

# Forward Together

2021–2025 Strategic Plan for  
Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Excellence



**Portland Public Schools reimagined**—our vision—serves as our compass toward a shared “north star,” knitting together our community’s long-term aspirations for our graduates, educators, and the overall school system. *Forward Together: PPS’s 2021–2025 Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Excellence* is the first in a series of multi-year strategic plans for the district, outlining the important steps we’ll take on the road toward realizing our vision.

Thank you for your support and engagement as we roll up our sleeves to make our audacious strategic plan widely understood, relevant, and real, in order to ensure the success of everyone at Portland Public Schools.



**The focus areas of the plan are organized under four main themes:**

As a community, we have an urgency to intentionally disrupt systems of oppression, because they are closely tied to disparities of access and educational outcomes, especially among our Black and Native American students. We have to attack racism and longstanding, structural inequities in our system. We have to remove barriers to teaching and learning. We have to create a sense of belonging for everyone. And we will establish a Center for Black Student Excellence, a constellation of built environments and a designated set of culturally responsive strategies that celebrate and advance Black student achievement at PPS. The issues of race, racism and racial equity are important to the strategic plan as a whole—and they suffuse other themes and action areas throughout. It is important that all stakeholders see opportunities to confront racism and promote equity in every element of our plan.

**Strategic Outcomes**

- Transform Structures for Racial Equity
- Reimagine Relationships and a Sense of Belonging
- Ensure Equitable Access to Facility Resources
- Cultivate a Culture of Racial Equity and Care
- Plan the Center for Black Student Excellence

We celebrate the diversity of our students, and are working to provide differentiated learning experiences and supports that meet every child where they are, work with their interests, and enable them to thrive at PPS. We have a significant population who have varying abilities that require special attention and programs. Many students with disabilities, and those with complex learning needs, were not well-served by COVID-19 virtual learning. We need to strengthen educational offerings for every student, including those with disabilities, and expand resources for their physical and emotional safety. And we must make learning relatable and relevant for real-world contexts—for jobs, technology, and challenges of the future—for every student.

**Strategic Outcomes**

- Develop an Integrated Instructional Framework
- Implement Multi-Tiered System of Supports
- Promote an Inclusive Mindset
- Design Learning Experiences that Promote Self-Directed, Future-Ready Learning
- Establish Systems and Structures for Inclusion
- Build the Advocacy Power of Students and Families of Students with Disabilities

To become a world-class school district, we must hire talented people from diverse backgrounds and experiences. We also know that our world-class staff needs ongoing professional support and resources. This will require action across many forms, including better communication and coordination; career pathways for educators, building our educators’ capacity in social and emotional support to students; and a culture of adult learning to accelerate student achievement.

**Strategic Outcomes**

- Develop a Diverse, High-Quality, and Thriving Workforce
- Advance Our Organizational Learning Culture and Practice

We need to create and support a culture open to positive change—as a system. The way we solve problems systematically, the way we build a culture and approach to successfully manage our work, the way we build trust and promote empathy, the way we communicate within our system and to our stakeholders—all of these are actions that require constant refinement and improvement.

**Strategic Outcomes**

- Socialize Our Vision and Strategic Plan
- Embed System-Wide Data-Driven Continuous Improvement Practices
- Launch an Innovation Practice that Reimagines System Problem Solving
- Build a Collective Sense of Trust and Belonging
- Establish Exceptional Service Culture and Standards
- Cultivate and Promote Aligned Community Partnerships
- Establish a System-Wide Project Management Culture and Practice
- Implement a Proactive, Effective, and Creative Communication Practice
- Develop a Coherent System-Wide Community Engagement Approach

To learn more about our Strategic Plan, visit [pps.net/forwardtogether](https://pps.net/forwardtogether)

**1  
Racial Equity  
and Social  
Justice**

**2  
Inclusive and  
Differentiated  
Learning for  
Every Child**

**3  
Professional  
Excellence  
and Support**

**4  
Embracing  
Change**

RACIAL EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Transform Structures for Racial Equity

Cultivate a Culture of Racial Equity & Care

Reimagine Relationships & a Sense of Belonging

Plan the Center for Black Student Excellence

Ensure Equitable Access to Facility Resources

Develop an Integrated Instructional Framework

INCLUSIVE & DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING FOR EVERY CHILD

Design Learning Experiences that Promote Self-Directed, Future-Ready Learning

Implement Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Develop a Diverse, High-Quality, & Thriving Workforce

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE & SUPPORT

Establish Systems & Structures for Inclusion

Promote an Inclusive Mindset

Advance Our Organizational Learning Culture & Practice

Forward Together

Build the Advocacy Power of Students & Families of Students with Disabilities

Socialize Our Vision & Strategic Plan

Build a Collective Sense of Trust & Belonging

Establish a System-Wide Project Management Culture & Practice

Embed System-Wide Data-Driven Continuous Improvement Practices

Establish Exceptional Service Culture & Standards

Implement a Proactive, Effective, & Creative Communication Practice

Launch an Innovation Practice that Reimagines System Problem Solving

Cultivate & Promote Aligned Community Partnerships

Develop a Coherent System-Wide Community Engagement Approach

EMBRACING CHANGE

## Our Vision

A graduate of Portland Public Schools will be a compassionate critical thinker, able to collaborate and solve problems, and be prepared to lead a more socially just world.

## Our Mission

We provide rigorous, high-quality academic learning experiences that are inclusive and joyful. We disrupt racial inequities to create vibrant environments for every student to demonstrate excellence.

## Our Theory of Action

**If ...** We braid Racial Equity and Social Justice strategies into our instructional core, work with our students, teachers, and content, and build our organizational culture and capacity to create a strong foundation to support every student...

**Then ...** We will reimagine Portland Public Schools to ensure every student, especially our Black and Native American students who experience the greatest barriers, realizes the Vision of the Graduate Portrait.

## Student-centered Indicators

### We will increase

- > Students who report increasing sense of belonging as measured by the Successful Schools Survey
- > Number of students on track for the Graduate Portrait milestones as expressed by the Graduate Portrait continuum

### We will reduce

- > Opportunity gaps for Black and Native students by increasing numbers of students prepared for 1st grade as measured by an appropriate set of early learning indicators, and by our progress on our Board Goals
- > Disproportionate identification of students in Special Education, especially our Black, Native, and English Learner students
- > Disproportionality in exclusionary discipline measures for our Black and Native students

### Students will

- > Report learning is more engaging and relevant for their future
- > Report their learning experiences support their understanding and attainment of the Graduate Portrait
- > Be able to self-assess growth on the Graduate Portrait, including an adapted Graduate Portrait for students with disabilities, using a developmentally appropriate continuum

## Other Success Indicators Related to Educator Essentials and Implementation of Key Strategies

- > Increases in number of educators of color who are hired and retained, and in educators of color reporting feeling a sense of belonging
- > The regular use of Educator Essentials to self-assess professional growth
- > Data driven, continuous improvement practices evident at grade level, schools, departments, and district as a whole
- > Evidence that educators are aligning their work and professional learning to the Vision