

THE DISTRICT'S MISSION, VISION, BELIEFS, VALUES AND THEORY OF CHANGE

PURPOSE: To establish the district's mission, vision, beliefs, values and theory of change.

Mission and Vision

As representatives of the Tulsa community and leaders of our district, the Board defines the District's mission and vision to guide the organization and administration of its schools. The Board's vision, detailed in its strategic plan *Destination Excellence*, is that Tulsa Public Schools be the destination for extraordinary educators who work with our community and families to ignite the joy of learning and prepare every student for the greatest success in college, careers and life. Doing so, the District will fulfill its mission to inspire and prepare every student to love learning, achieve ambitious goals and make positive contributions to our world.

Through *Destination Excellence*, the Board adopted a comprehensive framework for key strategic priorities. This policy framework is based on—and organized around—the belief that the entire Tulsa Public Schools community must be learners, contributors and designers for us to realize our vision. It articulates the priorities each of us—educators, community members, students and staff—will undertake to make our aims a reality. It also describes our beliefs and values as guideposts for how we approach our work and implement our priorities.

Our Beliefs

Our beliefs describe what we hold as inherent truths.

Our Students Can: Every child can learn. Every child has talent. Every child has value. Great education is demanding and engaging, structured and joyful, challenging and supportive. To succeed in a competitive world and to serve as the next generation of leaders, students must engage in their education, own their learning and feel accepted and supported in our schools.

Our teachers make it happen: Extraordinary teachers are the heart of successful schools. They must continually hone their craft and content knowledge to design engaging learning and facilitate success in every student. We require much of our teachers, and we must provide the conditions and work environments that promote professional satisfaction and student achievement. This means that our entire community must value, respect, and support teachers as the irreplaceable professionals they are.

Our principals are key: Principals' responsibilities are strategic, vast and intense. As leaders, they must be visible, hire the right staff, cultivate talent, build relationships with families and communities, foster positive and safe school culture and ensure results. As such, the education service center must support principals' growth as instructional leaders and be their primary support system in strengthening the quality of teaching and learning in all classrooms.

Our district is "all in": Effective teams collaborate and continually assess and improve their service to schools. They attend to present needs while preparing for the future. This means our employees and board must work together, reflect, adjust, think ahead and innovate in service to powerful teaching and learning.

Our community is essential: Our children and schools need all of us—educators, families, and community partners. High quality schools are vital to the health of our community. We must engage our families and all of Tulsa by embracing transparency, holding ourselves accountable to high standards, proactively communicating and working as a team united in the success of every student.

Our Values

Our values and beliefs serve as the foundation for all of our work and are the essence of our culture. Our values guide how we work and interact with each other.

Equity: All children deserve the opportunity to develop their full academic and social potential. Valuing equity means that we must provide resources and supports matched to student need, for every student in every school. Our diversity is a community treasure, and we must foster an inclusive environment by examining biases and resolving unfair practices.

Character: We are honest, trustworthy and have high standards of behavior. We make decisions, take action and approach our work based on what is best for our students and their success. We do the right thing even when it is hard. We face difficulty with courage and have the moral fortitude to act in accordance with our beliefs. While we do not always agree, we treat one another with kindness and respect.

Excellence: Tulsa needs and expects world-class public schools. We work hard together and expect a lot of one another because high standards produce exemplary knowledge, skills, abilities and mindsets. Achieving excellence means striving for it every moment of every day. It means sweating the small stuff while we focus on the big picture with determination and persistence.

Team: We care for one another, support the personal and professional development of one another, and work together to improve our community. Together we celebrate success, learn from struggles and invest in the development of our teams and team members. While we value our work together and invest mightily in it, we also honor and respect the commitments our team members have to their families and communities outside of work.

Joy: We love to have fun! Play is invaluable for students and adults alike. Joy at school and at work makes us more productive, because when we create, innovate and imagine, our motivation grows. At Tulsa Public Schools, we foster exuberant classrooms, schools and places of work where children and adults pursue their passions and are relentlessly curious. We want to ensure that everyone knows the excitement that comes from working deeply on a problem, task or concept and experiencing breakthrough moments.

Theory of Change

The Board's theory of change is that Tulsa Public Schools will be the destination for top educators and a proof point for what is possible in urban education by embracing innovation and supporting the design and implementation of new learning models while continuously improving teaching and learning for all. The power of our collective efforts will result in each student graduating ready for success in college, careers and life.

To implement this theory of change, the District—as an organization—must be learners, contributors and designers.

- As a learning organization, TPS will make investments to continuously improve the current system and ensure that all educators, students and schools benefit from high quality teaching and learning
 - A key strategic initiative is to move the system forward by creating powerful learning experiences for all. One example of a strategic priority within this initiative is building teachers' knowledge and expanding their mastery of content and the instructional practices needed to provide powerful and engaging instruction to students with diverse needs and interests.
- As a contributing organization, TPS will foster a culture of empowerment and engagement in the classroom, the community and in the district in order to spur change and effectively manage its diverse portfolio of schools.
 - A key strategic initiative is to ensure the well-being and success of our students by cultivating safe, supportive, and joyful school cultures. One example of a strategic priority within this initiative is the development of school support teams to assist students struggling to meet academic, behavior and attendance goals, and the building of positive, empowering cultures in schools that embrace all students, families and communities
 - A key strategic initiative is to develop leaders at classroom and school level. One example of a strategic priority within this initiative is developing strong professional learning pathways to develop the classroom management and instructional competencies of first- and second-year teachers of core subjects or special education.
- As designing organization, TPS will foster and embrace innovation through new instructional practices and classroom and school designs to help re-imagine the public school experience
 - A key strategic initiative is to expand what is possible by engaging in classroom, school, and organizational design. Examples of a strategic priority within this initiative include fostering promising innovative practices of individual teachers and teams of teachers through “kickstart” funding opportunities, as well as pursuing strategic partnerships with educational service providers to expand the District's instructional capacity and reach.

To be successful and transformative, the District's Theory of Change must be supported by the appropriate organizational conditions, which shall be grounded in our values and beliefs, especially the value of equity. In addition, as described above, an underpinning belief of the Board is that schools must be staffed with high capacity teams that are empowered with the flexibility and authority to articulate how they will design, learn and contribute in service to the district's vision and academic priorities. Flexibility is a key strategy to accelerate student achievement, as are change and performance management (including a high-quality school performance framework), a strong data infrastructure, a central office culture of service, and a resource allocation aligned with the District's values, beliefs and Theory of Change.

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