

**Port Chester Middle School  
Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District  
Schoolwide Profile Comprehensive Plan  
2024-25**

**Schoolwide Planning Team Members:**

<b>Team Member:</b>	<b>Position or Affiliation:</b>
Team Member:	Position or Affiliation:
Bryant Romano	Principal
Christine Rascona	Asst Principal
Kristin Pascuzzi	Asst Principal
Steven Vargas	Asst Principal
Maria Figura	Academic Learning Specialist
Chris Halstead	Academic Learning Specialist
Brenda Burke	Academic Learning Specialist
Melissa Pennino	Academic Learning Specialist
Chez Sanchez	Academic Learning Specialist
Daniella Kay	Academic Learning Specialist
Christine Telesco	Academic Learning Specialist

**Goal Statement**

**Student Achievement Goals:**

**Goal 1:**

Through Data meetings within each team the focus will be reviewing the 3 STAR Assessments from 23-24 along with the results from the NYS Assessments for 2024. Teachers will understand the needs of each child that sits in their classroom and adjust instruction to meet each student's needs through the use of the data. Administration of STAR first round of assessments will occur. Parent reports to be shared at Parent Teacher Conferences in November. The ultimate goal will be to increase student performance in ELA and math on the NYS Assessment and Star testing by five percent.

**School Operational Goals:**

Goal 1: The Port Chester Middle School has weekly data teams that will provide live professional development weekly to all grades. Faculty will develop a common language around instruction to ensure a consistent and coherent learning

experience for all the students at the Port Chester Middle School. During academic planning led by administration, Team Leaders, and Department Chairs and consultants. By the end of the year, PCMS will have our common language document in place in all classrooms.

**1. Vision statement for reform:**

Port Chester Middle School faculty and Staff seek to empower each student to meet their full potential by providing rigorous yet fair academic learning experiences while building strong character in an environment that is relevant to life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that will give our students the skills needed to improve on standardized assessments and overall academic success.

## **Comprehensive Plan**

### **Our School’s Vision and Mission Statements:**

Port Chester Middle School faculty and Staff seek to empower each student to meet their full potential via academic learning experiences in a rigorous yet fair atmosphere while building strong character in an environment that is relevant to life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**“SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT”**

### **Brief School Profile:**

PCMS is a school with a unique demographic population. We have approximately 120 faculty members and approximately 975 students. We offer a variety of programs ranging from extended day and Prep for Success to Drama and Athletics. Each faculty member views him/herself as an ELA teacher who continually embeds ELA skills into lessons. ELA is a priority, and students understand that literacy across the curricula is integral to being a successful learner. Students experience success in ELA because of the faculty’s overwhelming dedication to the Next Generation Standards-aligned Curriculum. Teachers devote themselves to identifying and delineating skills students need to become excellent readers and writers.

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### **Summary of Needs Assessment:**

It was determined through our needs assessment and data research that teachers throughout the school are using a variety of language, academic terminology, literacy philosophies, and vocabulary that confuse students. In addition, our NYS ELA, NYSESLAT, and district benchmarking data prove that writing is a weak area for our students and needs a strong focus for development.

### **Our Chosen Focus Area:**

Curriculum and Instruction

Literacy: Writing

### **Comprehensive Needs Assessment**

<b>**Profile Focus Area – Curriculum and Instruction</b>
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<b>Summary of problem:</b> Literacy: Writing	
<b>**Profile Focus Area – Curriculum and Instruction in Literacy</b> <b>Summary of problem: Literacy: Common Language development in all content areas with a focus on specific needs in the content area.</b>	
<b>Problem/Need:</b> Teachers throughout the school are using a variety of language and literacy philosophies in supplemental writing instruction.	<b>Possible Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Literacy common language to ensure students in RTI and AIS have the appropriate support needed to improve their language skills in reading and writing.</li> </ul>
<b>Problem/Need:</b> Teachers do not share a common literacy vocabulary across content areas to support students with language deficits.	<b>Possible Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a literacy vocabulary that can be utilized to support students with language deficits in RTI and AIS programs.</li> </ul>
<b>Problem/Need:</b> Teachers need time and training to build curriculum around the data analysis described in goal 1.	<b>Possible Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional Development and common planning time will occur during academic planning time and Superintendent's Conference Days to accomplish Goal 1.</li> </ul>

**Give a short description of where the school is now and where it wants to be when the vision is realized:**

PCMS is a large community school with a small school feel that is divided into 8 teams. Students perform well on school assessments as seen in our honor and high honor roll. We look forward to improving our standardized test scores with our continued focus on writing skills and instruction.

**Describe, using data, the student population, staff, and community demographics, as well as programs and school mission.**

In affluent Westchester County, upwards of 15% of children attending school are classified as “poverty eligible.” In comparison, 80% of Port Chester Middle School students are economically disadvantaged. This high concentration of poverty, together with ethnic and language changes continues to impact middle school operations. In 2000, 37% of students identified as Latino. Currently, 84% do. An increasing percentage of students come to the Middle School with significant gaps in their native education. We are a diverse school committed to success for every student. 3% of students

are African-American, 1% are Asian, and 11% are Caucasian. We embrace our diverse population and their families into our school culture. This is the essence of our Mission Statement: *Our Strength is Our Diversity!*

Within this diverse population, it can be seen that approximately 31% of the population are ENL and another 19% are students with disabilities.

The school currently has approximately 975 students in grades six through eight. This changes annually as we have new entrants joining us throughout the school year.

*PCMS Mission Statement: "PCMS is committed to the individual needs of its diverse population. We aim to ensure that all students will achieve academically, develop socially and discover their unique gifts and talents."*

### **What data sources were used to determine focus area needs?**

ELA scores on the NYS Assessments

SRI Scores

Report Card Data

Read 180

Star Renaissance scores

ARC - American Reading Corporation data (gr. 6) IRLA/ENIL (gr. 6)

### **1. Based on the data, what are our strengths and challenges? What priorities does the information suggest?**

The data suggest we have strong students that are able to achieve at high levels as depicted in our honor rolls. Through the strategic implementation of quality professional development and cohesive systems around data analysis, we plan to put in place in 2024-25, we look forward to seeing improvement in our standardized test scores. Our priority is leveling the playing field and closing the gap for newcomers and children with special needs. PCMS is beginning to utilize data to place students in intervention classes based on their specific needs.

Building on what began in 2015-16, we will continue to professionally develop our faculty to meet the needs of our students based on the Next Generation Standards-based curriculum in the area of literacy for all content areas and create our academic common language as described in Goal 1.

### **2. Schoolwide Reform Strategies:**

In grades 6-8, PCMS is working on establishing a core set of common vocabulary and literacy foci through our Bundled Skills. Additionally, our ICT teams are receiving coaching through G and R Consultants. We work collaboratively to map curriculum, create a common academic language, analyze data, and design lessons aligned to the Next Generation Standards. Grade 6 reading teachers are implementing components of ARC Core to align to programming in K-5.

### **3. Instruction by Highly Qualified Professional Staff/Teachers:**

The Port Chester School District only employs certified teachers in the appropriate content area for which they are hired. Our teachers are Highly-Qualified; no teachers teach outside their certification area. We consider all teachers to be literacy teachers within their content areas, especially from the Next Generation Standards perspective. To provide high-quality instruction, all teachers are trained in ongoing professional development throughout the year in various strategies and literacy intervention techniques to ensure the incorporation of best practices into all class instruction. For this school year, all staff will receive professional development in various literacy strategies and intervention techniques, including ARC Core, RTI tiered strategies, Academic Discourse for ELLs, embedding literacy skills into content instruction, guided reading, and phonics. Resources will include providing teachers with appropriate materials for continued training. Highly qualified teachers' salaries will be paid using Title I funds.

Target dates: 9.1.24-6.30.25

Person(s) responsible: Building Principal, Executive Director for Human Resources, Asst. Superintendent for Business

#### **4. High Quality and On-Going Professional Development:**

The district is committed to ongoing, high-quality professional development for all our teachers, teaching assistants, and administrators. These programs are offered through speakers/presenters, workshops, conferences, and discussion forums. The district professional development committee, served by teacher and administrator representatives from every building and at the district level, collects feedback from the staff in the form of an annual Needs Assessment, as well as surveys after Superintendent's Conference Days professional development sessions. These data help inform the decision-making for the subsequent professional development, which is designed based on teacher feedback, administrators' perceived needs for their staff as well as best practices in the content areas and technology advancement needs. Ongoing training in areas such as for our ELL population, and RTI for our struggling learners support our teachers in reaching the needs of all students in the classroom. Opportunities to advance their technology skills allow teachers to remain on the cutting edge, including training on hardware, software, and web-based programs. For this school year, staff will receive professional development in a variety of literacy strategies and intervention techniques, including ARC Core, RTI tiered strategy PD, Academic Discourse for ELLs, embedding literacy skills into content instruction, guided reading, and targeted literacy instruction. Resources will include providing teachers with appropriate materials for continued training.

Target dates: 9.1.24-6.30.25

Person(s) Responsible: Executive Director for Human Resources, Directors, PD Committee, and PD Planning Subcommittee(s), ASI

#### **5. Strategies to Attract Highly Qualified Teachers to High-Needs Schools:**

The district posts all open teaching positions on OLAS, the BOCES-hosted website for educational openings across NYS and lower CT. For every open position, we receive dozens to hundreds of applications from prospective teachers new to teaching, as well as many who are already teaching and want to change districts to come to Port Chester. Our diversity is attractive to many, and we seek to hire the best candidates from the vast

pool, many of whom are bilingual in Spanish. We host student-teachers from various colleges and universities, giving the teacher candidate an in-district experience that prompts many to apply for positions after their studies. In addition, many of our teachers begin as Teaching Assistants and gain experience in the Port Chester classroom before becoming teachers themselves. Many of our teachers were Port Chester students as well. Additionally, our administrators attend diversity fairs for hiring and reach out to local colleges and universities for partnerships that lead to a teacher pipeline.

Target dates: 9.1.24 - 6.30.25

Person(s) Responsible: Principal, Executive Director for Human Resources

## **6. Strategies to Increase Parental Involvement:**

Teachers and Principals will provide workshops in academic, social/emotional learning, and character education in the evening throughout the year. Our Family Liaison offers workshops throughout the year educating parents on how to support their children in their learning and illustrating how the dual language program model works. Our Community Schools Coordinator also supports parents with workshops, and individual meetings, as well as connecting parents with resources in the community. The Pre-K program allows us to connect with incoming students and families ahead of their entry into our school. School leadership, including administration and teachers, work with the PTA to pilot a “classroom hero” program in which one or two parents or guardians in each class volunteer to help coordinate activities, disseminate information, and collaborate with the classroom teacher to increase opportunities for parental involvement. Teachers utilize digital tools to connect with parents through messaging features regularly. District newsletters, notifications on our website, and all parent communication is sent home in both English and Spanish to ensure our parents have the opportunity to stay abreast of all information regarding their child and school. Over the years, we have increased our number of translators for this information to expedite the translation of these materials.

Target dates: 9.1.24-6.30.25

Person(s) Responsible: Building Principal, APs, Directors, Instructional Support Specialists, Teachers, Community School Coordinator, Pre-K Supervisor

## **7. Pre-School Transition Strategies:**

To prepare for the transition to Kindergarten, the staff functions to ensure a seamless passage for the children and their families. Direct run and delegate agencies offer support, information, and referrals to families leaving the Pre-K program. Transition planning begins for each child and family at least three months before the child's moving to Kindergarten. Children entering Kindergarten participate in activities that may include children, staff, and parents visiting the elementary school. Parent meetings are held to discuss school readiness and expectations. Meetings are held individually and in small groups, to assist parents with the Kindergarten registration process. Forums are held for families, with school staff as speakers. Referrals are made to the Committee on Special Education for children with disabilities, with parental permission. Staff members review and evaluate these activities annually to ensure the needs of parents and children are met. New ideas are added or modified as programs evolve. A Kindergarten skills assessment is administered at the end of the school year. The contracted community-based organization works to meet the goals and objectives of the Port Chester School District, so there is a smooth transition between

curriculums, providing the foundational skills necessary in pre-K for students to be successful in Kindergarten. Children are assessed three times a year (fall, winter, and spring) in the following six research-based domains: social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics. These assessments provide information to help teachers determine if students are making the appropriate growth in pre-K needed to succeed in Kindergarten. Kindergarten screening is held in the spring to help assess children's readiness for Kindergarten. The district has created a new entrant screening protocol for all to follow, including the state requirement documents and other important screening tools such as HLQ, video, informal interview, NYSITELL as needed, and the Woodcock-Munoz as needed. Ongoing training and improvements to the K screening process will occur in 2022-23.

Target dates 9.1.24-6.30.25

Person(s) Responsible: Pre-K Supervisor, Building Principal, APs

## **8. Teacher Participation in Making Assessment Decisions:**

Teachers collaborate with administration to help determine assessment tools, calendar dates for assessments, report card changes, and pilots. Instructional Support Staff were hired to help support and lead the teacher involvement in many areas, one of them being assessment decisions. K-8 uses a universal screening three times a year for benchmarking and data collection. Through the RTI process, teachers make ongoing instructional decisions based on progress monitoring assessment data. Teachers meet after assessments are given to analyze and determine the next steps. From teacher feedback, the district determines if the specific assessment should continue or be changed. In K-5 there was a collaboration in creating a standard report card with specific grading guidelines and assessments. This school year, district students in 3-8 will take the NYS computer-based assessments in ELA and math. The district had adopted the IRLA/ENIL assessments and SchoolPace software through the ARC Core literacy program that includes progress monitoring for all students, including our ELLs. The K-5 staff researched and piloted the ARC Core program's embedded assessments to assess students' reading skills. In 2022-23, K-5 implemented the Core and grade 6 implemented Toolkits and progress monitoring in reading classes.

Target dates 9.1.24-6.30.25

Persons responsible - Building principal, APs, Directors, ASI, Supervisor of K-8 Teaching and Learning

## **9. Timely and Additional Assistance to Students Having Difficulties Mastering Standards:**

The Port Chester School District continues to improve on the RTI model. At the elementary level, the district-wide RTI Elementary Committee created a RTI flowchart, RtI forms on Google Drive for academic and behavior, and an inventory of tiered intervention programs available and desired training needed for the upcoming school year. All staff have ongoing training about the RTI process starting at the classroom level. For our ELL population, we continue to work on finding appropriate intervention materials, specifically for our Spanish speakers. To better serve our special education students, our staff will receive refreshers and additional training in available programs while collaborating on best practices. The key is collecting the data using targeted instruction outside their core instruction. The district expanded its after-school and summer school programming to help meet Tier II instruction for many students. At the middle school level, the RTI team

accomplished creating targeted Tier II groups as well as having classroom teachers collaborate on progress monitoring specific students within their team. Teams on all levels continue to reflect on best practices and revise/adapt curriculum and formative assessments to align with the standards, yet meet the needs of the students. For this school year, the staff will implement the ARC reading program and its differentiated model to meet all students' needs, including Tiers II and III, schedule a separate time for RTI, create small targeted after-school groups, and purchase additional resources such as Imagine Learning software to support the standards and student improvement with supplemental instruction.

Target dates 9.1.24-6.30.25

Persons responsible - Building principal, APs, Directors, ASI, Deputy Superintendent

### **Coordination and Integration of Federal, State, and Local Programs and Resources:**

- a. School Parent Involvement Policy
- b. Planning to meet the needs of homeless students
- A. The partial 1% set aside for parent programs will take place in parent training in understanding Title I rights responsibilities, Next Generation standards, the new IRLA/ENIL assessments, program goals and outcomes, and how to help your child at home.
- B. Homeless: Port Chester-Rye UFSD has conducted a random residency study to provide data to explain the continued increase in student population. This fact is illustrated in the increase of homeless students over the past two years. It was established that the mobility rate of many families is higher than estimated; this is due to extreme poverty, increases in rents, limited housing stock, COVID-19, and an influx of new residents. With the increasing population, the district will ensure the set-aside funding is maintained and used for our Homeless liaison to meet the needs of children. McKinney Vento grant funding this year will abide by all the elements included in the law and provide all the services to all identified students under the definitions and parameters outlined in the No Child Left Behind Law.

Target dates: 9.1.24-6.30.25

Person(s) Responsible: Deputy Superintendent, Principals, District Homeless Liaison