



CH-UH Strategic Plan 2026



CLEVELAND
UNIVERSITY **HEIGHTS**
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

DEAR CH-UH COMMUNITY

As our landmark five-year Strategic Plan neared its end, CH-UH embarked on a process to update the guide that had come to define our collective work as a school district. Not far into the year, modern education met perhaps its biggest challenge yet in the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic paused this endeavor but could not stop it. The District's way forward is illustrated in our updated Strategic Plan, and I am proud to share it with you.

The Five Goals at the heart of the plan have new objectives fit for 2026. Our refined Core Values of Excellence, Equity, Integrity, Trust and Respect remind us of what we must see in ourselves and one another. And as you'll see in the following pages, we've crafted an exciting new District Vision for the Heights students of today and tomorrow. Our tried and true District Mission remains the same: **Our schools provide a challenging and engaging education to prepare all of our students to become responsible citizens and succeed in college and career.**

Our work goes far beyond giving a graduate a diploma and best wishes. Postsecondary achievement is the ultimate goal, the standard by which we measure ourselves as educators. Whatever their dreams and hopes are for the future, it is our intention that each of our students graduates with an actionable plan, the grit required to work hard and overcome setbacks, and the desire to improve the world around them.

Authentic engagement with all of our stakeholders is embedded into our plan. Our school system cannot succeed without the support of our community. I want to thank you for believing in our vision, our goals, and above all, our students.

Elizabeth Kirby
Superintendent





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OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In 2019, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District launched a strategic planning refresh process designed to chart a course for the next five years and define the expectations and aspirations that will drive the District over that time. The groundbreaking plan that was developed in 2015 served as the foundation.

After extensive research, the Board of Education hired a widely-respected strategic planning consultant firm based in Cleveland to guide them through this process: Janus Small Associates.

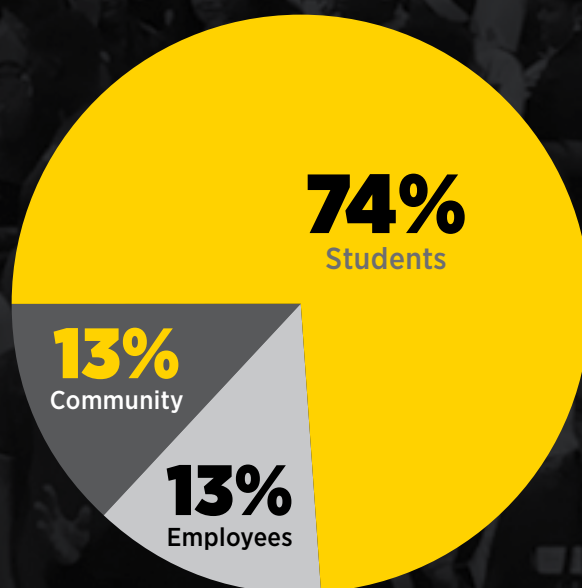
A Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) was formed in January 2020 to conduct the process. This 32-member group included a diverse cross-section of parents, students, community advocates, government leaders and CH-UH District staff. Over the course of 2020, the SPC conducted a series of facilitated discussions, shared an online public survey with the community, and held individual interviews in order to get a clear idea of all stakeholders' expectations. Five work groups were formed: Creating Our Narrative, Equity Activating, Measures That Matter, Mission/Vision/Values, and Student Survey Development.

WHO WE HEARD FROM

A total of 2,380 stakeholders shared their views, most (97%) via an online survey due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students make up the largest portion, followed by CH-UH employees. Community members, for this summary, includes parents and alumni.

TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS	#	%
Survey	2,317	97%
Students	1,765	74%
CHUH Employees	261	11%
Community	291	12%
Facilitated Discussions	63	3.0%
CH-UH Employees	59	2.5%
Community	4	0.5%
TOTAL	2,380	100%

The District also solicited feedback from the 10 District Task Forces (Advocacy, College and Career Services, Discipline, Early Childhood, Equity, Family Engagement, Gifted, Grading, Lay Facilities, and Lay Finance).



This input provided crucial insights into the preferences and hopes of the community. With this input, the original five goals were carefully updated, each with new and refined objectives, strategies and action items needed for its achievement.

KEY STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 TARGETS

100%

of 3rd graders read at or above their identified grade level

The ability to read at or above grade level is an important milestone in a student's educational journey. Research indicates that students who are reading at grade level by the end of third grade have higher graduation rates than students who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade (Reading by Third Grade - The Annie E. Casey Foundation report). According to the Third Grade Reading Level Predictive of Later Life Outcomes - Chapin Hall, 3rd grade reading level correlates with 8th grade reading achievement and college enrollment.

80%

of students will show proficiency on state assessments

The Ohio Department of Education administers assessments to public schools in order to measure student progress towards meeting state standards. Tests are given in the subject areas of English Language Arts and Math in grades 3-8 and Science in grades 5 and 8. In high school, students take end of course assessments in English Language Arts II, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, American History, and American Government. Success on standardized tests are a key factor indicating high school academic achievement and a foundation for college readiness.

90%

of 9th grade students will have course success in Algebra

Research shows that the passage of 9th grade algebra is a leading indicator for success in both high school and college and that success in algebra is a gatekeeper to higher-level mathematics with significant implications for equity & access (Cogan, Schmidt, & Wiley, 2001; Moses & Cobb, 2001). Further, success in 9th grade is one of the cornerstones towards postsecondary success according to Schoolhouse Partners and research from Johns Hopkins University.

95%

of students will graduate in 4 years

High school graduation is the central outcome for students experiencing success in our District. A high school diploma correlates to multiple positive outcomes for students. Graduates are more likely to be employed, earn a significantly higher income and have better health and life expectancy outcomes.

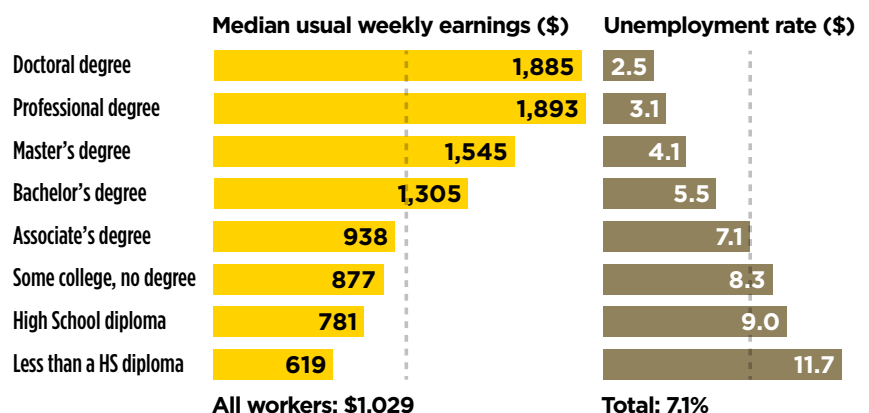
90%

of students will pursue college or a viable career pathway

While we seek to ensure all of our students graduate, we also want to make sure that each student has a concrete postsecondary plan to attend college or pursue a high wage career pathway. Research shows that all students will need postsecondary training to achieve success after high school and that there is a correlation between levels of education and life outcomes. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics indicate that the employment rate for individuals who complete at minimum a postsecondary certificate program are 15% higher than those who do not engage in postsecondary education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Further, education continues to correlate with overall well-being and lower disease mortality (Grossman and Kaestler, 1997). The chart below indicates the impact of education on lifetime earnings.

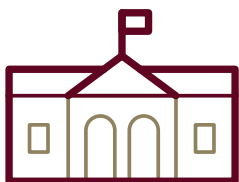
EDUCATION PAYS

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2020



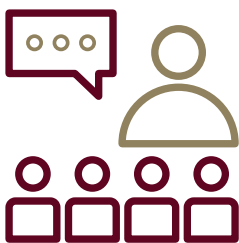
MEASURING OUR IMPACT

KPI stands for Key Performance Indicator. These KPIs provide us with a way to track the progress we are making toward our goals. The 2026 Strategic Plan KPIs fall into three main categories.



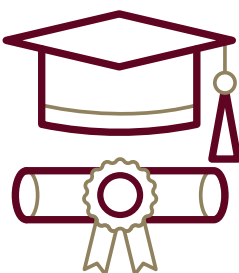
Culture and Climate

In order for students to achieve their academic goals, they must learn in an environment that is safe, welcoming and attends to their needs. Consistent school attendance is connected to academic success, and positive behaviors contribute to a safe learning environment. Participation in extracurricular activities provides students the ability to discover, pursue and cultivate their passion while building lasting bonds with their peers. We monitor our KPIs in this area with a focus on equity in order to support all of our students.



Academics

Measuring and monitoring student success on assessments and through grades is central to ensuring that we are on track to meet our academic goals for students. Students in grades Pre-K through 12 are regularly assessed and the results of those assessments are used to make needed adjustments to instruction. These results are reviewed regularly by building teams with an eye on progress and the performance of students in our priority groups, a central focus of our equity policy.



Postsecondary Readiness

Our ultimate measure of success is that each student graduates with a viable and specific postsecondary plan, whether that is higher education or a career path that will allow them to realize the vision they have for themselves and their future. The District uses the Postsecondary Planning System, a tool that allows counselors and social workers to identify students' needs across academic, mental health, physical health, and social-emotional domains and link them to programs and services that will help meet these needs, thereby setting them up for success beyond Heights.

MISSION

Our schools provide a challenging and engaging education to prepare all our students to become responsible citizens and succeed in college and career.

VISION

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Schools educate students by embracing diversity, ensuring equitable experiences and fostering outstanding teaching and learning to develop academically prepared, critical thinkers who contribute positively and compete successfully in the world.

CORE VALUES

Excellence
Equity
Integrity
Trust
Respect



THE THREE THEMES

Three overarching themes emerged when collecting data for the Strategic Plan Refresh: Measures That Matter, Equity, and Telling Our Own Story. **Measures that Matter** go beyond test scores and KPIs; activities such as community service, participation in the arts, music, and sports, and an ongoing quest for learning come to mind when we imagine a Heights graduate who is ready to become a responsible, caring and successful citizen. CH-UH is proud to provide these and many more opportunities for students to find their interests and how they can impact the world.

Equity is the lens through which we see our work. The vision of the Equity Task Force is that “CH-UH is a responsive, reflective, and honest community which embraces cultural differences to prepare all students for global success. Race must cease to be a predictor of student achievement.” Our Equity Policy solidifies our dedication to providing the best possible education for all students.

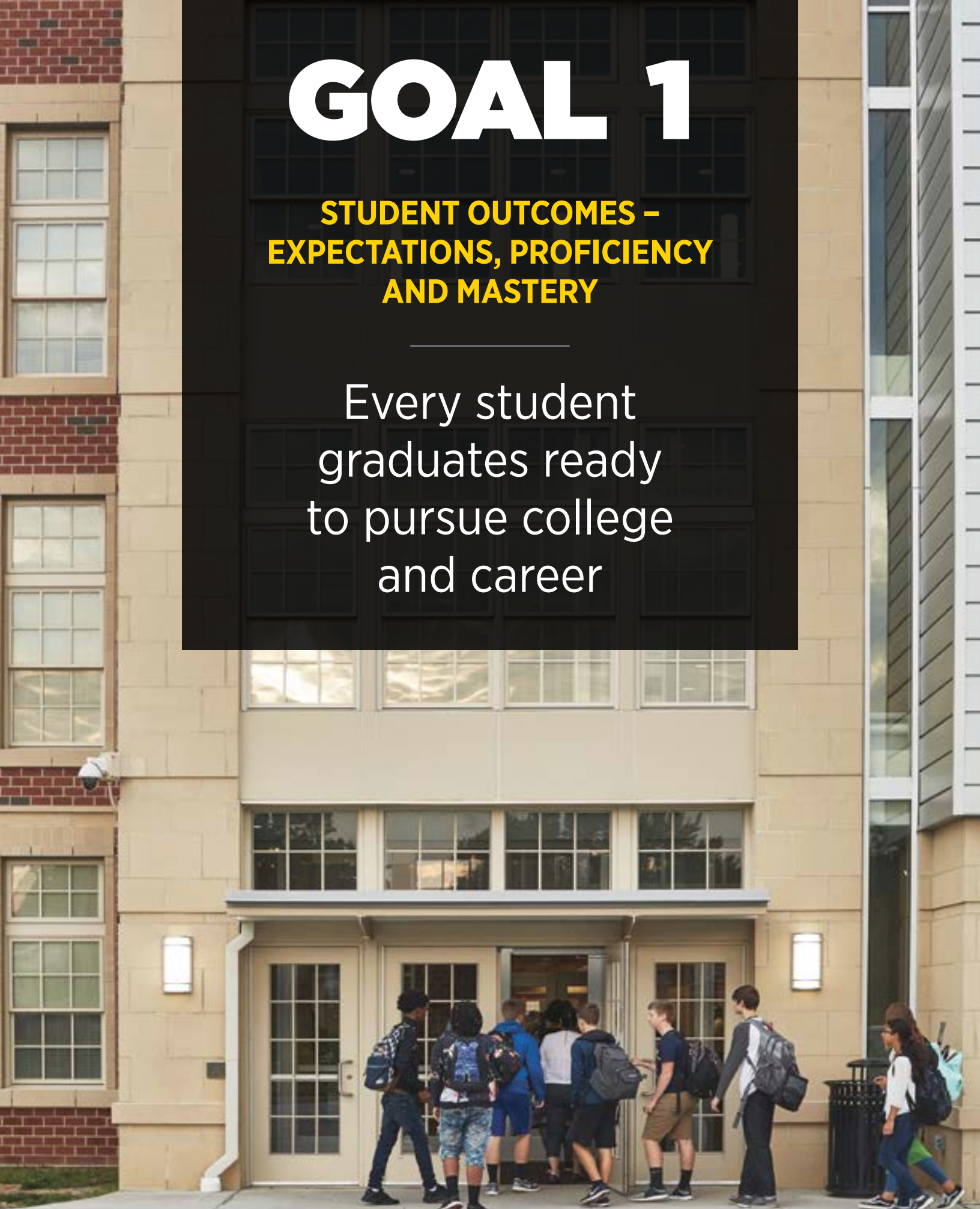
The CH-UH community cares deeply about its schools and its children. Families, students, staff and residents want to know about the wonderful things happening within and beyond the four walls of the classroom. We are committed to **Telling Our Own Story** with fidelity, boosting not only the knowledge of our district but also the pride of Tiger Nation.



GOAL 1

STUDENT OUTCOMES – EXPECTATIONS, PROFICIENCY AND MASTERY

Every student
graduates ready
to pursue college
and career



OBJECTIVE #1

At least 95% of District students will graduate in 4 years by meeting high school credit requirements and demonstrating their competency for postsecondary success.

STRATEGY A: Challenge and support each student by identifying the barriers that are prohibiting students from graduating on time.

STRATEGY B: Offer academic and social-emotional support at key transition grades in order to increase the percentage of students who successfully matriculate to the next grade level.

STRATEGY C: Develop and provide attendance support for PreK-12 students to encourage increased attendance.

STRATEGY D: Ensure that career and technical education (CTE) curriculum, instruction assessments and interventions are aligned to increase the percentage of students attaining industry certifications.

STRATEGY E: Align postsecondary planning system elements to district initiatives and performance indicators.

OBJECTIVE #2

Every teacher will use evidence-based instructional strategies and materials so that students master grade-level learning expectations.

STRATEGY A: Ensure that teachers have the requisite knowledge of the curriculum and instructional best practices by providing regular opportunities for teachers to improve their practice.

STRATEGY B: Increase opportunities for teacher collaboration.

STRATEGY C: Clarify instructional expectations for all grade-levels and subject areas.

STRATEGY D: Use technology resources, devices, and tools to support personalized student learning.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2026

- 4-year graduation rate of 95%
- 10% increase in average SAT & ACT scores
- 5% annual increase in college enrollment
- 15% annual increase in scholarship acquisition
- 80% of students score at or above the national norm on the Ohio State Tests
- 100% Algebra I passage rate
- 100% English I passage rate
- 5% annual increase in scores of Proficient or Advanced in the CTE WebXams

OBJECTIVE #3

Teachers regularly review and analyze student performance and use data to target instruction and improve student outcomes.

STRATEGY A: Develop an assessment and a data review cycle for all grade-levels and subject areas.

STRATEGY B: Develop an MTSS system to provide support and early intervention for students in tier 2 and 3.



GOAL 2

EDUCATIONAL APPROACH – EQUITY, EMPOWERMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES

Provide an excellent
education to each
student in every District
school & classroom



OBJECTIVE #1

Close achievement gaps between student economic, racial and disability status.

STRATEGY A: Review disaggregated student data regularly to identify opportunities for targeted support of student subgroups.

STRATEGY B: Ensure that all staff members believe that all students can achieve at high levels and exhibit responsibility for supporting students to reach the high expectations set for them.

STRATEGY C: Ensure that district practices and procedures reflect district equity policy and are consistently implemented district-wide.

STRATEGY D: Create structures and supports for students with disabilities to be able to be served in their grade-level general education classroom setting.



OBJECTIVE #2

Provide quality early childhood education opportunities to all children so that they have a strong early foundation.

STRATEGY A: Investigate the opportunity to expand and enhance early childhood education enrollment by partnering with community stakeholders.

STRATEGY B: Partner with local early childhood education providers to ensure that programs meet rigorous state early learning requirements.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2026

- 97% daily student attendance
- 5% annual increase in students participating in extracurricular activities
- 100% of indicators are met on the special education report card
- 80% of students score at or above the national norm on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests
- 100% of preschools receive a 5-star rating





GOAL 3

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT,
PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION**

Welcome family and community
members as equal partners in
student learning

OBJECTIVE #1

Foster staff-family positive interactions that support meaningful engagement.

STRATEGY A: Create opportunities for staff and family members to build relationships.

STRATEGY B: Establish and expand community partnerships to support students' postsecondary readiness.

OBJECTIVE #2

Improve communication between families, students, staff, and community partners.

STRATEGY A: Determine effective communication strategies for two-way communication with families and community partners.

STRATEGY B: Engage family members in a shared decision-making process to improve student outcomes.

OBJECTIVE #3

Create Community Learning Centers that leverage community assets.

STRATEGY A: Identify where Community Learning Centers would be most beneficial to students.

STRATEGY B: Develop and monitor common operating standards to ensure effectiveness across Community Learning Centers.

OBJECTIVE #4

Improve public perception of CH-UH Schools among stakeholders.

STRATEGY A: Promote positive stories about the exciting things that are happening in the district, including stories that incorporate student voices about their successes.

STRATEGY B: Implement new approaches to student recruitment.

STRATEGY C: Establish a clear plan for addressing student retention issues.

OBJECTIVE #5

Deepen understanding of the District's equity initiatives among internal and external stakeholders.

STRATEGY A: Provide comprehensive online resources with information and news regarding equity in the District.

STRATEGY B: Provide continuing professional development regarding equity for staff and community partners.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2026

- 90% of stakeholders are satisfied with district/school communication
- 70% of family members indicate that they know their child(ren) school's goals and the role they can play in helping to achieve them
- 90% parent engagement (by household) on Infinite Campus
- 100% of elementary schools have at least one active Kindernet representative
- 100% of schools support student achievement by engaging their parent groups and parent leaders
- 100% of schools have community partnerships that support student goals

GOAL 4

VALUED PROFESSIONALS AND A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

Attract and retain
highly-qualified
and dedicated staff
members who have
experience working with
diverse communities



OBJECTIVE #1

Increase and promote the hiring of staff members who represent the cultural makeup of the CH-UH student body.

STRATEGY A: Expand Grow Your Own (GYO) program.

STRATEGY B: Establish use of equitable hiring practices.

STRATEGY C: Engage current staff members who represent the cultural makeup of the CH-UH student body to recruit and select new staff members.

STRATEGY D: Explore partnership opportunities with organizations who promote diverse candidate pipelines.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2026

- 5% annual increase in certified staff diversity
- 90% retention of all staff yearly
- 100% of GYO participants earn their certification
- 100% of schools maintain full compliance with state requirements around safety in alignment with Ohio Revised Code

OBJECTIVE #2

Develop and support staff members to promote their professional growth in student-centered learning and increase opportunities for staff collaboration.

STRATEGY A: Create a robust district-wide professional development plan that is differentiated for subgroups of staff members.

STRATEGY B: Improve staff knowledge about equity and culturally relevant educational practices.

STRATEGY C: Establish employee resource groups that encourage staff collegiality and advance equity.



OBJECTIVE #3

Provide a safe and nurturing environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.

STRATEGY A: Create a plan to address existing safety concerns.

STRATEGY B: Identify opportunities for new preventive security measures.

STRATEGY C: Build relationships between security staff members, students, families and community members that fosters trust, mutual respect and cooperation.





GOAL 5

OPERATIONAL RESOURCES – FINANCES, TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES

Ensure that the District has the necessary finances and infrastructure to meet its student outcomes goals

OBJECTIVE #1

All school facilities support educational objectives by providing equitable, safe, and comfortable environments.

STRATEGY A: Adhere to a five-year Permanent Improvement Plan.

STRATEGY B: Provide the necessary resources to repair and maintain the District's facilities and grounds.

STRATEGY C: Develop a system to review funding allocations and repairs across the District using an equity lens.

OBJECTIVE #2

Use infrastructure and technology to support instruction and efficient District operations.

STRATEGY A: Re-evaluate five-year technology hardware plan so that all technology is current and functioning at its optimal level.

STRATEGY B: Develop an actionable, practical and reliable disaster recovery plan.

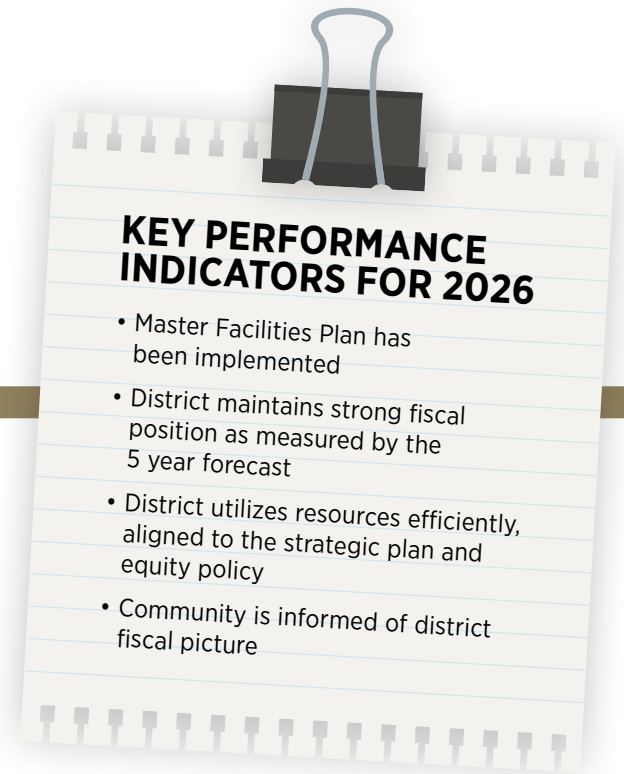
STRATEGY C: Identify and mitigate potential cyber security risks by building on the strengths of the District's existing technological infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE #3

Inform and educate internal and external stakeholders about the use of state funding and other District funds.

STRATEGY A: Develop a strategic communications plan about key District financial matters.

STRATEGY B: Offer opportunities for diverse stakeholder groups to provide feedback about specific financial matters that connect to the District's strategic priorities.



CH-UH STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH COMMITTEE

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Director of Athletics

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Taylor Evans

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Pam Fine

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Chief Financial Officer / Treasurer

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Coordinator of Alternative Education

Beverly Wright

CH-UH Board of Education Member

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Progress toward the 2026 goals will be assessed through Central Office Progress Meetings, Principal Meetings, District Leadership Team Meetings, and shared through updates to the Board of Education, an annual report to the community, and on CHUH.org.

ABOUT THE CH-UH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

For more than 100 years, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District has been one of the most storied and successful school districts in Northeast Ohio.

We serve a vibrant, diverse community, made up of Cleveland Heights, University Heights, and a section of South Euclid. We educate approximately 5,000 students each year, from Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade, in seven elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, a career and technical education consortium, an alternative options school, and three preschools.

The CH-UH School District has long been known for providing exceptional academic programs that help prepare students of diverse abilities and backgrounds for lifelong success. We offer esteemed extracurricular activities at every grade level, including our world-renowned vocal and instrumental music programs, in addition to accomplished athletic teams.





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