



# DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS

## DARE 2023

*REIMAGINING THE FUTURE  
OF DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS*

DARE  
COUNTY  
SCHOOLS

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# DARE 2023 | REIMAGINING THE FUTURE OF DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS

This document was created by the collaboration of many stakeholder groups through a comprehensive visioning process.

## DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP TEAM



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Almost fifty years ago, millions of spectators gathered and even millions more watched on television as the thirty-story-high Apollo 11 spaceship prepared for launch from Kennedy Space Center. The spaceship was essentially a modified World War II missile that contained over 6 million parts. Technology that was once used for warfare had now become a unifying symbol of the possibilities of scientific exploration in space. After hearing the countdown on July 16, 1969, at 9:32 a.m., Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Mike Collins lifted into the skies to embark on the greatest journey in human history -- they were traveling to the moon.

The Apollo story is compelling and it reminds us that great things are possible when we work together. It would never have happened had the nation not united in the common cause that Americans would be the first explorers to walk on the moon. Although NASA experienced setbacks and failures along the way, the scientists and astronauts remained grounded in the liberating optimism that comes from working towards the creation of a possible future. By learning from the mistakes of the past, they were able to rid themselves of the probable and obtain the possible. So goes the strategic plan for Dare County Schools.

Our strategic plan represents what is possible for our schools and our community. Imagine this: What if every student in Dare County Schools graduated from high school with the skills they needed to live a choice-driven life? What if our students were given the tools they needed to take charge of their own learning? And, what if every student was nurtured to become caring and compassionate global citizens? Imagine the possibilities of this future. We can make this shared vision a reality.

In writing this plan, the Dare County Schools senior leadership team met with staff, parents, and students to gain their insights on how we can improve our schools. In every session, they asked a simple question: "What are your hopes and dreams for our students?" With every answer, they heard passionate and thought-provoking responses. It is clear that our parents, educators, and community members care deeply about the success of our schools. Your ideas have become the foundation of our new strategic plan.

Now that our plan has been written, it becomes our responsibility to move from design to action. We must work diligently to ensure that our ideas are translated into reality. Our quest is to redefine what is possible in education. To do this, we must work together and embrace our shared vision. And most importantly, we must agree that the success of our children is more important than anything else. After all, our future depends on it.



# WHO WE ARE



TOTAL STUDENTS:  
**5,361**



TOTAL STAFF:  
**987**

**95%**

GRADUATE AT HIGHER  
RATES THAN OTHER  
DISTRICTS IN NC

**SAT**

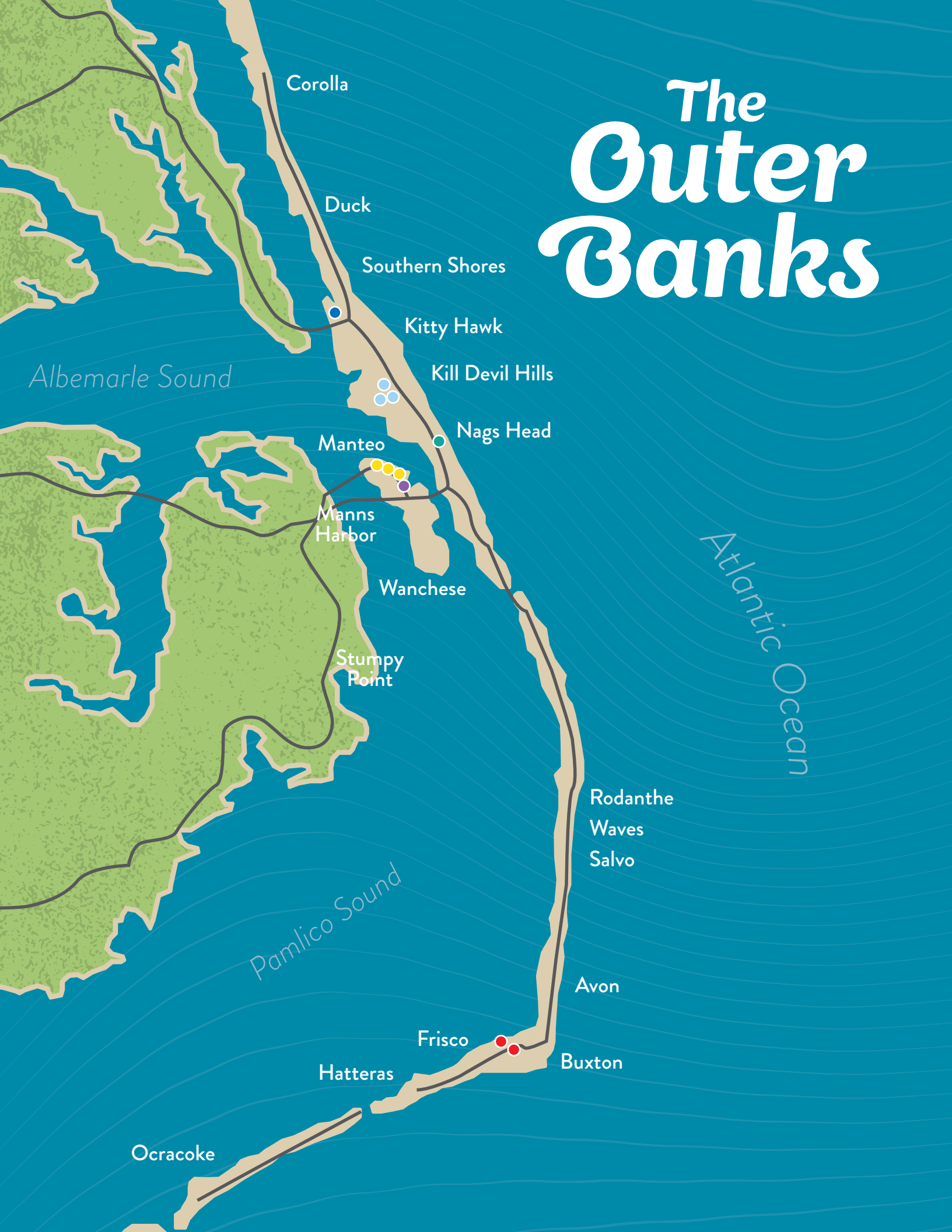
NATIONALLY RANKED  
FOR HIGH SAT SCORES  
& COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE



## DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- 75% WHITE
- 17% HISPANIC
- 5% TWO OR MORE RACES
- 2% BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 1% ASIAN, AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE,  
NATIVE HAWAIIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER

# The Outer Banks



Corolla

Duck

Southern Shores

Kitty Hawk

Kill Devil Hills

Albemarle Sound

Nags Head

Manteo

Manns  
Harbor

Wanchese

Stumpy  
Point

Atlantic Ocean

Rodanthe  
Waves  
Salvo

Avon

Frisco

Hatteras

Buxton

Ocracoke

Pamlico Sound

# OUR SCHOOLS



## Kitty Hawk Elementary School

At Kitty Hawk Elementary School we live by our school motto, "By Reaching High, We Fly." Kitty Hawk Elementary School provides a high quality education for all students. Our school was also recognized in 2019 by the United States Department of Education as an Exemplary High Performing Blue Ribbon School.

**Grades: K - 5 • Students: 445**



## First Flight Elementary School

First Flight Elementary School, nestled within walking distance of the Wright Brothers Memorial, is a small community-oriented school. We serve students that live in Colington and the surrounding neighborhoods. Our school focuses on educating and growing the whole child.

**Grades: Pre-K - 5 • Students: 355**



## First Flight Middle School

First Flight Middle School is located in Kill Devil Hills and is largest middle school in Dare County. Our school embraces rich traditions and takes pride in creating a dynamic school climate. Our school is always looking for ways to challenge all learners to chase their hopes and dreams.

**Grades: 6-8 • Students: 685**



## First Flight High School

First Flight High School is located in Kill Devil Hills and is the largest high school in Dare County. The school currently serves students who live from Duck to Northern Nags Head. We strive to provide all students with a well-rounded education through teamwork and love for children.

**Grades: 9-12 • Students: 826**



## Nags Head Elementary School

Nags Head Elementary School is the home of the Wave Riders. We embody the philosophy, "If it is to be, it is up to me." Working together, our goal is for all students to achieve their maximum academic potential. We are committed to "Riding the Wave of Success" for every student at NHES!

**Grades: Pre-K - 5 • Students: 593**



## Dare Learning Academy

The Dare Learning Academy is located on the beautiful College of the Albemarle-Dare Campus and serves students from all over the county. We encourage our students to take ownership of their learning and behavior. We provide positive supports and interventions so that they are successful in school and life.

**Grades: 9-12 • Students: 31**



## Manteo Elementary School

At Manteo Elementary School, we provide a safe, caring, and nurturing environment for our students to grow and expand their potential. We are a community school grounded in rich local history. We hold high expectations for all students by leveraging the diversity of our community as we learn from the experiences of others.

**Grades: Pre-K - 5 • Students: 696**



## Manteo Middle School:

Manteo Middle School is located on historic Roanoke Island. Nestled in a walking community, our school offers a welcoming atmosphere. Our staff takes pride in their relationship building and investment in innovative, personalized learning activities. We capitalize on the traditions of our past while involving all stakeholders to realize the dreams of tomorrow.

**Grades: 6-8 • Students: 455**



## Manteo High School

Manteo High School is located in Manteo on Roanoke Island. In addition to students from Manteo, those from Nags Head, Wanchese, Manns Harbor, Stumpy Point, and East Lake attend Manteo High School. Manteo is a comprehensive, high school serving our diverse community. Our sporting events, concerts, and plays are an integral part of the Manteo community.

**Grades: 9-12 • Students: 514**



## Cape Hatteras Elementary School

Cape Hatteras Elementary School is located in scenic Buxton on Hatteras Island. Students from Oregon Inlet to Cape Hatteras attend CHES. Our learning community understands that every child is unique and encourages students to reach their highest potential by promoting independence and a love of learning.

**Grades: Pre-K - 5 • Students: 320**



## Cape Hatteras Secondary School

Cape Hatteras Secondary School of Coastal Studies, located in Buxton, serves all students grades 6-12 on Hatteras Island. We provide a safe and caring learning environment that nurtures personal growth, respect for diversity, and empathy. We work closely with our community, parents, and students to provide quality instruction.

**Grades: 6-12 • Students: 328**

# IMAGINE A POSSIBLE FUTURE





What if every student who attended Dare County Schools graduated from high school on time and prepared to pursue their hopes and dreams? What if every teacher was motivated to utilize the newest technology to meet the needs of their students? What if our classrooms looked like imagination stations more so than rows of desks? What if each day our students took advantage of their learning and used it to positively impact our community? All of these things are happening in Dare County Schools. However, they are not happening every day in every classroom. But, what if we could create a possible future where every child had this experience every day? Imagine the positive impact this future would bring to our community, our state, and even our nation. It is possible.

Today, you can visit any school in Dare County and find countless educators, students, and parents who are creating this possible future. These stakeholders are committed to

the cause and are willing to make great sacrifices to make this future become a reality for our community. Our strategic plan is written with these leaders in mind. We know that our schools are capable of achieving more.

Our young people have bold visions for their future. We know this because we have asked them. We have students who want to become public servants and influence the political climate. Other students want to save lives through science and technology in the healthcare industry. Students in our community also want to spend their lives building up our common humanity through the creation of nonprofits and philanthropy. These testimonials give us hope that our future is bright.

What follows are our district priorities, which focus on how to achieve this possible future.



## DARE COUNTY SCHOOLS GRADUATE PROFILE

Our graduate profile outlines the skills and traits we aim for our students to have mastered by graduation.

### OUR GRADUATES ARE:

- Effective Communicators
- Innovative Problem Solvers
- Global Thinkers
- Transformational Leaders
- Change Agents



# ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

## OUR PROCESS

This strategic plan is a blueprint that will guide our improvement efforts to build a globally renowned school system. We strongly believe in the urgency of now. We believe that one moment can change a child's life. We believe that our schools are intellectual and social safe havens -- places where our students can discover their hopes and dreams. We believe that access to a high-quality public education is a fundamental human right.

A blueprint is a drawing that represents a design of something that has yet to be created. We have great schools, but they can become even greater. Our strategic plan is a blueprint that helps us imagine our possible future. By working together, we can build the schools of tomorrow.

Our strategic plan has been developed through the collaboration of many stakeholders. Parents, students, educators, and community members have all participated in a comprehensive visioning process that has spanned the past 12 months. Through this process, stakeholders provided input on how to improve our schools. Data was collected through community, staff, and student surveys along with focus groups and more than 40 community meetings. The mission, vision, core values, and priorities outlined in this strategic plan are directly related to feedback from our stakeholders.

As our community unites around a common vision of educational excellence, we will work together to ensure that our students are prepared to make choices in today's world and the one they will inherit in the years to come.



## VISION

*Our vision inspires us to work towards a possible future:*

**Together we are building extraordinary schools.**



## MISSION

*Our mission explains the purpose of our schools and our work:*

**Dare County Schools will empower every student to be an innovative problem solver and engaged global citizen.**



## CORE VALUES

*Our core values set the tone for our district's culture. These values shape our actions and lead us towards the path of achieving our vision. What we do is a reflection of our values.*



### Every child matters

We believe every student is uniquely capable and deserves to be challenged and engaged in relevant, rigorous, and personalized learning every day.



### Safe and joyful schools

We believe every student deserves to learn and grow in a safe, caring, respectful, inclusive, and supportive school environment.



### Collective greatness

We believe we are better together. Our schools can accelerate the attainment of our mission and goals through engaging parents and community members in meaningful partnerships.



### Innovation ignites excellence

We believe in the power of leveraging high-impact teaching strategies to inspire learning, global thinking, creativity, and problem-solving.



### Extraordinary people

We believe our staff members are phenomenal and care greatly for our students. We support talent development so our staff members discover their professional greatness.



## DISTRICT PRIORITIES

*Our district priorities outline our focus areas and goals over the next five years.*



**Healthy  
Schools**



**Active  
Learning**



**Talent  
Development**



**Community  
Partnerships**

# DISTRICT PRIORITIES



## ♥ HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Our schools should first and foremost be physically and emotionally safe for all people. Safety is imperative for learning to take place. Our goal is for all students, staff, and families to be physically and emotionally safe during, before, and after the instructional day. Each school has a comprehensive safety plan that includes processes and procedures for drills, lockdowns, and crisis management. School leaders and staff are engaged in ongoing professional learning opportunities around school safety and mental health.

Each Dare County School currently has a school counselor and a district social worker. Our school nutrition department ensures that all students and staff have access to healthy breakfasts and lunches. All schools have a School Resource Officer through a partnership with the Dare County Sheriff's Office and local municipalities. The Dare County Health Department also provides a nurse for every school. These long-standing partnerships help make our school environments exceptional.

### STRATEGIES

- **Enhance school safety measures** by continuously improving protocols and spreading awareness.
- **Increase mental health support** by aligning district structures and processes to foster creative initiatives that address this growing need.
- **Build resiliency** among all stakeholders to make our schools more trauma-sensitive.
- **Improve student attendance rates** through early intervention and the Dare County Attendance Council.
- **Promote healthy lifestyle choices** by creating opportunities during the school day that include physical activity and healthy food options for students and staff.



What is called genius is the abundance of life and health.” – Henry David Thoreau



## ACTIVE LEARNING

Our goal is to provide all students with equitable access to an unparalleled educational experience that is grounded in high expectations, collaboration, and self-efficacy. To prepare our students for an ever-changing world, they must be actively involved and take ownership of their learning. This means designing experiences that enhance our students' thinking and providing opportunities for them to be leaders.

The Active Learning Priority reflects strategies that are intended to promote a student-centered and personalized learning experience. To achieve this, we will put a focus on effectively using technology to create limitless opportunities for our students to investigate their hopes and dreams. These strategies will guide our efforts in this priority.

### STRATEGIES

- **Develop an instructional framework** that aligns with state and national standards and supports student performance and growth.
- **Create pathways** for students to explore interests and gain new skills.
- **Support the creation of a personalized learning environment** by identifying and providing access to a variety of digital resources through a reliable and robust technology infrastructure.
- **Foster innovation**, problem-solving, and risk-taking by transforming traditional spaces to better support individualized needs.
- **Promote global awareness** by designing interactive and dynamic lessons that focus on developing citizenship, character, and global readiness.



Do not confine your children to your own learning, for they were born in another time.” – Chinese proverb



## TALENT DEVELOPMENT

We believe that our greatest resource is our people. Our goal is to recruit, develop, and retain extraordinary people. To operate at maximum efficiency, our schools will embrace initiatives and programs that promote the social and emotional well-being of our staff. These include investment in developing the heart and purpose of our staff. We have amazing adults that have dedicated their professional career to supporting, developing, and nurturing our students.

Central to this theme is our belief that every Dare County Schools staff member will have the opportunity to grow professionally based on their personal learning goals. We will work to provide an empowering and collaborative environment that places our educators in the driver's seat.

### STRATEGIES

- **Foster a leadership pipeline** to build organizational capacity.
- **Adapt recruiting methods** that align with the current and evolving needs of the district.
- **Provide professional growth** through opportunities, experiences, and pathways that result in increased staff member retention.
- **Create valuable experiences for new staff** that connect them with the vision and mission of the district.
- **Design a professional learning system** that allows educators the opportunity to develop and share innovative practices that support student learning through a blended (face-to-face and online) model.



All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.” – Walt Disney



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Dare County Schools has a rich history of partnerships with local organizations and businesses. Partnerships range from local art galleries sponsoring student art shows to organizations supporting scholarships for graduating seniors. Through a partnership with a local education foundation, Dare County Schools staff have access to affordable teacher housing units in Kill Devil Hills and Cape Hatteras. Our Parent Teacher Organizations and Associations support philanthropic initiatives at schools each year.

Our long-standing community relationships show the value of education in Dare County. Our goal is to continue to strengthen community relations through aligning resources and experiences to support learning.

## STRATEGIES

- **Collaboration among teachers, schools and community** to support learning and development of the whole child.
- **Align resources** to support the needs of students and schools.
- **Invite community members** into our schools to volunteer and participate in annual visits to highlight the work of our staff and students.
- **Grow student internship and apprenticeship options** at the secondary level.
- **Expand our online presence** through digital storytelling.



Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.”  
– Marian Wright Edelman

# INDICATORS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS



Our district priorities serve as a guide in decision making as we work to meet our district vision of creating extraordinary, forward-thinking schools. By emphasizing the four district priorities, we will use these measurements to track our progress towards meeting our goals.



## HEALTHY SCHOOLS

### *Measures and Metrics*

1. Updating and improving school safety plans.
2. Survey students, staff, and community members to assess school culture and climate.
3. Evaluate health and wellness resources.
4. Monitor school attendance rates and trends.



## TALENT DEVELOPMENT

### *Measures and Metrics*

1. Analyze staff assessment of professional development opportunities and activities.
2. Evaluate Teacher Working Conditions survey data.
3. Monitor teacher retention rates.
4. Utilize Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) Teacher Effectiveness Data.
5. Track National Board Certification Data.



## ACTIVE LEARNING

### *Measures and Metrics*

1. Increase overall proficiency and subgroup data for all End-of-Grade and End-of-Course test areas.
2. Reduce achievement gaps.
3. Increase high school graduation rate.
4. Expand options for students to receive college credit.
5. Analyze Career and Technical Education (CTE) enrollment, credentialing, and internship placement data.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### *Measures and Metrics*

1. Analyze stakeholder survey data
2. Utilize website and social media analytics.
3. Collect and study volunteerism and school visit attendance data.
4. Track financial support data.

## BY 2023...



***All schools will achieve a North Carolina School Performance Grade of an A***



***All schools will exceed growth as measured by North Carolina State Growth and Accountability Measures***



***All students will graduate from high school***

## CONCLUSION

The timing has never been better for implementing a shared vision for the future of Dare County Schools. Many of our stakeholders asked for transparency and clarity around our shared expectations for the future of our schools. This plan represents our response to that request. It has been our goal to build a shared vision among our parents, students, educators, and community members that articulates our core beliefs and commitments for becoming an exceptional school district.

Through this process, we have learned more about the hopes and dreams of our students. We have learned that our students love their teachers and that our schools feel like families; we have learned that our teachers want more professional development and opportunities to improve; and we have learned that our community is willing to do whatever it takes to support our schools. As we consider all of this, we are excited by the immense possibilities that await our students.

***Anything is possible for the future of Dare County Schools.***



