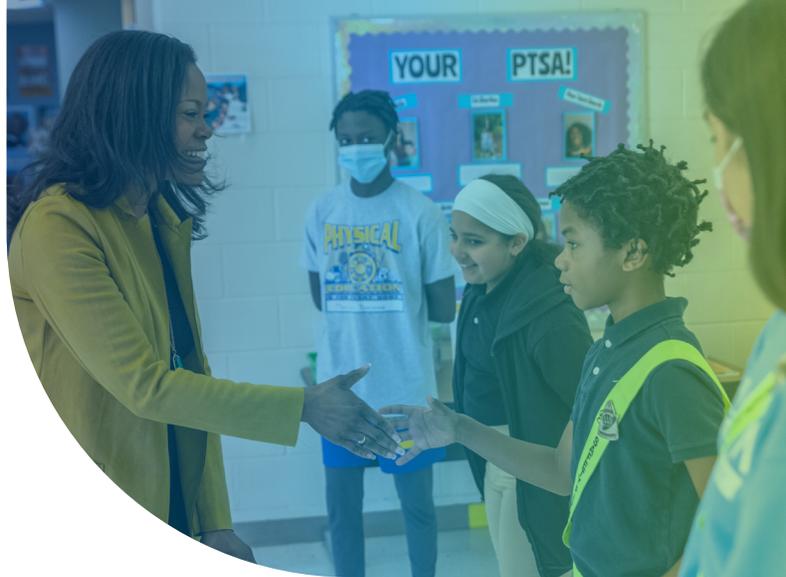


90-DAY REPORT

**SUPERINTENDENT
DR. CRYSTAL L. HILL**



Letter from the Superintendent



Dear Mecklenburg County families and community,

During this holiday season, and every day, I am grateful for our community, staff, students and for the amazing opportunity to serve as superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. When I became superintendent, I shared a 90-day engagement plan with you, outlining the strategies I planned to implement, and promised to provide updates about our progress. I am pleased to share this report that highlights our steadfast focus on the goals we set and the milestones we have accomplished as we work together to achieve our vision of excellence without exception.

Educators continued to work tirelessly to improve academic performance and ensure every student graduates ready to enroll, enlist or be employed. Students have continued to impress us with their diligence and leadership. And the community we serve gave us a resounding vote of confidence in passing the 2023 \$2.5 billion bond referendum. I am beyond thankful to serve in a community that believes in the importance of public education, and I take the responsibility to deliver the best education to CMS students to heart with every action and decision I make.

I am pleased to share a few highlights from the first 90 days of the school year:

- We honored nine outstanding principals as finalists for Principal of the Year, and we congratulate Principal Dwight Thompson, our 2023-24 CMS Principal of the Year, from Renaissance West STEAM Academy. Principal Thompson has been named to be named the Southwest Region Principal of the Year by the North Carolina Department of Instruction.
- One hundred nine of our schools rank in the top 50% in the state for Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) growth scores.
- Jay M. Robinson Middle School was named a 2023 National Blue Ribbon School, one of only eight schools selected from North Carolina and among 353 schools honored nationwide for overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps.
- Blythe and Paw Creek elementary schools earned national recognition as certified magnet schools from Magnet Schools of America. They completed a rigorous process to achieve this distinction for promoting school diversity, closing the achievement gap, integrating a theme-based curriculum throughout the school, and encouraging parent and community involvement.

- The student performance data released by the North Carolina State Board of Education showed that in Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools, all reading and math composite scores increased, including improvements in third grade literacy and high school Math I. While we still have work to do, the data showed good progress as we experienced an increase in the percentage of students achieving grade-level proficiency and college and career readiness in most grade levels across all student groups during the 2022–23 school year.
- With support from our staff, the Charlotte–Mecklenburg Board of Education has worked hard to develop meaningful goals and guardrails for our district, which will guide our actions for the next five years and take our district to new levels of excellence.
- We opened three new schools – Esperanza Global Academy, Grove Park Elementary School, Central Piedmont Early College – and rededicated Elbert Edwin Waddell High School to serve international students. These schools provide enhanced environments for learning and new opportunities for student success.
- Last, but not least, we completed our inaugural annual report for 2022–23, *A Year in Review*, showcasing our proudest achievements that make CMS great.

We could not have achieved these results without the Board of Education’s counsel and support every step of the way. My heartfelt thanks to the current and past Board Members who devoted tremendous time and energy to advance our district, because they care about our children and our future.

As I reflect on what we accomplished in just 90 days, I am energized for what we can achieve together the rest of this school year and in the years ahead. We have staff and educators who bring their passion and dedication to work every day. We have a supportive community that believes in the importance of public education and provides us with the resources to move forward. Most importantly, we have students who represent our future and who amaze us every day with their fresh ideas, resilience and diligence. They are the reason we do this work!

With gratitude,

Crystal L. Hill, Ed.D.
Superintendent



Our District

Who We Are and Excellence Without Exception in Practice

Our Mission, Vision and Strategy remain consistent as our guiding lights. Over the past 90 days, the Board of Education has engaged the community and, with support from our staff, has drafted new goals and guardrails which will drive us to achieve that vision and mission. We are now working on specific action plans to achieve the new goals over the next five years.

Excellence without Exception is about getting 1% better every day, and focusing on how we plan, organize and hire. The foundation for achieving excellence is a leadership team that is experienced, capable, and passionate about providing students with the best education that prepares them for the future. I am confident our new team can take CMS to unprecedented levels of greatness.

We have been very intentional about our planning processes and ensuring that we are organized in a way that facilitates progress toward our goals. All departments have completed organizational excellence models, the starting point for developing standard operating procedures. We have enhanced measurement and monitoring of progress on our District Annual Plan and of projects and goals throughout the district.

Excellence is accelerated by the way we serve each other, our families and the community. We are all committed to the C.R.O.W.N. experience and being:

- Customer-focused
- Responsive and Respectful
- Optimistic
- Welcoming...while providing
- Needs-based service

Training on the C.R.O.W.N. experience was delivered to office personnel in October, and we are excited to continue offering this professional development in the spring.

Excellence without Exception is not one thing – it is a mindset that defines the way we work every day.

MISSION

Lead the community in educational excellence, inspiring intellectual curiosity, creativity, and achievement so that all students reach their full potential.

VISION

Create an innovative inclusive, student-centered environment that supports the development of independent learners.

Our new goals and guardrails, established by the Board this fall with input from the community and support from our staff, will guide our actions for the next five years.

2024–29 GOALS

- 1 Early Literacy**
Percent of kindergarten through second grade students scoring at or above benchmark in early literacy as measured by DIBELS will increase from **67%** in June 2023 to **91%** by June 2029
- 2 Grades 3–8 Literacy**
Percent of students scoring college and career ready (CCR) on reading end of grade assessments in grades 3–8 will increase from **30.5%** in September 2023 to **50%** by June 2029
- 3 Math I**
Percent of students scoring college and career ready (CCR) on Math I assessments will increase from **27.4%** in September 2023 to **57%** by June 2029
- 4 Postsecondary Readiness**
Percent of rising 12th grade students on track to graduate from high school enrolled, enlisted or employed will increase by June 2029 (metric is currently in development)

2024–29 GUARDRAILS

- 1 Equity over Equality: Equitable Distribution of Outcomes (Closing Gaps)**
While ensuring schools have the resources needed to meet student needs, the Superintendent shall not neglect strategies or resources for **significantly reducing achievement gaps**.
- 2 Safety**
The Superintendent shall not allow an unsafe environment in schools, at school-related events, or on transportation.
- 3 Attend to the Whole Child: Student Well-Being & Engagement**
The Superintendent shall not neglect social-emotional support; character development support; attendance support; or access to enrichment activities that successfully engage students.
- 4 Staffing: Teacher Recruitment, Retention & Engagement**
While ensuring all schools have teachers equipped to deliver high-quality instruction, the Superintendent shall neither neglect targeted nor comprehensive strategies for teacher recruitment, retention and engagement.

Engagement By the Numbers

Community Support



\$2.8

Bond referendum passed Nov. 7

Community Engagement



10

Town hall meetings with employees and the community

School Visits



51

(as of Nov. 2)

Board Engagement



169

One-on-one and group meetings with members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

**Includes open and closed sessions, small groups, monthly leadership check-ins, Chair/Vice Chair and special meetings of the board.*

1:1 Engagements



111

Internal meetings

83

External meetings

CROWN Experience Professional Development



6

Sessions

467

Employees attended



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The first of our four Pillars of Excellence — Academic Excellence — focuses on delivering a student-first environment by creating student and family services and experiences that are unparalleled. In order to do so, we must increase equitable access to excellent learning and teaching experiences to raise achievement and eliminate achievement gaps. I have implemented the strategies we outlined to achieve Academic Excellence.

STRATEGIES

Develop a process to accelerate achievement of the Student Outcomes Focused Governance (SOFG) goals.

Collaborate with the Board of Education to develop the next set of goals and guardrails.

Nurture a culture of belief and high expectations for all students.

Establish universal processes and protocols to effectively address the needs of exceptional learners.



I am proud to report that in my first 90 days, we have completed 95% of my plan in this area. In July 2023, we launched the Capturing Kids' Hearts initiative which equips our educators with the tools to create a culture of care within their buildings and improve academic success. We assessed our goals and guardrails and made recommendations to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education for the 2023-24 school year, and the Board approved them in October. We've also launched our benchmark assessments that allow teachers and district leaders to track mastery of standards to improve teaching and learning. A process has been established for principals to provide a quarterly report on the state of their schools.



PEOPLE

EXCELLENCE

The second pillar — People Excellence — is designed to build and strengthen culture and further our commitment of excellence for all employees. I outlined the four strategies below for reaching our goal of building strong teams, while nurturing a culture of excellence built on strong, trusting, co-dependent relationships.

STRATEGIES

Ensure alignment of leadership skills that effectively address school and district needs.

Engage all Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools employee groups.

Increase effectiveness and enhance systems to monitor required training/professional development.

Enhance recruitment and retention strategies.



We have completed 91% of my plan in this area, which includes a series of town hall meetings we held for employees and meetings where I connected with leadership groups for teachers, principals and support staff. We have added a new feature for tracking professional development to MyTalent, our platform for managing registrations, and fully executed our first full professional cycle of learning for goal-aligned subjects/grade levels. We continue to work on other steps, including our Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools housing initiative, an important teacher retention and recruitment strategy.



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The third pillar — Operational Excellence — aims to optimize operational processes through aligned systems and tools that achieve desired results. My goal was to increase our operational efficiencies using transparent processes.

My strategy to achieve operational excellence was to standardize our processes and procedures. I planned the following eight steps, which we have accomplished:

STRATEGIES

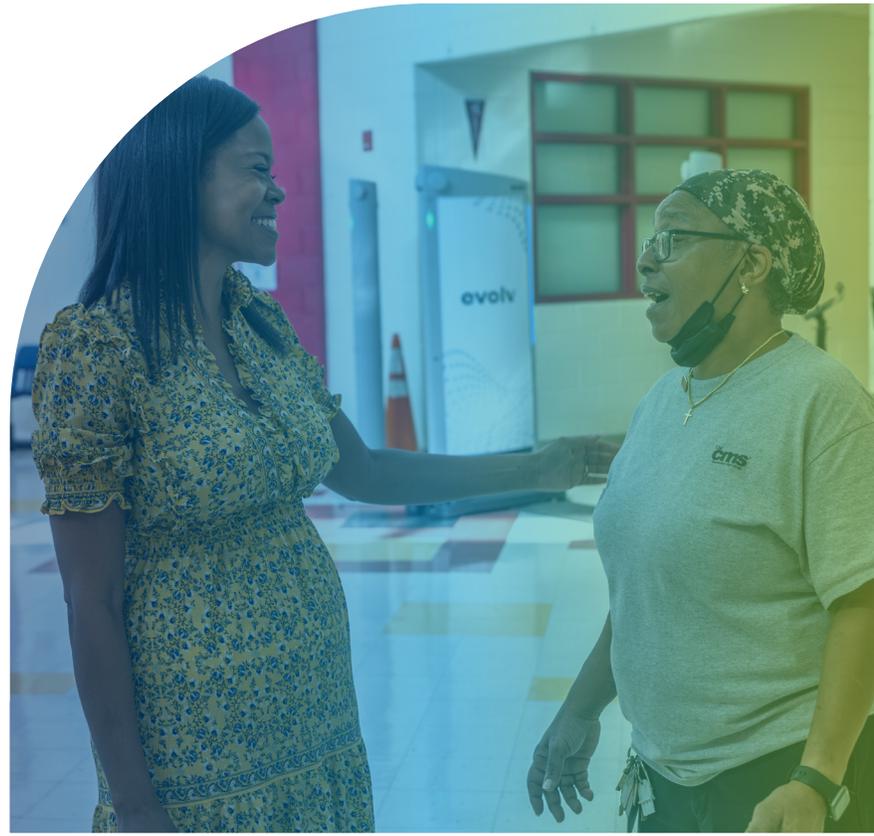
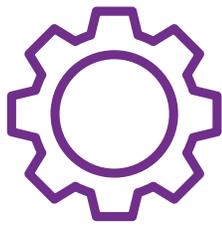
Launched an evidence-based, decision-making protocol with key stakeholders.

Launched a new budget development process.

Ensured completion and execution of Organizational Excellence models for each division and department through facilitated coaching sessions.

Solidified cadence for monitoring and reporting using effective systems and tools.

Clarified roles and responsibilities for cross-department projects and initiatives.



Reviewed systems within departmental organizational excellence models for needed improvements.

Ensured district progress with the business systems modernization process aligned with the state initiative.

Launched the district's annual plan that outlines projects and initiatives to achieve the goals and guardrails aligned to the four pillars of excellence.

I am happy to report 100% implementation of my plan for this pillar.

ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

The fourth pillar of Excellence — Engagement Excellence — focuses on leading the way through an interconnected ecosystem of families, community, corporations and organizations. In order to do so, we must nurture a culture of excellence built on strong, trusting, collaborative relationships.

The strategies I have implemented to achieve Engagement Excellence include:

STRATEGIES

Launch Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools customer service protocols.

Strengthen relationships with individual board members and the full Board of Education.

Enhance strategic partnerships.



Throughout my 90 days, I've had a chance to meet with several stakeholders — students, staff, families and the greater Mecklenburg community — to listen and gather feedback on the strengths and areas of improvement for the district. Through the various town hall sessions, the information shared will help shape our strategic plan.

A key ingredient to a good relationship is communication. I meet regularly with board members to keep them apprised of district initiatives as well as share a weekly Board Update. We've also launched a district-wide communication tool, ParentSquare, and implemented a customer service program for all employees, the C.R.O.W.N. Experience, to ensure our families and community members are attended to in a timely and consistent manner and receive consistent information.

The strategies implemented to achieve Engagement Excellence are 93% complete, with ongoing efforts to meet with board members and other stakeholders in the community.

The first 90 days have been energizing and rewarding. I thank the Board of Education, our CMS team, and the community for making these successes possible and I look forward to more accomplishments in the new year and beyond.



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