



Dubuque COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

2025-2026

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

UPDATE: **FEBRUARY 2026**

STRATEGIC **PLAN** 2024-2029



READY. FOR YOU.

Each year, the strategic work of the district is outlined in a set of **annual priority initiatives**. These initiatives serve as the roadmap for the work of the district over the course of the school year.

DEEPLY ALIGNED

The work we accomplish as a district – and our ability to truly move the needle and accomplish our strategic goals – cannot be accomplished by any one person, team or department alone.

Instead, our work requires deep alignment and synergy across all areas of the district for success to be realized.

As noted in the priority initiatives report, each initiative is aligned with both the pillars and action steps of the strategic plan to ensure strong connections between our plans and our work.

REGULAR REPORTING

The Superintendent of Schools and members of the district’s senior leadership team report on strategic plan progress three times each year to the School Board and community.

These reports occur at special strategic plan meetings of the Board in October, February and May.

STATUS UPDATES

Each report includes an update on key actions and next steps tied to the district’s annual priority initiatives. Status is reported using the following indicators:

▶ **STARTED** ◉ **ON TRACK** ⏸ **ON HOLD** ✓ **COMPLETED** ⏪ **OPERATIONAL** ✕ **CANCELLED**

Read the full 2024-2029 strategic plan at:
www.dbqschools.org/strategicplan



PRIORITY

1

WHY

We are **READY**

to connect families to their student's learning experience in regular, meaningful ways.

We believe

this will bolster supports for students and further create a collective drive toward student academic success.

1 Strengthen the district's efforts to engage families, students and staff in various areas in student-success-focused initiatives.

- 1.1 Focus attendance initiatives on targeted outreach efforts and individualized interventions for students considered severely chronically absent.
» STATUS: **OPERATIONAL**
- 1.2 Launch an updated parent-teacher conference model that focuses on the success-readiness of students and utilizes data from the new Xello system (secondary) and updated report card measures (elementary).
» STATUS: **ON TRACK**
- 1.3 Review current preschool program offerings and research best practices to determine the best array of early childhood programming to serve the district's youngest learners.
» STATUS: **ON TRACK**

PILLAR
AREA ALIGNMENT



**STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT
+ DEVELOPMENT**



**FAMILY +
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

ACTION
STEP ALIGNMENT



**Individual Passion
+ Purpose**



**Family
Connections**



**Streamline for
Sustainability**

Key Actions

- » Attendance initiatives remain a key priority at both the district and school levels. Based on work this year, the district has conducted targeted home visits for students with chronic absenteeism to provide supports in improving attendance.
- » Principals and building leadership teams have met to continued action plan at each level. Supporting professional development is planned to continue enhancing meaningful conference offerings.
- » A preschool and kindergarten planning team including cross-departmental representatives has met since last May to discuss the district's preschool offerings and explore potential transitional kindergarten options. These meetings included a look at programming across the state and in our area, research about best practices and benefits, and overall enrollment trends and community needs.

Next Steps

- » The district has operationalized monitoring of attendance interventions and is exploring additional ways to track progress. Evaluation will continue of the effectiveness of current interventions, supports, and incentives while identifying necessary adjustments to enhance our daily attendance.
- » Reflection and refinement of conferences by building leadership teams and principals will continue following March conferences.
- » The preschool and kindergarten planning team will continue its work with programming recommendations forthcoming.

PRIORITY 2

WHY

We are **READY**

to bolster our instructional practices by using data and best practices to engage students in learning.

We believe

that doing so will drive each student's academic progress forward by tailoring support to their individual needs.

2 Deepen support for educators in systematizing collaboration to analyze, plan and implement best-practice instructional methods.

2.1 Develop more frequent, informal evidence of student learning (common formative assessment) to drive teaching and learning in a way that best meets student needs.

» STATUS: 🟡🟢 **ON TRACK**

2.2 Increase the frequency and depth of Collaborative Learning Communities (CLCs), including comparative student data analysis, to extend learning differentiation in core instruction, deliver interventions and provide learning extensions.

» STATUS: 🟡🟢 **ON TRACK**

PILLAR
AREA ALIGNMENT



**STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT
+ DEVELOPMENT**



**EMPLOYEE
EXCELLENCE**

ACTION
STEP ALIGNMENT



**Instruction +
Interventions +
Extensions**



**Culture
Growing**

Key Actions

- » The Educational Support Team continues to focus its professional development on the use of data to guide instruction by Collaborative Learning Communities to support student learning. At the elementary level, a group of teachers have worked to deconstruct the essential elementary language arts standards with suggested learning targets, common definition of mastery, and assessments. These planning frameworks were partially rolled out during the February professional learning day, while also providing teachers an opportunity to use these frameworks as a guide to develop their own common formative assessments.
- » Instructional Coaches, Educational Support Team members and school administrators continue to attend and coach CLCs to continually improve their process. Tiered learning supports are in place and are impacting students positively.

Next Steps

- » Deconstruction of elementary math essential standards is currently in progress, similar to the work underway with language arts standards. In the fall, these planning frameworks in both language arts and math will be rolled out to support a guaranteed and viable curriculum standard across all buildings.
- » Further development of action plans to support coaching for maximum impact on student learning is underway. Action plans will then be followed through coaching cycles, instructional rounds, and job-embedded professional learning opportunities. Additionally, the comprehensive literacy state development grant (CLSD) will assist in professional learning and data analysis with areas of strengths and growth.

PRIORITY 3

WHY

We are **READY**

to meet students where they are with supports, interventions and instruction tailored specifically to their needs.

We believe

that supporting students in all areas of development will bolster their personal and academic success.

3 Provide an optimal learning environment through honing instructional knowledge of educators to engage students in their learning of skills and content.

3.1 Launch the Teach to Heal initiative by providing initial awareness to all staff, continuing leadership training, and fully train staff in three buildings.

» STATUS:   **ON TRACK**

3.2 Refine math and science instruction to align with new Iowa legislation and standards, including the launch of new elementary science curriculum.

» STATUS:    **OPERATIONAL**

PILLAR
AREA ALIGNMENT



**STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT
+ DEVELOPMENT**



**FAMILY +
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**



**EMPLOYEE
EXCELLENCE**

ACTION
STEP ALIGNMENT



**Human-Centered
Skills + Supports**



**Culture
Growing**



**Powerful
Partnerships**

Key Actions

- » A two-day Teach to Heal capacity-building session was held in November for 59 district staff and 13 Keystone AEA staff to broaden program implementation. Audubon, Prescott and the Alta Vista Campus staff continue year-one of full implementation and have received in-depth training at two district professional learning days, as well as with five days of coaching and an administrator session from program founder Danielle Theis.
- » The new elementary science curriculum, “Amplify,” was rolled out in August with a half day of professional learning per grade level. Opportunities to use the assessment features in the curriculum, create common formative assessments, and provide feedback have occurred throughout the year.
- » In the area of math, both secondary and elementary Educational Support Team members have worked to ensure that the required screening, monitoring, interventions, and family communication were more systematically in place per the Math Counts law.

Next Steps

- » The district was recently awarded an IDEA-DA grant, which will support work with Teach to Heal. Additional capacity-building sessions are scheduled for March and April for schools not fully implementing. A training on “Life Space Crisis Intervention” is also planned for the end of February.
- » Elementary science summative assessments will be revamped based on student data and teacher feedback to more explicitly assess the key essentials.
- » The elementary team will roll out the new iReady math curriculum materials in the fall with a built-in system for ongoing professional learning after each screening period. Additionally, the math essential-standard work will roll out at this time.

PRIORITY

4

WHY

We are **READY**

to intentionally realize financial efficiencies that ensure the district's viability well into the future.

We believe

this will maximize resources to have the greatest impact on students through high-quality facilities and educational offerings.

4 Study and implement strategies to streamline operations in ways focused on student success.

4.1 Complete facility planning and community outreach to share information regarding the bond referendum anticipated for November 2025.

» STATUS:    **COMPLETED**

4.2 Further develop middle school efficiency plans to ensure a high-quality experience for all students.

» STATUS:  **STARTED**

4.3 Complete an efficiency review to better understand programmatic resource allocations and use a "start, continue, stop" model to maximize district programs.

» STATUS:   **ON TRACK**

PILLAR
AREA ALIGNMENT



**EFFECTIVE
RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**



**FAMILY +
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

ACTION
STEP ALIGNMENT



**Facility
Focus**



**Powerful
Partnerships**



**Streamline for
Sustainability**

Key Actions

- » A comprehensive effort to communicate about the district's general obligation in the November election was completed, and the bond narrowly missed the 60 percent of votes required for passage.
- » The district leadership team participated in an exercise to begin exploring opportunities for programmatic adjustments using a "start, continue, stop" model.

Next Steps

- » Internal planning remains underway to explore options to maintain a high-quality educational experience that puts students first while also realizing needed operational efficiencies to ensure the district's long-term financial viability.
- » This process will continue to move forward this school year with opportunities for staff and community feedback.

PRIORITY

5

WHY

We are **READY**

to enhance employee mentoring and leadership development that recognizes the career goals of our amazing team.

We believe

that ongoing employee support, encouragement and growth leads to staff exceeding their career expectations.

5 Enhance staff development that bolsters leadership opportunities and supports staff retention and longevity.

5.1 Create a paraprofessional mentoring program designed to create leadership opportunities among the building paraprofessionals.

» STATUS:   **ON TRACK**

5.2 Develop a check-in program that formalizes career-focused engagement opportunities with staff as they transition into various stages of their careers.

» STATUS:   **ON TRACK**

PILLAR
AREA ALIGNMENT



EMPLOYEE
EXCELLENCE

ACTION
STEP ALIGNMENT



Staffing
Success



Culture
Growing

Key Actions

- » Best-practice models in paraprofessional mentoring programs were researched and a program was outlined that the planning committee will adapt to best suit the needs of the district.
- » Third-year teachers were surveyed on their transition from their first two years with a mentor to their first year without a mentor.
- » One-on-one meetings were held with third-year teachers to discuss the challenges they face at this stage in their career.

Next Steps

- » Work with the committee is underway to set the parameters with which we will begin implementation of the mentoring program.
- » Review of the data provided from the survey, along with the information gathered from the individual meetings, is underway to look for ways to improve the transition and support our teachers during the crucial stretch from three to five years in the profession.



Dubuque COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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