



# NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS GREAT EXPECTATIONS 2009–13 STRATEGIC PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**96.2%** of community meeting participants agree that all teachers must have the skills and knowledge to provide quality instruction to meet the multiple and varied needs of students.

**95.5%** of community meeting participants say all new teachers should receive coaching and assistance from an effective “mentor teacher.”

**96.6%** of community meeting participants say all Newark high school students should be expected to graduate from high school.

A strategic plan represents a collective vision of where we intend to go ... and provides a basic blueprint of how to get there. For Newark Public Schools, it is a down payment on turning around our school system. The four priorities and 13 strategies described in this plan will drive all of our thinking, actions, and investments in the coming years. When we do what we say we are going to do, the community should expect to see steady gains in student progress, year by year.

The stakes could not be higher. Our youth need to be able to compete in an increasingly complex, competitive, and diverse world. Many of the best new jobs require not just a high school diploma but at least two years of college. We need to raise the bar, and we are. Our goals for 2013 are very challenging:

- **Ready to learn by kindergarten.** 80 percent of our students will be ready to learn by kindergarten, up from 64 percent in 2008–09.
- **Reading and writing at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.** 80 percent will be reading and writing by the end of 3rd grade, up from 40 percent in 2008–09.
- **Ready for the middle grades.** 80 percent of 5th graders will be proficient or above in language arts literacy and 85 percent or above in math, up from 40 percent and 59 percent, respectively, in 2008–09.
- **Ready for high school.** 80 percent will be “on track for graduation,” up from 38 percent of freshmen who are on track to begin the 2009–10 school year.
- **Ready for college or work.** 80 percent will graduate, and 80 percent of graduates will enroll in college, up from 54 percent and 38 percent, respectively, in 2008–09.



Despite some encouraging progress, we have a long way to go. We must do better. And we can.

The priorities, strategies, and actions in the following pages have been carefully crafted, guided by public discussions, and informed by data. They will move us in the right direction. But words will not transform the system. People will.

*People who demand more of themselves and of each other. People who have high expectations for students and consistently send that message. People who are willing to think big, prepare well, take risks, work together, and be held accountable for results. That means all of us — administrators, teachers, staff, parents, community members, and of course, students.*

The work starts with great expectations, but it must be powered by a relentless and focused commitment to keep our promises — to each other, to the children, to our community. It is time.

#### **PRIORITY 1. Ensure highly effective teachers and principals deliver strong curriculum, instruction, and assessment**

- A challenging curriculum, instructional program, and assessment consistently implemented
- Professional improvement plans, based on students' needs and performance
- Stronger pipeline of quality teachers and principals

#### **PRIORITY 2. Build a system of great schools that serve students, their families, and the community**

- Aligned Pre-K–grade 3 programs
- Stronger middle grades
- Transformed high schools
- Aggressive turnarounds for the lowest-performing schools

#### **PRIORITY 3. Ensure that schools are safe, welcoming, and working collaboratively with parents, families, and community partners to support student success**

- Safe, family-friendly schools
- Informed and involved parents and families
- Stronger community and national partnerships

#### **PRIORITY 4. Improve our educational practice by creating an accountability system that promotes data-informed, effective, and efficient management and operations**

- Reorganized and streamlined central and regional offices
- A culture and system of accountability
- Transparent decisionmaking and reporting

**95.5%** of community meeting participants think schools should offer career and college awareness opportunities in the middle grades so students start thinking about their futures.

**100%** of community meeting participants think that schools should provide “customer service” training for all school and central office staff to ensure that parents and families are treated courteously and with respect.

**100%** of community meeting participants think schools should serve as neighborhood centers, working with community partners to provide adult education, job counseling, and similar programs and opportunities for parents and families.



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