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Detroit Public Schools Community District Superintendent Nikolai Vitti Delivers the District's First State of the Schools Address

Second year of reform demonstrating signs of improvement in student achievement, Partnership Schools, enrollment, attendance, student engagement, and teacher vacancies—DPSCD is on the rise.

DETROIT – (April 10, 2019) – Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) Superintendent, Dr. Nikolai Vitti delivered his first State of the Schools address since he was appointed superintendent in May 2017, following decades of state emergency management and the transition from DPS to DPSCD.

“After a year of analyzing inadequate systems and processes and implementing new ones, we are beginning to show the signs of improvement,” said Vitti. “We will continue to scale needed reforms while developing the capacity of our leaders and students to, once again, show the world what Detroit children are capable of when an educational system addresses their needs and enhances their gifts and talents. All we need is time, political space and support, and equable resources to accelerate, scale, and sustain our improvement. This means multiple partners continuing to step up to fill gaps and advocate for DPSCD’s future. It’s time for everyone to pick up their brick to help rebuild our district.”

The event explored the journey to restoring public education in Detroit as an institution of excellence, and reinforced the District’s brand message that **when student’s rise, we all rise.**

The State of the Schools address featured promising data on the success of initial reforms, placed a spotlight on employees, students, families and partners supporting progress, and set out ambitious plans for future improvement in each of its strategic plan priority areas: Transformative Culture, Outstanding Achievement, Whole Child Commitment, Exceptional Talent and Responsible Stewardship.

Transformative Culture

- Engaged students, families and staff to develop a new code of conduct.
 - 27 percent fewer in-school and out-of-school suspensions – 17,048 in April 2018 compared to 12,373 today
 - 63 percent fewer out-of-school suspensions – 6,538 in April 2018 compared to 6,097 today
- Funded new positions: deans of culture, school-based attendance agents, counselors, and school culture facilitators.
 - A 7-percentage point decline in chronic absenteeism rates, from 33 percent in March 2018 to 26 percent in March 2019, or 3,800 fewer students

- A 6-percentage point improvement to students with excellent attendance, or 3,275 more students, comparing March 2018 to now
- Reinstated the PTA and launched the Parent Academy.
 - More than 3,401 parent-teacher home visits completed by March of this year
 - Approximately 6,807 Parent Academy participants since the inception of the program

Looking ahead, the District will hold diversity, equity, inclusion and restorative practice training, revise the code of conduct to respond to constituent feedback, provide more alternative settings for students, strengthen engagement with the faith-based community and increase alumni engagement and reinforce anti-bullying strategies.

Outstanding Achievement

- Implemented teacher-driven K-8 Literacy and Mathematics curriculum adoption and new formative assessments with actionable data
 - Stronger Readers – mid-year data indicates that 27 percent of students are on pace to make a year’s worth of growth, 18 percent of students had already grown a full year by the midyear, and 11 percent of students had already grown two full years by the midyear
 - Growing Mathematicians – mid-year data indicates that 19 percent of students are on pace to make a year’s worth of growth, 18 percent of students had already grown a full year by the midyear, and 6 percent of students had already grown two full years by the midyear
- Increased student engagement.
 - In its second annual student survey administration, 93 percent of all eligible students in DPSCD shared feedback about their experiences at school and classrooms
 - Survey data shows dramatic gains over last year in both students’ engagement and experience of academic rigor in their classroom in K-8, the grades in which the new instructional materials were implemented
- Improved Partnership Schools.
 - The District was rated “on track” at its 18-month state performance review of schools which were previously identified for possible closure before the School Board took office

Looking ahead, the District will embrace the introduction of the new Detroit school grading system, continue to improve its services for exceptional students, implement a high school literacy and math curriculum that is aligned to the expectation of grade-level standards, expand and improve dual-enrollment programs, improve reading intervention for struggling readers, launch career academies, and improve quality pre-K options.

Whole Child Commitment

- Funded art or music in every K-8.
 - Today, more than 29,500 students have art, music or performing arts at their school
- Revised master schedules for 150 minutes of physical activity for K-5 students each week.

- Initiated enrichment and mentoring programs such as 5000 Male Role Models, Cultural Passport and Lego League
 - K-5 students will participate in more than 1,300 Cultural Passport Field Trips this year

Looking ahead the District will expand after school programming, increase secondary electives aligned to students' interests, and expand mental health services with a focus on trauma informed care.

Exceptional Talent

- Recognized external experience and increased teacher pay.
 - Improved compensation by providing an average increase of \$5,236 to teachers' base salary
- Lowered teacher vacancies.
 - In 2016 there were 275 core vacancies, today there are 120 vacancies.
- Offered at-scale professional development for teachers and leaders, including leadership pipeline programs for more than 100 district staff members interested in taking on school-based administrator roles.
- Established the Master Teacher role.
- Launched a new professional development management platform for all staff.

Looking ahead, the District is negotiating a third-year Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) Contract, improving compensation for top educators through performance-based pay, expanding leadership development programs, redesigning the teacher and administrator evaluation system, providing incentives for hard-to-staff schools, and identifying funding to close the pay gap compared to neighboring districts.

Responsible Stewardship

- Overhauled the District's budgeting and accounting practices.
 - Since the formation of DPSCD, the District has maintained a positive fund balance for two consecutive years; these are the first positive fund balances over the past decade
- Thoroughly assessed the state of school buildings and technology infrastructure.
- Managed and deployed resources equitably among schools.
 - Deployed new laptops to all teachers to support their work
 - Decreased the student to device ratio from more than 6:1 to 3.5:1
- Is preparing to offer smart new school options this fall
 - Enrollment is up by more than 4,800 students over three years
- Established meaningful and aligned business partnerships to fill critical gaps.

Looking ahead the District will host community engagement sessions on facility needs and opportunities, establish a capital fund account and implement major maintenance projects, install hydration stations in every school by Fall 2019, expand one-to-one technology for all K-8 schools, establish an internal auditing process, expand vendor interest, pursue a Wayne County millage renewal and improve the abatement process. Most importantly, the District will advocate for equitable funding as compared with local districts.

To view the complete 2019 State of the Schools Address presentation and other accompanying materials, visit detroitk12.org/stateoftheschools. To learn more about donating, volunteering or partnering with the District, call 313-240- 4377.

About Detroit Public Schools Community District

Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) is Michigan's largest public education system. It is governed by a locally-elected, seven-member board with Dr. Nikolai Vitti serving as superintendent. The District's mission is to provide every student with a beneficial and rightful educational experience, preparing students to be career and college ready, and qualified to compete in the global market. The District has 106 schools and educates 50,000 children. For more information, visit detroitk12.org.

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