Pennsylvania School for the Deaf

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf educates students to succeed by recognizing and developing individual strengths, building confidence, collaborating with families and communities in a nurturing, dynamic, and language-rich environment steeped in cultural awareness of Deaf, Hearing, and worldwide diversity.

PSD empowers children with hearing loss by providing fully accessible services and a quality education so that they can become educated, productive, and responsible members of society.

Language is the key to opening the world of learning to every child. American Sign Language and English are both essential to students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and/or use cochlear implants or other assistive technology to build literacy and develop understanding and knowledge of the world. Strategies that enhance and deepen our students' knowledge include early language development and a language rich environment: sign language, spoken language, speech reading, and other language/communication tools. All students are capable of setting goals, growing and achieving when guided, nurtured and challenged. Our students thrive when they have the knowledge and skills they need to self-advocate, pose and solve problems, and become critical and creative thinkers. Every individual has strengths and the ability to contribute to improve their community and the world. Our students thrive when the communities, which support them, partner with the school. Our students are prepared for the 21st century by understanding multiple perspectives and valuing diversity.

The Next Frontier of Deaf Education

Dear Members of the PSD Community,

It is our honor to share with you the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, which was unanimously adopted by the Board of Trustees on June 8, 2023.

On the heels of its 200th Anniversary, PSD began the process of charting the course for its third century of providing the highest quality of Deaf education. This plan represents the culmination of a year-long process undertaken by PSD’s leadership team, staff, and board of directors to thoroughly assess the school’s core strengths and areas for growth.

The vision that has emerged from this process squarely aligns with our school-wide commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Over the last several years, PSD worked across constituents to develop an integrated and holistic DEI plan. We implemented several policies that reflect our commitment to ensuring that all of our programs are inclusive and equitable. We launched professional development programs for senior leadership and staff focused on understanding implicit biases, microaggressions, and other -isms to create a more inclusive school climate. We updated our curriculum and family services programs to ensure they are culturally and linguistically accessible. We have identified strategies to ensure recruitment and hiring practices attract diverse employees.

It is within this context that PSD identified the five areas of focus that will guide our work over the next three years: College and Career Readiness, Market Relevance, The PSD Community Experience, Financial Stability, and Culture & Talent.

PSD’s proud legacy, exceptional staff, and highly-talented students leave us well-positioned to educate the next generation of Deaf scholars, leaders, and citizens. We are enormously grateful to the staff, Board members, and leaders who have contributed to this plan. It is in this spirit of gratitude and hopefulness that we share our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

Sincerely,

Melissa S. Draganac Hawk
Head of School

Mark L. Apodaca
Board Chair
2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Integrated and Holistic DEI Plan*

A. College & Career Readiness
1. Increase cultural awareness and culturally competent instruction that applies across all grade levels and domains.
2. Beginning with Early Intervention, solidify language curricula that scaffolds across the students’ years at PSD.
3. Broaden our mathematics pedagogy to solidify a curriculum that scaffolds across students’ years at PSD.
4. Build a comprehensive Transition Framework
5. Invigorate our students’ sense of belonging.

B. Market Relevance
1. Develop a case for support.
2. Identify target markets.
3. Develop a multi-year marketing plan.
4. Refresh marketing and fundraising materials.
5. Promote public programming to engage stakeholders and cast a bright spotlight on PSD.

C. Community Experience
1. Promote and deliver engaging experiences, including events, both within the school and for all communities.
2. Educate trustees, parents, staff, students, and alumni to become ambassadors for the school.
3. Support and advocate for families raising a Deaf/Hard of Hearing child.
4. Utilize the Deaf Culture & Heritage Center to educate the public about PSD’s rich history
5. Foster effective communications with internal and external stakeholders about PSD activities and updates

D. Financial Stability
1. Develop a multi-year financial plan.
2. Provide guidance to update current fiscal processes and policies to align with equitable and inclusive people practices.
3. Create a framework for long-term facilities maintenance and repairs to maintain and improve the safety and security of campus infrastructure, improve academic outcomes, and overall PSD experience.
4. Increase revenue generating opportunities.

E. Culture & Talent
1. Identify existing skills and talent within PSD.
2. Develop individual leadership plans for PSD employees to close gaps, address areas of improvement, and enhance career development for existing and emerging leaders through a Panther Leadership Academy.
3. Increase recruitment and retention by recruiting the best and rewarding the best. Develop a succession plan to address talent gaps across organization and future needs.
4. Make PSD an employer of choice by showcasing our values and talented employees.
5. Engage employees in the development of talent and growing culture through focus groups and activities.

*PSD has developed a comprehensive Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan that we are continuing to implement across our programs and divisions.
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For regular updates follow us @psd1820!