Superintendent’s 2020-2021 Report
on JOURNEY 2025
the NNPS Strategic Plan

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Superintendent
June 2021
Initiatives and Accomplishments

- During the 2020-2021 school year, the school division expanded its one-to-one technology initiative to provide a Chromebook for every student in kindergarten through 12th grade to support learning in-person and online. Families in need of internet access were provided with Wi-fi hotspots.
- Annual federal funding plans and applications for Title I, II, III and IV grants were written and presented by staff, and approved by the School Board.
- A compensation increase and a bonus were provided to all regular, contracted full-time employees in March 2021.
- A 2021-22 operating budget was drafted and approved by the School Board in the amount of $336.8 million. The budget includes several compensation adjustments:
  - A 3% salary increase for all full-time employees
  - Salary scale adjustments for teachers
  - Compression adjustments for teacher scales, an increase to 1.5% between years of experience from 12 – 19
  - Salary scale adjustment of one grade for bus drivers
  - Salary scale adjustment of two grades for nurses
- The approved budget also includes the addition of five school counselors, two licensed clinical social workers, two psychologists, a central office college and career readiness position, five administrative positions for schools that need additional support and an assistant principal for Huntington Middle School, and funding to make the five high school college and career specialist positions full-time.

Awards and Achievements

Each day in Newport News Public Schools the focus is on one mission: ensuring that all students graduate college, career and citizen-ready.

The Newport News Public Schools community commits to ensuring all graduates will be:

- **College-Ready** - Whether it be in college or the workplace, graduates of NNPS will understand the importance of being life-long learners. Graduates will be prepared for future learning and to take on new challenges.

- **Career-Ready** - By offering a variety of certifications and opportunities for all students, graduates will be ready to join the workforce in a globally competitive market. Graduates will understand the importance of having a career mindset.

- **Citizen-Ready** - As a result of the commitment to students’ social, emotional and academic development, graduates of NNPS will be competent in civic engagement, intellectual freedom, service to community, and tenets of diversity.

The Five-Year Strategic Plan, Journey 2025, is intended to engage the 4,500+ dedicated members of the Newport News Public Schools team in the work of transforming our school division and public education into a system that truly meets the academic and social development needs of every student.

Journey 2025 was launched this year. It was developed by a diverse committee of business and industry professionals, city and community leaders, and educators at all levels. The plan is specifically designed to be transformative and forward thinking. It ensures that our school division will have a social and emotional curriculum, and it cultivates something we are well on way to doing – digital transformation and blended learning.

Designed to be responsive to a rapidly changing global workforce, Journey 2025 serves as a call to action for our community to support equitable outcomes for every student, which includes expanded opportunities and access to rigorous coursework and workplace readiness opportunities.
The plan has five strategic goals to ensure that we get this important work completed:

1. **Student Success** speaks to academic achievement and excellence. To meet this goal, we will engage and challenge all students in authentic, rigorous, culturally relevant learning experiences.

2. Our focus on **Student & Staff Wellness** will create an environment that promotes the social, emotional and physical well-being of students and employees.

3. **Employee Expertise.** NNPS will cultivate and celebrate a highly skilled and diverse employee workforce through professional development, coaching and other supports. Great school divisions emphasize continuous learning and growth and NNPS professional educators will remain on the cutting edge with the best and innovative practices.

4. **Journey 2025** will continue our efforts to establish supportive educational partners in local business, community and non-profit organizations. Every year we celebrate the many Enhanced Partnerships that make NNPS a special place for students.

5. Last, but not least of our strategic plan goals, is **Stewardship of School Division Resources.** We will ensure that financial and human capital decisions are consistently made with a focus on the best interests of students, safety and our pursuit of academic excellence. Additionally, our continued promise to our community and staff will be to remain transparent in matters of fiscal management.

There are two key items which will power this plan moving forward: the Newport News Public Schools Profile of a Learner and our focus on equity.

Our profile incorporates the characteristics of the Virginia Profile of a Graduate: Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Collaboration, Communication and Citizenship, while also emphasizing the qualities that our community values in our future graduates.

This report highlights strategic work initiated and achieved in advancing the Strategic Goals of Journey 2025 during the 2020-2021 school year.

### NNPS PROFILE OF A LEARNER

As Learners, we are...
- **Academically Prepared:** Adaptable
- **Equity-Minded:** Collaborative
- **Critical Thinking:** Critical
- **Creative Thinking:** Coding
- **Collaboration:** Champions of Change
- **Communication:** Respectful
- **Citizenship:** Influential

As Leaders, we are...
- **Academically Prepared:** Self-Directed
- **Equity-Minded:** Critical
- **Critical Thinking:** Collaborative
- **Creative Thinking:** Coding
- **Collaboration:** Champions of Change
- **Communication:** Respectful
- **Citizenship:** Influential

As Innovators, we are...
- **Adaptable:** Innovative
- **Deliberate:** Critical
- **Curious:** Collaborative
- **Entrepreneurial:** Coding
- **Problem-Solvers:** Champions of Change
- **Divergent Thinkers:** Self-Directed

As Leaders, we are...
- **Academically Prepared:** Self-Directed
- **Equity-Minded:** Critical
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### Initiatives and Accomplishments

- **We grow the natural talents and skills of our NNPS employees to ensure that all learners find success.** NNPS is committed to elevating the knowledge, skill and experience levels of all employees.

- The Teaching and Learning Department offered just-in-time professional development for all educators throughout the school year to support virtual learning, blended learning and in-person instruction. Instructional specialists and coaches led some of this important training for our school-based staff. In addition, teacher leaders met with T&L administrators throughout the school year for insightful discussions and input on pandemic safety and virtual and hybrid learning.

- Teachers across the division are IGNITING their passion for teaching through our summer learning event, IGNITE. Nearly 50 courses are being offered in the summer.

- On June 22 from 12 to 3 p.m., NNPS will host a virtual Blended Learning Conference featuring Dr. Catlin Tucker, a bestselling author and international trainer who has written numerous books and blogs on blended learning. Educators are invited to attend for an exploration of the why, how, and what of blended learning, along with a deeper dive into practical learning models.

- The Technology Department provided on-going support and professional development for educators on Canvas and Zoom to facilitate online and blended learning. Our Digital Transformation journey began in fall 2020 and is a comprehensive shift in teaching, learning and leadership strategies that will support all learners through purposeful integration of technology. NNPS will continue to leverage technology to personalize and transform learning by combining innovative teaching practices, professional development and a rigorous curriculum.

### Awards and Achievements

Newport News Public Schools is also home to talented award-winning employees:

- Pat Franklin, supervisor of visual and performing arts, earned the 2021 National Art Education Association Southeastern Region Art Education Award
- Cathy Alexander, executive director of nutrition and wellness, earned 2020-2021 No Kid Hungry Virginia School Meals Hero Award
- Educators Michael Belamy and Tiffanie Smith were named WISE Gold Star Teachers
- Lead Custodian Tammy Davis was recognized as a Facility Cleaning Decisions Magazine’s frontline honoree in December 2021.
for our students. Universal supports and practices were provided for all students during the school day during virtual learning and in-person hybrid learning. Some students required additional intervention and mental health treatment that was guided by mental health clinicians, student support specialists, school psychologists and social workers.

**Student Meal Service**

Meal service continued for all students at 20 locations across the city during virtual learning. Families could go to the closest location and receive a free prepackaged breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner for each student. On Fridays, families also received breakfast, a snack and lunch for Saturday and Sunday.

When some students returned to in-person instruction, meal service at school began. Families were also able to continue to receive prepackaged meals for their children.

**Flexible Work Scheduling for Staff**

From August 2020 through January 2021, NNPS was among a few school divisions that allowed staff to work primarily from the safety of their homes with minimal in-person reporting.

**Sports**

After establishing COVID-19 protocols to ensure the health and safety of student-athletes, NNPS was able to resume sports conditioning and contests. Shortened fall and spring sports seasons enabled student-athletes to resume play.

**In-Person Instruction**

Newport News Public Schools developed and implemented a Return to Learn Plan based on the Commonwealth of Virginia’s updated and consolidated Guidance for Reopening PreK-12 Schools and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) three core indicators (mitigation assessment, 14-day case incidence and/or test positivity) to assess the risk of transmission in schools and to inform decisions about school programming. As students returned to in-person instruction, the school division also began following the Virginia Department of Health’s recommendation to consider the level of impact of COVID-19 transmission on a specific school.

NNPS developed an academic plan that supports teaching and learning for all students. The elementary school schedule was designed to support both in-person and virtual students four days a week. Students attended school for a half day of instruction in reading and math and then went home to work virtually for science, social studies and resource classes (PE, music and art). Students who were participating in virtual learning worked on science, social studies and resource during the morning and met with their classroom teacher synchronously to work on reading and mathematics in the afternoon. With this model, all students (hybrid and virtual) received the same amount of instructional time with their teacher.

Students in grades 6-12 whose families opted for in-person learning were divided into two cohorts and attended school on their assigned days and learned remotely on days they did not attend school. Teachers work concurrently with both their hybrid and virtual students throughout the day to ensure all students have teacher-facilitated instruction. Beginning in April, secondary students were offered the opportunity to attend school in-person four days a week, upon request.

**Initiatives and Accomplishments**

NNPS expanded the use of technology to one device per student. Learning was facilitated through the deployment of the Canvas Learning Management System. Because of this significant investment in resources and training, NNPS is poised to move forward with a blended approach to learning that combines in-person classroom learning with digital resources and expanded learning opportunities.

**Measuring Student Growth**

- NNPS maximized opportunities to improve overall student literacy through the use of diagnostic testing throughout the school year.
- PALs Assessment for Reading: Elementary students grades K-3 were administered the PALs Reading Assessment during the beginning, middle and end of the school year. Overall 52% percent of students met the PALs benchmark in Spring 2021 growth. Reading and Math Inventory Assessments: Students in grades 3 through 8 participated in the Reading Inventory (RI) assessments. Overall, 34% of elementary students demonstrated growth in reading; while 60% of middle school students demonstrated a year of growth.

**Awards and Achievements**

- The Class of 2021 boasts 1,620 graduates, who earned more than $30 million in scholarships and academic awards.
- The first inaugural class of the Community Captains, the college readiness program launched in partnership with Christopher Newport University, graduated from NNPS. Of the 78 students, 17 have committed to attend CNU.
- Twenty-four NNPS students successfully completed one or more certifications and were offered full-time employment following graduation through New Horizons Regional Education Center’s the Good Life Solutions program.
- Sixty-nine Early College Scholars from the Class of 2021 earned college credit hours starting them on a path for success in colleges and universities across the Commonwealth.
- Newport News Public Schools earned six 2020 Virginia Board of Education Exemplar Performance School Awards for high student achievement, continuous improvement and innovative practices. Deer Park and General Stanford elementary schools received the highest achievement award for the second year in a row. Denbigh High, Discovery STEM Academy and Marshall Early Learning Center earned the continuous improvement award. The school division was recognized for innovative practices in STEM instruction delivered through the Engineering Design Challenge presented by our dedicated partners including Busch Gardens, the U.S. Navy, Dominion Energy, Jefferson Lab and the Mariners Museum.
• The Denbigh High School Aviation Academy was listed among the top schools in state in 2021 by Virginia Living magazine.
• Middle and high school students in Career and Technical Education organizations earned 23 awards during regional and state competitions in 2021.
• Members of the Young Men of Distinction at An Achievable Dream Middle and High School earned first place in the 2021 Black History Virtual Trivia Bowl.
• Two student artists earned accolades in the Virginia School Boards Association’s Tidewater Regional Art Contest. Sara Zhang from Cottenden Middle School placed first in her division, and Tina Nguyen from Woodside High School earned third place for the high school level.
• Miles Thomas, a sophomore at Heritage High School, was named the state Region 2 winner in the 2020 Computer Science in Your Neighborhood competition.
• Jazlyn Jones, a seventh grader at Booker T. Washington Middle School, earned the grand prize in the tenth annual James River Association Poster Contest.

Student & Staff Wellness
Create an environment that promotes the social, emotional, and physical well-being for students and employees.

Initiatives and Accomplishments
Newport News Public Schools worked to ensure the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction.

The NNPS health plan addresses daily health screenings, physical distancing on buses and in classrooms, social distancing: cleaning and disinfecting, the use of face coverings; and restricts mixing groups of students, large gatherings and the use of communal spaces (cafeterias, gyms, auditoriums).

Daily Health Screenings
NNPS implemented daily COVID-19 screenings for all students, staff and visitors to be completed prior to entry to its buildings. Masks are required for all staff, visitors, and students. Physical distancing of 3-6 foot is used in all classrooms and on the school bus. Students eat in their classrooms and must remain 3-6 feet apart. Cleaning and disinfecting are provided throughout the day by custodial staff and air filtration systems are available as needed. Contact tracing is completed by NNPS Health Services Staff and Health Services Contact Tracers.

Before any students could return to school in person, each school division in Virginia was required to submit a health plan to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The NNPS plan outlines the school division’s plans for student and staff health monitoring; communication plan with staff, students and families; preparation of student health services; promoting behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19; hygiene practices; protecting vulnerable individuals and preparing for when someone gets sick. Newport News Public Schools submitted its health plan to the VDOE on July 17, 2020.

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Social and Emotional Support
The cumulative effects of COVID-19 have had an impact on every student, every family, and every staff member in NNPS. These universal impacts have heightened the need for learning environments that are welcoming to and supportive of all students. NNPS remains committed to helping all students weather this crisis through recognizing and responding to their emotions and promoting positive and prosocial relationships. Social emotional learning (SEL) is critical to re-engage students, support adults, rebuild relationships and school communities, and create equitable learning environments for all students.

While SEL promotes resiliency and managing emotions, some students may require mental health support beyond what is provided through a multi-tiered approach for social emotional learning. NNPS developed a plan focused on providing mental health supports and services to provide equitable learning opportunities.

NNPS Mitigation Strategies
In addition, Newport News Public Schools has adopted procedures on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

• Universal and correct wearing of masks. All students, staff and visitors are to wear masks while on school grounds.
• Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding). Desks in classrooms were reconfigured to allow for 3–6-foot social distancing as indicated for elementary and secondary grade levels. Elementary students remained within their cohorts throughout the day.
• Handwashing and respiratory etiquette. Wellness stations are available in all classrooms which include hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, anti-bacterial hand soap, and adult and child disposable masks. Coughing and sneezing into a tissue or sleeve, proper disposal of used tissues and proper handwashing are stressed to students and staff. Posters and signage are used throughout all school buildings.
• Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities including improving ventilation. Increased cleaning and disinfection is conducted by custodial staff, and air purification systems are available to all classrooms and buildings where the HVAC systems do not meet current ASHRAE standards.
• All NNPS Health Services Staff, Athletic Trainers and Health Services Contact Tracers were trained in contact tracing, NNPS Health Services collaborates with the Peninsula Health District to identify and isolate or quarantine those students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 or were a close contact of a person with COVID-19. NNPS follows the VDH Algorithm for Evaluating a Child with COVID-19 Symptoms or Exposure.
• NNPS Health Services nursing staff provided vaccinations and care to staff members at participating community vaccination clinics in Newport News. In collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health and the City of Newport News, NNPS also hosted a vaccination clinic for students age 12 and above.
• NNPS collaborates with the Peninsula Health District which works directly with the Virginia Department of Health and the CDC for our COVID-19 guidance.

NNPS COVID-19 Dashboard
Newport News Public Schools launched an online dashboard in November 2020 to keep families, staff and the community informed about positive COVID-19 cases within the school division. The dashboard provides the number of positive COVID cases by location each week. In addition to eastern region, Peninsula and Newport News transmission data from the Virginia Department of Health, which evaluates statistics weekly to identify reliable trends.
The Denbigh High School Aviation Academy was listed among the top schools in state in 2021 by Virginia Living magazine. Middle and high school students in Career and Technical Education student organizations earned 20 awards during regional and state competitions in 2021. Members of the Young Men of Distinction at An Achievable Dream Middle and High School earned first place in the 2021 Black History Virtual Trivia Bowl. Two student artists earned accolades in the Virginia School Boards Association’s Tidewater Regional Art Contest: Sara Zhang from Cottenden Middle School placed first in her division, and Tina Nguyen from Woodside High School earned third place for the high school level. Miles Thomas, a sophomore at Heritage High School, was named the state Region 2 winner in the 2020 Computer Science in Your Neighborhood competition. Jazlyn Jones, a seventh grader at Booker T. Washington Middle School, earned the grand prize in the tenth annual James River Association Poster Contest.

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**Measuring Student Growth**
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- In mathematics, 67% of elementary students demonstrated growth on the Math Inventory (MI) assessment.

**Awards and Achievements**
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- The first inaugural class of the Community Captains, the college readiness program launched in partnership with Christopher Newport University, graduated from NNPS. Of the 78 students, 17 have committed to attend CNU.
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### NNPS Profile of a Learner

**As Excellent learners, we are:**
- Responsive to Challenges
- Self-Directed
- Resilient
- Adaptive

**As Academically-Prepared learners, we are:**
- Literate
- Applies us of our knowledge
- Knowledgeable
- Accountable
- Intrinsically Motivated
- Digitally Literate

**As Emotionally-Intelligent learners, we are:**
- Committed
- Resilient
- Empathetic

**As Ethical learners, we are:**
- Responsible
- Respectful

**As Innovators, we are:**
- Deliberate
- Curious
- Entrepreneurial
- Problem-Solvers
- Divergent Thinkers

**As Reflexive learners, we are:**
- Receptive
- Self- Aware
- Goal-Oriented

### Initiatives and Accomplishments

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Twitter Chats were held to provide educators with an opportunity to share resources and tips.

Another important focus this year was literacy. To support and advance literacy instruction, a K-12 Literacy Team comprised of teachers and other professionals was formed to guide the development of a division-wide literacy plan.

The University of Employee Development (U-Ed) helps employees navigate the vast array of in-house professional development opportunities. Professional learning catalogs are published each semester to highlight the wide variety of division-level development opportunities available. Current offerings are available online in Frontline.

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- **Citizen-Ready** - As a result of the commitment to students’ social, emotional and academic development, graduates of NNPS will be competent in civic engagement, intellectual freedom, service to community, and tenets of diversity.

The Five-Year Strategic Plan, Journey 2025, is intended to engage the 4,500+ dedicated members of the Newport News Public Schools team in the work of transforming our school division and public education into a system that truly meets the academic and social development needs of every student.

Journey 2025 was launched this year. It was developed by a diverse committee of business and industry professionals, city and community leaders, and educators at all levels.

The plan is specifically designed to be transformative and forward thinking. It ensures that our school division will have a social and emotional curriculum, and it cultivates something we are well on way to doing – digital transformation and blended learning.

Designed to be responsive to a rapidly changing global workforce, Journey 2025 serves as a call to action for our community to support equitable outcomes for every student, which includes expanded opportunities and access to rigorous coursework and workplace readiness opportunities.
Initiatives and Accomplishments

• During the 2020-2021 school year, the school division expanded its one-to-one technology initiative to provide a Chromebook for every student in kindergarten through 12th grade to support learning in-person and online. Families in need of internet access were provided with Wi-fi hotspots.

• Annual federal funding plans and applications for Title I, II, III and IV grants were written and presented by staff, and approved by the School Board.

• A compensation increase and a bonus were provided to all regular, contracted full-time employees in March 2021.

• A 2021-22 operating budget was drafted and approved by the School Board in the amount of $336.8 million. The budget includes several compensation adjustments:
  o A 3% salary increase for all full-time employees
  o Salary scale adjustments for teachers
  o Compression adjustments for teacher scales, an increase to 1.5% between years of experience from 12 – 19
  o Salary scale adjustment of one grade for bus drivers
  o Salary scale adjustment of two grades for nurses

The approved budget also includes the addition of five school counselors, two licensed clinical social workers, two psychologists, a central office college and career readiness position, five administrative positions for schools that need additional support and an assistant principal for Huntington Middle School, and funding to make the five high school college and career specialist positions full-time.

Awards and Achievements

• NNPS earned an Association of School Business Officials Meritorious Budget Award and a Certificate of Excellence for Financial Reporting.
Superintendent's 2020-2021 Report on JOURNEY 2025 the NNPS Strategic Plan

George Parker, III, Ph.D.
Superintendent

June 2021