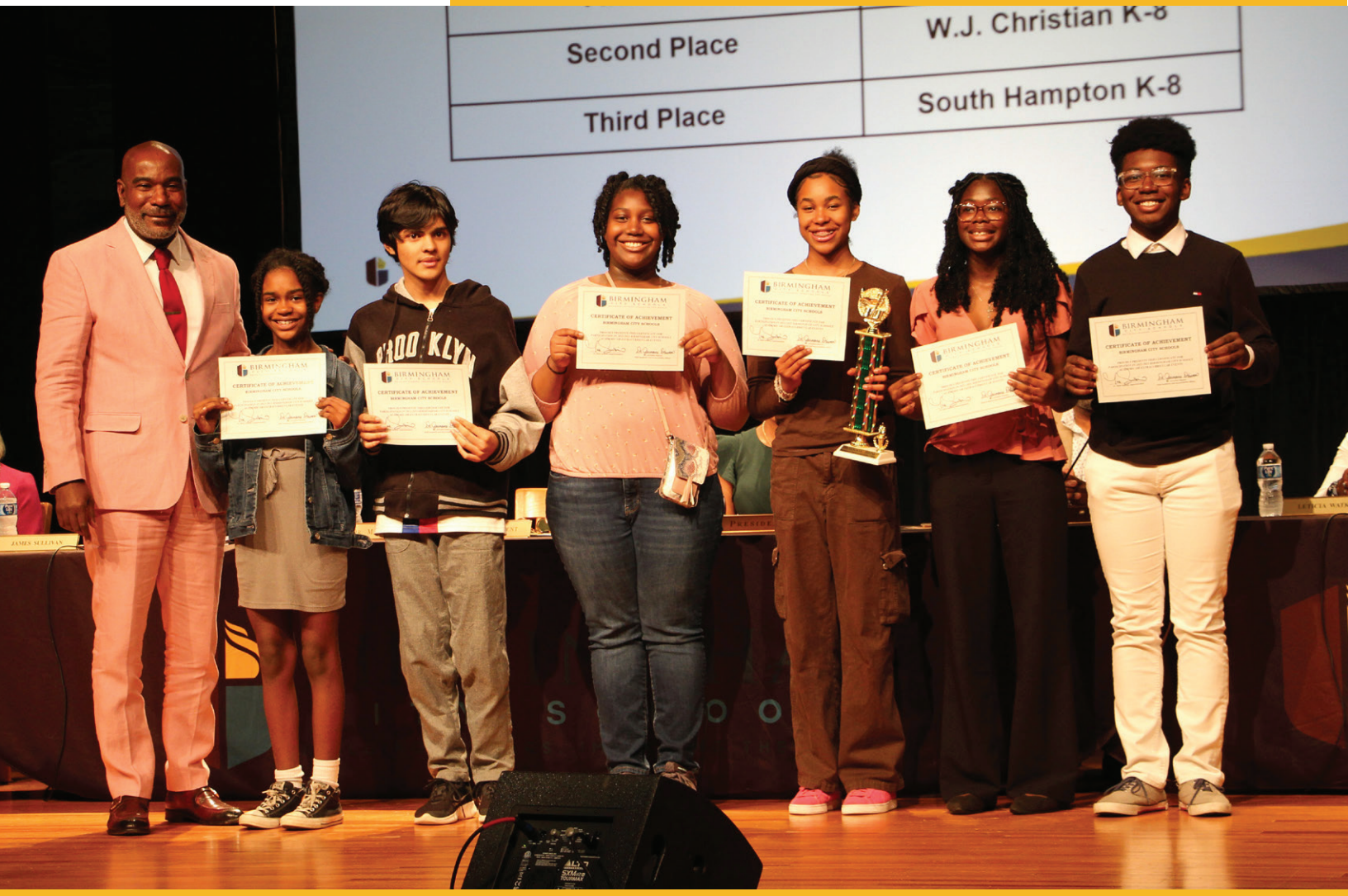


CUSTOMER SERVICE

BCS will simplify and streamline communication methods so that all families, community partners, and other stakeholders will feel supported and have the information they need to meaningfully engage with the district.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

- Increase in the percentage of parents who report feeling engaged with the district
- Increase in the percentage of community partners who report they receive the communications and information they need to meaningfully partner with the district
- Increase the percentage of parents who report feeling fully supported by the district



DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY AND COHESION

BCS will increase accountability by developing and refining central office structures to effectively manage, monitor, and support all district departments.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

- Increase effectiveness of district communication as reported by principals and staff members
- Increase the percentage of principals scoring highly effective on evaluation tool



NEXT STEPS

Implementation

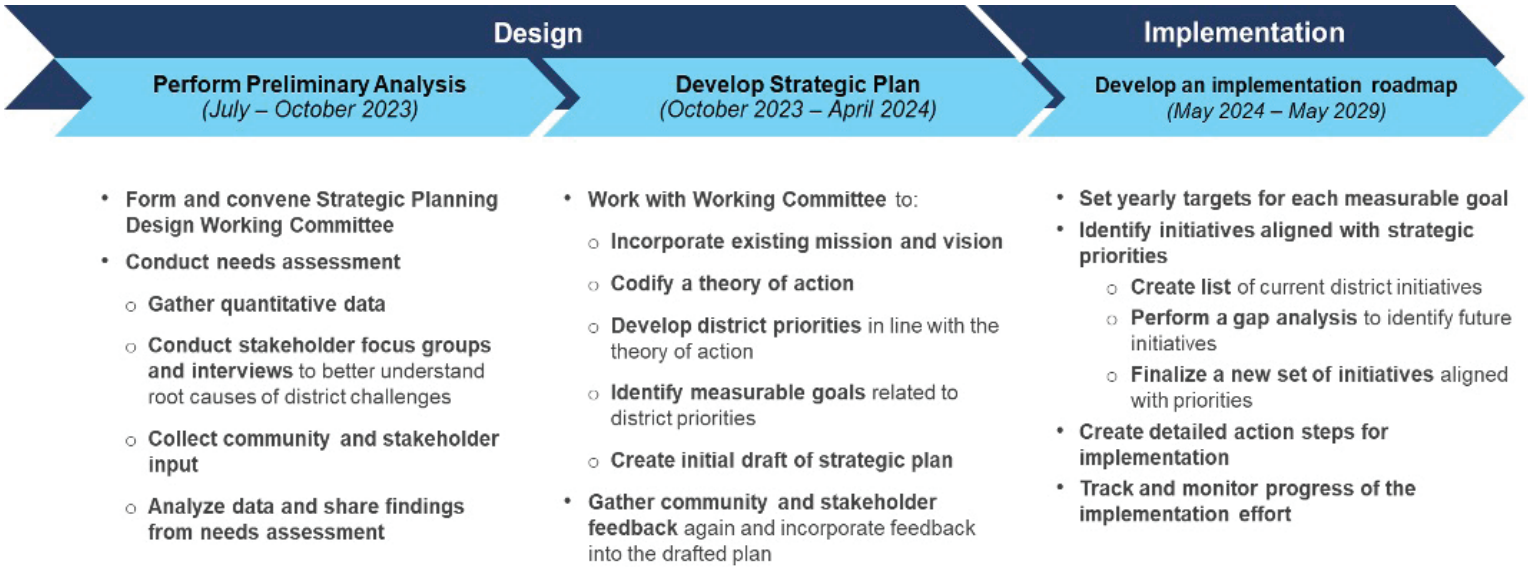
Once the Birmingham Board of Education ratifies the strategic plan, attention will turn towards its implementation. This phase will involve establishing precise data benchmarks and milestones for every measurable goal, while also developing initiatives and action steps aligned with each priority area.

The responsibility for implementation lies primarily with the school district, supported by crucial guidance and oversight from the Board of Education to ensure the strategy's realization. Through this collaborative effort, a cohesive and action-driven strategy will emerge, yielding significant outcomes for students, staff, and the broader community.


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HUFFMAN
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APPENDIX

Full Strategic Planning Process



Detailed Summary of the Needs Assessment Analysis

DMGroup conducted a full qualitative and quantitative study of district needs throughout the late summer and fall of 2023. The purpose of this analysis was to surface the most pressing needs of the district to inform the theory of action and priorities written in the strategic plan. Below is a detailed view of the various needs that emerged through this analysis.

Overall District State

- Extensive Numbers of Initiatives – Staff expressed that, in part due to ESSER funding, the district has taken on an increased number of initiatives and partnerships over the last few years, causing challenges in prioritization and clarity.
- Limited Direction and Communication – Staff explained that in taking on these initiatives, the district has not communicated the purpose, logistics, and ways to ensure fidelity to school leaders, families, and other stakeholders. This has resulted in confusion amongst district staff and stakeholders about what is important and how to implement initiatives consistently.
- Lack of Cohesion Amongst Schools and Leaders – Staff expressed that there is often a lack of strong guidance and communication resulting in school leaders operating independently. This has led to a lack of consistency, fidelity, and effectiveness of these initiatives.



APPENDIX

Enrollment

- Enrollment has continued to decline at a faster rate than the city's population - Birmingham City has seen a 7% population decline, while the school district has seen an 11% decline. This amounts to over 3,000 students who are no longer attending Birmingham City Schools.

- For students who are attending Birmingham City Schools, chronic absenteeism remains a challenge - 29% of students were chronically absent in 2022, amounting to over 6,000 students who are not attending school regularly.

Student Academic Outcomes

- Despite strong financial health and considerable financial investments, Birmingham City Schools continues to see lower student achievement than surrounding districts, despite outspending those same districts.

- While student growth in grades 3-8 has outpaced that of the state, overall student achievement, as evidenced by ACAP scores, continues to lag far behind that of the state of Alabama.

- During both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years the majority of students in K-2 ended the school year below grade level in math and reading according to iReady performance measures.

- Students with disabilities and multilingual students experience significant achievement gaps in both math and reading as compared to their peers without disabilities and monolingual peers.
    - Notably, both of these student groups have seen continued population growth in the district during the last six years.

Student Wellbeing

- On district-administered surveys, less than half of high school students responded positively to questions related to how they felt at school.

- While the district has some amount of student surveys, the survey questions do not expansively target understandings around students' social-emotional well-being. This lack of data presents a challenge to understanding the state of students' social-emotional wellbeing. However, qualitative data suggests that students are struggling socially and emotionally.

APPENDIX



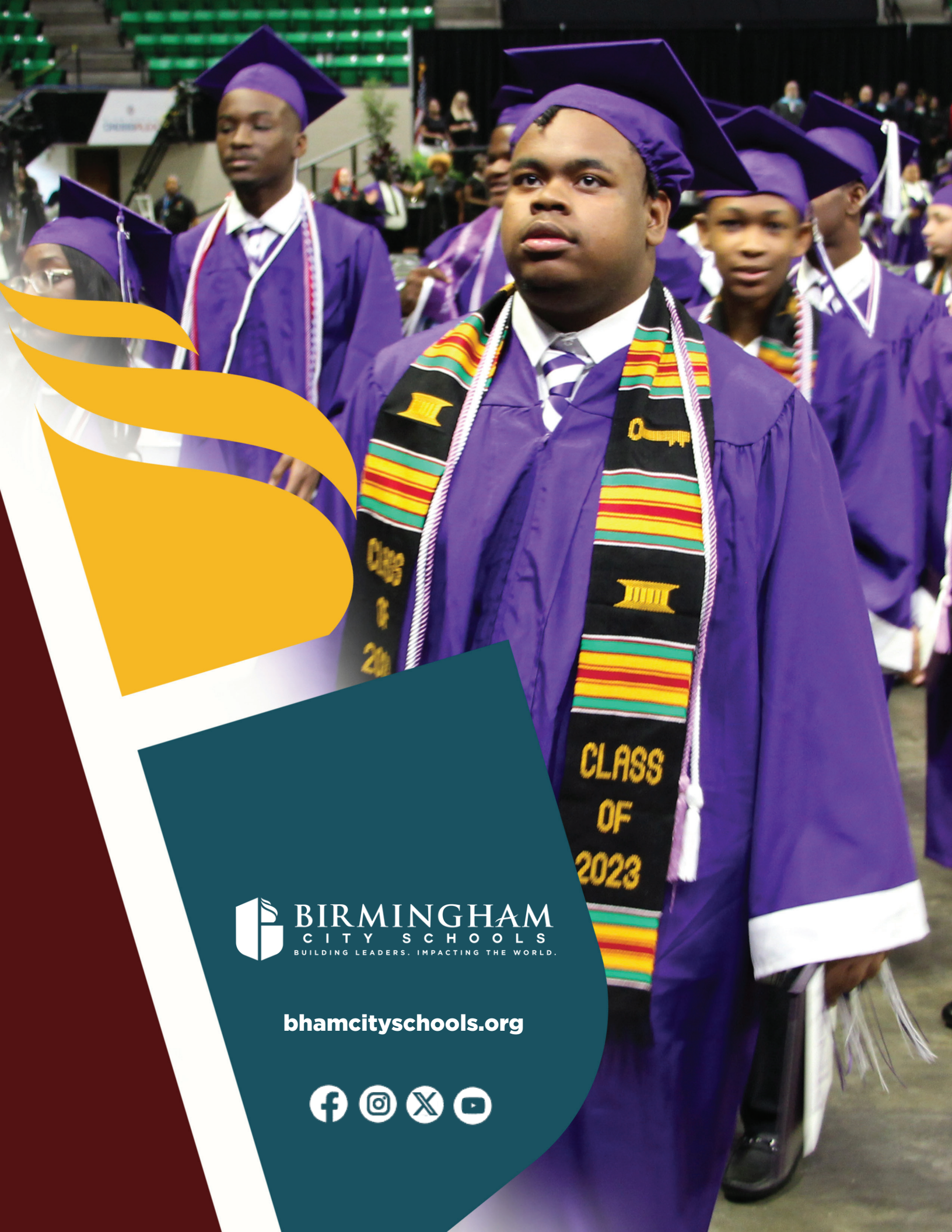
Human Capital

- Teacher retention saw a decline before the COVID-19 pandemic but has experienced an even more significant decrease since 2021.

- One out of every five teachers left the district last year. Additionally, the data lacks disaggregated data on teacher retention which would help to paint a stronger picture and allow for a deeper analysis of teacher retention.

Family and Community Engagement

- Stakeholders stated that difficulties arise in receiving information and engaging with the district due to issues with the district website, various communication tools, and a lack of reliable responses from the district.
  - **Website Improvement** – On the community survey and in focus groups, stakeholders expressed that navigating the district website is not user-friendly and does not contain crucial, up-to-date information.
  - **Communication Modes and Tools** – On the survey and in community meetings, stakeholders discussed that they receive critical information from too many different channels and tools, making it confusing to know how best to get the information they need.
  - **Consistent Responses** – On the survey and in focus groups, many stakeholders expressed that reliably getting a response from the district – whether by phone, email, or other communication, is a challenge.
- Additionally, families and community partners expressed that communication from the district was not proactive, effective, or consistent enough.



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