



## End of Year Goal Summary

### 2019-20

The following highlights the key accomplishments of District 99 during the 2019-20 school year and future opportunities for growth. The summary is organized by the five domains the District is following to support our mission:

*"In cooperation with parents and the community, provide a caring and challenging environment where all students develop as lifelong learners to become contributing, responsible members of a changing world."*

The goal progress document fails to capture much of the work we have been engaged in for the past three months. It is difficult to remember much of the school year before Stay-at Home Orders and Remote Learning went into place. The final three months of the school year have felt like a singular school year in itself. From March 13th until the middle of April, the Administrative Team was working seven days a week, 12-16 hours a day, to figure out how school should work while being provided constantly changing guidance from the Governor, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the DuPage County Regional Office of Education (ROE), and the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD). At the same time, we were receiving recommendations from the Illinois Association of School Administrators (who ISBE tasked with providing additional guidance to administration), labor organizations, and agencies in the federal government. In these unprecedented times, with a lack of organized leadership at many levels above us, I believe we provided excellent service to our students and families while also respecting the additional pressure and anxiety our staff were facing. We have continued to ensure students are engaging with learning while making sure we are helping them stay healthy, safe, and cared for.

The last few years of building confidence in our community through transparent and timely communication have helped us build on established trust through these uncertain times. Our experience in drafting difficult communications to the community through challenging personnel issues, student tragedies, and the referendum put us in a unique position to lead at the county level. District 99's team has been called on many times to help or consult with the ROE and the DCHD in drafting guidance or sample messages for districts across DuPage County and the State.

Moving forward there is a lot more work to do around Remote Learning. The guidelines put in place worked for ending the school year, but will not be effective to start a year. If Remote Learning continues, we will need to make significant changes in attendance, grading, curriculum, and expectations in student participation. We have sent surveys out to our

stakeholders, are analyzing the feedback, and are collaborating with other DuPage County school districts on what might come next.

I believe next year will either start with a period of Remote Learning, or additional outbreaks of COVID-19 will require us to return to Remote Learning for periods of time for some or all of our students. We will spend our summer preparing for this, alongside our normal preparations for a school year. These are unusual times that will change our schools and society forever. District 99 will be prepared to lead in whatever comes next.

The remainder of the End of Year Goal Summary that follows captures more of the work outside of Remote Learning and provides an overview of the accomplishments and opportunities for growth in our five District goal areas.

### **Domain 1: Student Experience**

*Evaluate, refine, and develop academic and social emotional programs to ensure high school and postsecondary success for all students.*

#### **Key Accomplishments and Opportunities for Growth:**

- **Dual Credit:** We continued to expand our offerings and have made great progress with the College of DuPage (COD). The legislation we helped put into place has led to a far more proactive relationship with COD and we are now actively working, with COD's help, to get more of our teachers approved to teach Dual Credit courses. The changes we made in our teacher contract will encourage many more teachers to earn advanced degrees and engage in advanced coursework that will lead to Dual Credit certification. Moving forward, we will continue to bring additional coursework and strategically focus on blending Advanced Placement courses with Dual Credit courses.
- **Internship Programs:** This year we proposed, and the Board approved, a new course for formal internships. It is running next year at both schools and will serve as a more formal entry way into internship experiences for our students. We intend to leverage the relationships and experience built through these programs to continue growing workplace experiences for all of our students.
- **Common Experience:** This year, after a year of planning, we began our [common experience](#) work with our course teams. This work seeks to ensure equity across our schools - more specifically within our departments and courses. It is specifically targeted to bring standards, grading, and assessments more consistent across a course team. This work will continue as a focus for the next several years.
- **Equity work for Students and Staff:** Currently, all District 99 staff participate in several morning sessions focused on [Equity & Inclusion](#) each year. These sessions are intended for staff to develop understanding of student and staff equity and inclusion. The learning groups within these sessions provide an opportunity for adult learners to learn about and with each other, and to find ways to make equity and inclusion foundations of all job roles. This year we expanded our work to include students through our [Changemakers](#) program which seeks to create a diverse group of student leaders seeking to find ways to make positive changes in our schools and making them more accepting of all people. At the end of the year, we participated in an equity audit assisted by the DuPage County Regional Office of Education and we will be bringing findings to the Board next year. This is obviously a topic that society is working on and we are trying to lead in DuPage County.

- Having a new Data Analytics System in place: This year we started to use 5-labs as a data visualization and analytics tool. This will help us track data in real time around key information we use in decision making. We have also entered into intergovernmental agreements with our partner elementary school districts so we can share pertinent information with them as we try to have more of a K-12 view of our students through analytics. Moving forward we will begin to utilize this information more frequently and with more of our District Leadership Team.
- Improvements in our IEP and 504 Processes: Special Services has redesigned the evaluation process for initial and reevaluations of students with disabilities to include a Domain meeting ensuring parent participation and collaboration with the IEP school team. In addition, our related service teams participated in a common experience process to align services and supports to students receiving speech, social work, occupational therapy and physical therapy. This process reviewed student goals, delivery of service, and related service minutes provided to students. IEP and 504 plans are now documented in our PowerSchool online student system. The online system helps us to follow current ISBE and Federal guidelines and best practices. District 99 held a 504 articulation meeting this year with our partner schools. This included reviewing our supports for students as well as discussing the 8th grade transition process and how services will be provided at the high school level. We will continue to finalize our related service common experience work, finalizing the logistics and implementation of services to best support our students. We will also continue to review our Child Find process for 504 and IEP identification. The CSSS Department Chairs will act as our 504 Coordinators to support our students, families and partner schools this coming school year.
- Designing the PATH Program to address ongoing Discipline Issues and Disproportionate Discipline: This year, after several years of investigation related to our discipline data, we asked the Board to approve and staff the PATH (Pause, Ask, Think, & Heal) Program for next year. It is designed to empower students to develop emotional and social learning skills that can help reduce risk factors that have resulted in inappropriate and/or disruptive conduct. The social-emotional learning skills learned in the PATH Program will encourage accountability and enable students to modify their behavior and demonstrate ability to control conduct within norms of pro-social behavior. This is a program we will monitor closely to determine if it is helping us to lower the incidents of negative discipline data, especially in reducing recidivism and out of school suspensions.
- Develop a process to appropriately staff Student Activities and Athletic Programs: An area where we have historically struggled is in determining the appropriate staff resources for Activity and Athletic Programs. For the past year we have piloted a process in Student Activities and for the past several years we have been working on this in Athletics. As part of the teacher contract, this year we developed a dynamic process that allows us to allocate the appropriate staffing level and compensation to coaching and activity stipends based on a combination of factors. This will enable us to be more flexible and responsive to student interests and needs. We will be monitoring this process for the next several years and will modify as necessary.
- Redesigning the end of the year from Remote Learning to Graduation - multiple times and starting on designing next year: As described in the opening of this document, the last few months of this year have been incredibly challenging for society and for schools. We closed out the year in a positive fashion and are now analyzing feedback data from students, families, and staff. At the end of this month we will have virtual graduations

with an opportunity for students to come on campus, receive their diplomas, and get their picture taken. Over the next several months we will continue to learn about the possibilities for next year and will design school to be the best possible experience within the health department guidelines provided.

## **Domain 2: Development and Evaluation of Staff**

*Enhance current practices, identify strengths and challenges, and create new processes that empower staff to create conditions for a positive and effective student experience.*

### **Key Accomplishments and Opportunities for Growth:**

- **The new DGEA (Downers Grove Education Association) Contract offers many Advancements towards District Goals:** [This document](#) outlines the changes in detail and connects back to the District Goals. We worked on this negotiation for over a year and have been spending the last three months providing additional guidance to staff due to the amount of new language in the Contract. This Contract creates many opportunities for the District over the next five years.
- **Redesigning the Personalized Professional Learning program:** The Personalized Professional Learning (PPL) program began this year after several years of planning. This program values continuous learning for every teacher and has been designed to give numerous opportunities for faculty to personalize their learning. All of the areas of focus in PPL are designed to enhance the Student Experience. This year's process was shortened by school closing early and we will resume next year.
- **State and National Conferences:** Many of our staff members presented at national and state conferences and District 99 is viewed as a leader in many areas related to teaching, learning, and school administration. Many of our staff have leadership roles in professional organizations at the local, state, and national level. We will continue to look for ways to lead in the profession.
- **Teacher Evaluation:** We made several [key adjustments](#) to our teacher evaluation processes in response to changing guidelines at the state level and in response to changes we made in 2018, based on teacher and administrative feedback. This is an area we monitor each year for improvements.
- **Staff Discipline Process:** instituting a [new process](#) for staff discipline and created a [scenario based training](#) for all leaders. We will continue to monitor the efficacy of this process moving forward.
- **Support Staff Onboarding:** A new committee met this year to create a process for all new hires to receive the training and development necessary for staff to be successful in their roles.
- **Continued Equity Work:** Equity work continued by involving student leaders and creating materials for teaching our staff as described above.
- **Negotiating Remote Learning Agreements:** Remote Learning Agreements were negotiated with both bargaining units providing guidance on how Remote Learning works. These will need to be revised if we return to Remote Learning next year.

## **Domain 3: Sharing our Stories and Informing the Community**

*Ensure trust, confidence and support for our District through the use of comprehensive, transparent, and consistent communications methods.*

### **Key Accomplishments and Opportunities for Growth:**

- Parent Events and Guest Speakers: This year we expanded our learning opportunities for families through multiple events and guest speakers at both schools on topics that included building student resilience and managing college costs. We also partnered with our elementary school districts and hosted the 4th Annual Realtor Breakfast; over 100 realtors attended and provided positive feedback.
- Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee: The Committee met several times this year and brought in guest speakers on topics including financial aid for college and community resources available to families during the pandemic.
- Parent Technology Resources: We continued to make our resources more accessible and have provided more help and additional tutorials on school tools.
- Strong Communications with Families and the Community: We continued to offer high quality communications and publications including: Daily Announcements, Weekly D99 Docket, Weekly Facility Friday Newsletters, Monthly Principal Videos, Bi-Monthly Board of Education Highlights, Monthly District Newsletter and Monthly Facebook Lunchtime Live Superintendent events. Nearly 7,000 people self-subscribe to one or more of our newsletters. Social media is also an important way we communicate with families and the community; [click here](#) for statistics for the school year.
- Communications Related to the Pandemic: Throughout the Stay-at-Home order and during Remote Learning the administration found creative ways to meet with parents and students including virtual meetings, webinars, and town hall style meetings. This will be an ongoing topic over the summer and will be a standing agenda item on upcoming Board meetings.
- Master Facility Plan Progress: We continued to find creative ways throughout the year to share the progress of the Master Facility Plan including our Facility Friday publication and a lot of pictures and video - including 360° images. Nearly 900 people subscribe to this publication.
- Education Foundation: We continued to assist the Education Foundation with their mission to support our students and teachers. The Foundation had several new creative projects including the Angel Fund (social fund), a fundraiser for protective face shields for first responders, and a COVID-19 relief fund for District 99 families in need. Collectively these programs raised more than \$35K and are still working to support our community. This is all on top of the support the Education Foundation provides on a yearly basis.

#### **Domain 4: Creating and Supporting a Valued Learning Environment**

*Efficiently manage fiscal resources and facilities to support an educational program that is designed to promote a valued student experience.*

#### **Key Accomplishments and Opportunities for Growth:**

- Pedestrian Safety: We led a major effort to improve pedestrian safety throughout our community in cooperation with the Village of Downers Grove and other area agencies resulting in significant changes to improve safety. We now have a comprehensive plan to improve safety for pedestrians in our school community and are working to put changes in place.
- Master Facility Plan: Progress continues ahead of schedule, The Master Facility Plan (MFP) has maintained a significant contingency. The project continues to deliver greater

outcomes than initially promised to the community. We started out the year with a tour of the new facilities and the community was impressed with the changes. The outcomes of the next two summers will be dramatic and will have a long term impact on how students perceive school, interact on a daily basis, and learn in the future.

- **Capital Projects:** We also continued to improve our facilities through \$1M of capital improvement projects including pool lighting improvements, locker room renovations, and upgrades to our HVAC systems.
- **Student Transportation:** We began a training process for staff that drive vehicles during the school day in response to state law. Over the course of the year we put together a plan to replace our fleet of aging busses, which we tabled at the end of the year until we have a more definitive fiscal future.
- **Outdoor Fields:** The new artificial turf field went into use at South High this year and closed an equity gap in facilities between the two schools. Both schools are investigating and redesigning lighting options for our outdoor practice fields. The primary competition fields are receiving new lamps and additional auxiliary lighting as alternate projects related to the MFP.
- **Residency:** We have continued our residency verification process to better ensure our students live in the community.
- **Information Technology:** Proactively addressing cybersecurity threats continues to be a primary focus of the Technology and Information Services (TIS) team. We have implemented an advanced Security information and event management system (SIEM) that collects and aggregates log data generated throughout our technology enterprise, identifying and categorizing vast amounts of such data, in order to notify us of potentially malicious security events. We enhanced our network failover protocols and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) response and mitigation capabilities in order to maximize network uptime during incidents. We enhanced our network backup capabilities for optimal protection of our critical data resources. We implemented Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) for enhanced remote user access security. We are well underway with the major project of replacing our entire wireless network infrastructure with the latest technologies. During the COVID-19 response, we quickly located, procured, and deployed Cameyo, an innovative cloud-based solution that allowed student instruction to continue remotely on Chromebooks, for software that was only previously possible within our Windows labs (AutoCad, etc.) We also implemented new technologies to provide technology support remotely to our staff and students. Moving forward, information security, data privacy, and network availability will continue to be major focus areas for the TIS team.
- **Finances:** We continued to maintain a budget within the revenue stream that has us prepared to weather an anticipated unknown economy over the next five years. A major piece of this included a 5-year teacher contract that will be well within the revenue stream. We also finalized the issuance of the MFP bonds and saved taxpayers \$37.2M in interest. We will pay off the referendum bonds four years earlier than projected.

### **Domain 5: Future Opportunities**

*Embark on a plan, leading to a process of identifying strategic goals committed to developing organizational readiness for future opportunities.*

**Key Accomplishments and Opportunities for Growth:**

- Restorative Practices: We made some initial advancement in Restorative Practices through the design of the PATH program. We have also made this a high priority in teacher tuition assistance, which will encourage more staff to choose this topic in advanced studies. Work in this area will continue as a key strategy moving forward.
- Title IX: We have increased training and awareness around Title IX; the Associate Superintendent has led a lot of work in this area. The federal guidelines around Title IX were just issued this spring and we will be preparing for new training next year for all staff.
- Workplace Readiness and Trade Organizations: We built stronger relationships with trade organizations,
- Non-English Speaking Families: Resources for non-English speaking families were increased. Staff were trained on the use of the LanguageLine to provide for translation services when speaking to families. We also increased the hours of Spanish Speaking Home School Liaison. For students we increased the number of bilingual course offerings.
- School Day Bell Schedule: Work began on major changes in the bell schedule for the 2021-2022 school year as an outcome related to the teacher contract. Committee work began on presenting it to the community this summer for feedback. The schedule will be finalized, based on the feedback, next school year. This bell schedule combines the benefits of a traditional 50 minute period bell schedule with a block schedule. It is built around an 8 period day and allows students more instructional time each week, while offering the same course selection opportunities as in the past. It also compacts the day. The new schedule makes the day more efficient, while offering expanded opportunities for students to get help.