



**OFFICE OF THE RECEIVER**  
**QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT**  
**FOR THE PERIOD Q1 2023-2024**

**Dr. William H. Kerr, Receiver**

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## **1. Authority and Purpose**

Consistent with the Financial Recovery Act 141 of 2012, the Duquesne City School District Financial Recovery Plan was issued on February 11, 2013 and implemented on April 2, 2013. On November 12, 2020, a Fourth Amendment was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and final approval granted by the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas on November 16, 2020. In 2023 - 2024, a Fifth Amended Recovery Plan for academics and finances will be developed with strategic and operational goals for continuous school improvement and sustainability.

Section 672-A (b) (2) of the Public School Code of Pennsylvania requires a Quarterly Report for the Secretary of Education; therefore, the Quarterly Progress Report for **FY Q1-2023-2024 – July 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023** is provided herein.

## **2. School District Benefits of Receivership**

Receivership of the School District was a result of fiscal instability and poor academic performance, taking into account all aspects of financially distressed operations. The benefits of Receivership have preserved, protected, and enhanced the value of assets through a variety of assistance including, but not limited to, an advance of state subsidies, a transitional loan, targeted grants, and professional development programs funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Under Receivership, the School District has been able to be more efficient to secure, manage, and stabilize assets from further deterioration. Equally important, liabilities and contested financial matters have been eliminated. District policies and procedures have been implemented and restrictions enacted for proper accounting by effectively managing cash flow, debt service, and timely payment of all financial obligations. Receivership has provided an intense level of intervention for student achievement and growth, professional development, and financial accountability – a triangular relationship for continuous school improvement.

Pursuant to Act 141 of 2012 and the implementation of the Financial Recovery Plan in 2013, the various Court appointed Receivers and the Department of Education assigned Chief Recovery Officers for the Duquesne City School District have been an integral part of the Financial Recovery Plan, as amended. Each has collaborated through interactive dialogue with key stakeholders of the School District, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, and Public Financial Management.

Every fiscal quarter since 2013 – 2014, the Duquesne City School District has been in good financial standing. There have been no unpaid or contested invoices; and, all payroll, benefit expenditures, debt service obligations and tuition payments have been made in a timely manner.

There is no threatened or pending litigation against the Duquesne City School District. Further, the School District is unaware of any other unasserted claims or assessments involving the School District.

### **3. Executive Summary**

Concerted efforts for continuous school improvement of curriculum, instruction, and assessment are an integral part of the Duquesne City delivery system for educational programs and services based on collaborative and professional working relationships among the administration, faculty, and support staff. Financial sustainability, transparency, and accountability – including updates of projections as part of the Annual Budget planning and approval process – are also an integral part of continuous efforts for school improvement.

#### ***Quarterly Progress Report FY Q1-2023-2024 Highlights***

- Under the ESSER Stakeholder Engagement / Consultation Reports, the Superintendent of Schools provides Advisory Committee updates during the Receiver Business Meetings.
- The primary goal of the Duquesne K – 8 School is to be recognized as a “turnaround school” and a model for rebuilding educational programs, services, and activities in a financially distressed school district.
- The Receiver, Superintendent, Business Manager, and an AIU employee who is a member of the Receiver Advisory Committee, had interviews with Dr. Ryan Stewart, consultant with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, relative to the Duquesne City School District Recovery Plan, as amended, and its implementation. The purpose was to help PDE identify what has been successful about the financial recovery process so far and to learn from participants about recommendations for future improvements. The Receiver and Superintendent were interviewed individually.
- The 2023 – 2024 Pre-K Counts program continues to be operated and staffed by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and grant funded by PDE. The quality pre-kindergarten program provides a strong start for children and for those who may also have language barriers (English not as the first language), a disability or developmental delay, or other issues that consider children at risk for failing in school.
- The 2023 – 2024 Head Start program continues to be operated by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and promotes school readiness of infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children from families with low income. The program engages parents or other key family members in positive relationships, with a focus on family well-being for successful learning outcomes and support for children.
- As of September 29, 2023, Duquesne K – 8 student enrollment was 455, including 60 ELL students.
- Current secondary enrollment of Duquesne resident students at West Mifflin and East Allegheny is 237.

- Annual tuition to be paid by Duquesne for students attending schools elsewhere in 2023 – 2024 is projected to be \$8,583,970.
- Current charter school enrollment K – 12 is 216.
- Steel Center Career and Technical Education enrollment is thirty-one (31); CTE tuition per student is estimated to be \$5,969 for 2023 – 2024.
- Mon Valley Special School student enrollment is seven (7) and Sunrise School enrollment is one (1) with an overall estimated tuition cost of \$485,000 for 2023 – 2024.
- The Receiver Advisory Committee, as prescribed by Act 141 of 2012 – Section 654-A, will meet five times in school year 2023 – 2024. Virtual meetings are scheduled for October 10, December 12, February 13, April 9 and June 11. Invited representatives include parents, teachers, administrators, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, a neighboring school district superintendent of schools, community-at-large, and board secretary. One vacancy remains for a charter school representative.

#### 4. Supplemental Information

The DCSD website, [dukecitysd.org](http://dukecitysd.org), provides the general public a historical summary of the School District's severe financial recovery status, its receivership, and criteria for exiting recovery status. The Financial Recovery Plan, as amended, and Quarterly Progress Reports are posted for accountability, transparency, and fiscal responsibility.

“Rediscover Duquesne!” is an electronic monthly newsletter providing information and updates to parents, families, and community members about the School District. The production is in cooperation with the Duquesne Administration and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Communications Department.

#### 5. Regular Education – Student Enrollment

Duquesne K – 8 student enrollments, for 2022 – 2023 and 2023 – 2024, are displayed on the following table.

**Duquesne K - 8 School  
Student Enrollment  
September 30, 2023**

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Sept 2022	47	52	50	58	45	46	52	58	41	451
Dec 2022	53	55	50	57	45	45	51	58	43	457
Mar 2023	56	55	50	56	46	43	47	61	44	458
June 2023	57	57	48	54	48	43	47	58	46	458
Sept 2023	55	53	60	45	52	47	41	48	54	455

## 6. Regular Education – Sections, Class Size, and ESL Data

The following tabulation reflects current regular education sections and average class size for each grade level.

### Duquesne K - 8 School Regular Education Sections, Class Size, and ESL Enrollment September 30, 2023

Grade	Sections (Classroom Size)	Enrollment	ESL Enrollment
Kindergarten	3 (18.3)	55	7
First Grade	3 (17.6)	53	6
Second Grade	3 (20.0)	60	7
Third Grade	3 (15.0)	45	5
Fourth Grade	3 (17.3)	52	6
Fifth Grade	2 (23.5)	47	8
Sixth Grade	2 (20.5)	41	6
Seventh Grade	3 (16.0)	48	6
Eighth Grade	3 (18.0)	54	9
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>60</b>

## 7. Average Student Attendance

The following chart reflects two years of attendance

### Duquesne City School District Average Student Attendance 2022 - 2023 and 2023 - 2024

2022-2023 Month	Day Count	Avg. Monthly % Present	Avg. % Absent Count	Avg. Excused Count	Avg. Unexcused Count	Avg. Unlawful Count
Aug.	8	97.23%	2.77%	1.62	1.62	0
Sept.	22	90.89%	9.11%	5.22	11.63	0
Oct.	21	92.81%	7.19%	7.59	9.09	0
Nov.	22	92.42%	7.58%	6.15	11.36	0
Dec.	22	90.99%	9.01%	2.91	18	0
Jan.	22	91.83%	8.17%	4.9	13.81	0
Feb.	20	90.68%	9.32%	5.54	15.69	0
Mar.	23	91.17%	8.83%	4.23	15.91	0
Apr.	20	96.29%	9.71%	4.84	17.0	0
May	23	89.49%	10.51%	4.71	18.82	0
June	11	87.3%	12.7%	3.09	19.9	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>91.4%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>5.97</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>0</b>

2023-2024 Month	Day Count	Avg. Monthly % Present	Avg. % Absent Count	Avg. Excused Count	Avg. Unexcused Count	Avg. Unlawful Count
Aug	8	92.5%	7.5%	1.87	11.25	0
Sept	21	92.18%	7.82%	2.71	12.23	0

## 8. Significant Observations

Q1-2023-2024 student ending enrollment is 455 and the ESL enrollment is 60 students, indicating a slight decrease of three (3) students, including two (2) ESL less students ending Q4-2022-2023.

Student attendance remains relatively the same. Continuous efforts are made between the staff and parents / guardians to improve daily student attendance.

## 9. Student Enrichment and Support Programs

Boys & Girls Club – 34 students enrolled (Grades K – 8)

Uplift Center – 7 students enrolled (Grades 3 – 8)

Oasis Tutoring – K – 3(need to identify interested tutors)

The partnerships continue with Eat n’ Park and the United Way to provide food to the families and community members of Duquesne, including backpacks of food for students who qualify on the weekends. The Boys and Girls Club partnership continues with after-school activities for Duquesne City students.

Q1 discipline behavior incidents are 65. With the sustained efforts of PBIS programming and MTSS in place, student discipline continues to have support and interventions for positive and successful outcomes. In addition to Restorative Practices through the University of Pittsburgh, the following support services are highlighted:

The School District continues to engage with Communities in Schools / Pittsburgh-Allegheny County (CISPAC) which has been a highly successful collaborative partnership among educators, students, parents / guardians, and families. CISPAC strives to surround students with a community of support so every student can succeed in school and life. The CISPAC Coordinator meets with 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to provide socio-emotional enrichment and other support services.

Pressley Ridge, a non-profit social services agency, provides Emotional Support Services for grades K – 2, 3 – 5, and 6 – 8. Auberle, a non-profit social service agency, provides support for students through school based therapy and SAP screening services. Auberle will also provide grade level support through their Stop Now and Think (SNAP) program to 5th Grade students beginning in January, 2024.

## 10. State Monitoring

Refer to Special Education State Monitoring Report, #15, C.

## **11. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

### **A. Curriculum and Instruction**

- K – 3 teachers are working on the Science of Reading in their ELA instruction and focusing largely on phonemic awareness, phonics, blending, and decoding, and beginning reading skills.
- K – 3 ELA curriculum is being supported by Sounds to Spelling. This program, which is in year 3, has been extremely positive based on teacher feedback.
- K – 3 reading block was changed to 120 minutes to allow for intensive and explicit reading instruction.
- A Reading Specialist was added to support students on the cusp of reading proficiency. Pull out and push in support is offered to ELA teachers depending on the needs of the students.
- Grades 4 – 8 continue to use iLit, a digital reading program that levels assignments and texts to each student’s instructional level based on their GRADE diagnostic. Students and teachers are extremely familiar with this program and new staff have had onboarding and training. PD was completed with staff in September to review using data to inform and drive instruction and conferencing within iLit.
- Grades K – 8 are using READY math for core math instruction as well as the iREADY math program for math enrichment and remediation.

### **B. Professional Development**

The School District Administration and Instructional Leadership Team continue to participate in professional development sessions and school turnaround through the University of Virginia (UVA) Partners in Educational Leadership Program (PELP.) Administrative support will focus on the Building Principal and how to improve and support building-wide instruction.

### **C. Assessment**

Preliminary PSSA scores released show improvement in proficiency in various grade levels in ELA, most notably in our third and sixth grades. Math continues to be an area of weakness across the School District. To address the lack of growth in Math, the School District has partnered with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct a root cause analysis of math programming and will work to implement recommended changes. The administration has scheduled intervention periods for both ELA and Math, including uniform resources and lesson plans across grade levels.

## **12. Career Development / World of World**

The 2022 – 2023 “World of Work” program, in cooperation with the Western PA Learning 2025 Alliance, AASA and the Grable Foundation, Pittsburgh, provides students with connections to real world work experiences. During the pilot 2022 – 2023 school year, “World of Work” involved teachers and students in grades 2 – 5 at Duquesne City, Elizabeth Forward, Avonworth and South Fayette School Districts. A Career Interest Survey, referred to as RIASEC, categorizes six themes

which include Realistic (doers), Investigative (thinkers), Artistic (creators), Social (helpers), Enterprising (persuaders) and Conventional (organizers).

In 2023 – 2024, Duquesne students will experience the integration of RIASEC and career units in all classrooms in grades 2 – 5. Teachers in these respective grade levels were presented with a year-long timeline that scaffolds roll-out for students. Additionally, first grade teachers and students will pilot the “World of Work” framework. Teachers will build six career units appropriate for first grade and implement them into their own instructional delivery. This structured roll-out will be a model for participating school districts who want to be a part of the Pittsburgh “World of Work” cohort.

Duquesne was a grant recipient to fund a K – 2 career awareness and exploration pretend play area. Seven miniature businesses were created for students to learn about and roll-play through exploration. This instructive and interactive play area is utilized by students on a weekly schedule. Businesses, aligned to the “World of Work” framework of experiential learning, include a fitness trainer, firefighter, librarian, artist, veterinarian, banker, and police officer. Neighboring school district students will have the opportunity to travel and visit Duquesne K – 8 to explore the career learning space.

### **13. New Schools Venture Fund / High School Comprehensive Planning**

Designated Duquesne administrators continue to work on the 2023 – 2024 New Schools Venture Fund Comprehensive Plan with supplemental responsibilities for the potential re-opening of the Duquesne High School. The High School Principal-designate, funded by foundation grants, is an integral part of the extensive research and development throughout the comprehensive planning process for a proposed Duquesne Innovative High School. The Receiver, the Special Advisor to the Secretary of Education, and the Fiscal Management Specialist had a virtual session regarding “Considerations for the Re-Opening of Duquesne High School.” Additional meetings with Public Financial Management consultants will be scheduled in the near future with the Superintendent, Receiver, and Business Manager to discuss the financial model assumptions and projections for sustainability relative to the potential re-opening of a Duquesne High School.

### **14. Technology, Digital Learning, and Innovation**

The School District has contracted All Lines Technology to provide Level 1 IT support services, noting that the Allegheny Intermediate Unit provides Level 2 and 3 Network Administration support. Five new copiers were installed to mitigate paper waste and constant breakage. Also, Secure Print requires the user to key in a code on the physical copier to release a print job based on respective users restricted paper allotment. The K – 8 building has additional new access points to improve the Wi-Fi infrastructure, funded by eRate.

Personalized Learning continues to be a focus of Educational Technology. Teachers received professional development about the Personalized Learning Pathway template and a refresher of Canvas features, which is being used to implement the personalized learning pathways for students. New Teacher Orientation focused on providing professional development on use of School District technology and educational technology platforms, including Canvas and Clever. The Moonshot Grant continues through December with emphasis on personalized learning and providing teachers with time to analyze student data that drives personalized learning pathways. Drop-in learning sessions were provided in a centralized room for additional instruction, including



one-on-one sessions during respective teacher preparation time or during the morning professional development time for personalized learning implementation.

## **15. Special Education Services**

### **A. Special Education Enrollment**

Due to resignations, the Duquesne City School District (DCSD) hired a total of 4 new special education teachers for 2023 – 2024. The Special Education Department is fully staffed with a total of ten special education teachers, one speech and language pathologist, and one cyber academy teacher. For the Q1 report, 112 special education students are being supported: in-district (90), specialized educational placements (17), and Duquesne Cyber Academy (5).

### **B. Student Enrichment Programs**

During summer 2023, DCSD had 33 students qualify for Extended School Year Programs. Of the 33 eligible students, 15 families agreed to their child participating. Of the 15 anticipated participants, two attended ESY at Duquesne K – 8 School and six attended at specialized educational placements.

### **C. State Monitoring**

Based upon the results of the spring 2023 Cyclical Monitoring for Continuous Improvement (CMCI) audit, improvement plans in the areas of Least Restrictive Environment and Participation in PSSA / PASA were developed, submitted and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) in September 2023. In addition, all special education files that were flagged during the Education Benefit Review component of CMCI have been corrected, submitted to PDE, and approved. The Special Education Office will prepare for another file review which will occur in April 2024.

### **D. Gifted Education**

Duquesne K – 8 has one identified gifted student and a Gifted Education Plan has been developed as part of the Comprehensive School Plan. This plan will assist District personnel in identifying potential gifted students. Duquesne recently added accelerated virtual instruction to gifted programming options.

### **E. PASA Testing**

Preparations to administer the Pennsylvania Alternate State Assessment (PASA) in the spring of 2024 are underway. To date, Duquesne has three qualifying students; (1) in-district and (2) in specialized educational placements. The School District continues to closely monitor students in order to move closer to the 1% compliance requirements.

### **F. Professional Development**

The Director of Special Education has conducted monthly department meetings with all special education personnel, as well as weekly, 30 minute mini-professional development activities. Topics have included Writing measurable IEP goals, ESY data collection, Developing a NOREP, and Self Care for Teachers. This schedule will continue monthly during the 2023 – 2024 school year.

Emotional Support teachers were invited to participate in an ES Boot Camp, facilitated by PaTTAN. This professional development assisted with classroom set up, behavioral management / establishing classroom expectations, and effective implementation of Positive Behavior Support Plans.

Life Skills / Autistic Support teachers are part of a cohort through the Allegheny County Intermediate Unit and have participated in two full-day trainings to date. Teachers will continue to receive supports throughout the 2023 – 2024 school year from TaC Team members. Teachers are also part of the Professional Learning Community for Life Skills and Autistic Support teachers.

The Program Director for Training and Consultation at Allegheny Intermediate Unit facilitated professional development for all teachers titled, “*Supporting Students with Disabilities within the Least Restrictive Environment.*” With the School District moving towards a more inclusive educational environment, the Program Director was able to provide the audience with reasonable methods of meaningfully including students with disabilities in the regular education classroom and providing access to the general education curriculum.

## 16. Student Services

### A. IST / DSAP Q1 Data

IST		DSAP	*
Total Students Referred	14	Total Students Referred	27
Referrals Reopened	0	Referrals Reopened	0
Cases Closed	0	Cases Closed	0
Cases Active	14	Cases Active	27

\*McKinney-Vento Data included

### B. McKinney-Vento Summary

School District personnel transported all accounted for McKinney-Vento families daily to and from school. There are currently eleven (11) students identified. All primary parents of families experiencing homelessness have been given the opportunity to utilize available resources depending on specific needs from the Duquesne Family Center, Duquesne City School District, and Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

## 17. Mental Health and Behavior Support Services

Duquesne’s Mental Health and Behavior Support Services connected with families in several different ways during the August Back-to-School BBQ event, partnering with local community supports that elevate students’ social and emotional wellness and provided learning opportunities that they may not have otherwise thought to be important to students. The goal is continuous: all students have better self-esteem and are more engaged when they look and feel good. Mindfulness Kits were provided to families and teachers, including various items such as Mindfulness Cards, multiple types of fidgets, and information about using the items and the contribution it gives to mindfulness. This continues to bridge the support brought in by the UPMC Mobile Chill Project and removes the barriers students and families might face in using Mindfulness activities.

The Back-to-School BBQ event included resource tables by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Highmark, Communities in Schools, Youth Places, Duquesne K – 8 educational technology / device insurance registration, and Youth Enrichment Services. The school community event engaged over 400 children, youth, and families with complimentary food and refreshments, music, and free school materials and supplies.

The collaboration with BEST Pressley Ridge classroom support continues with full staffing and professional development in emotional support classrooms. There has been a marked improvement in students having whole-child needs met, a testament to the supports in place. This is evidenced by increased attendance, improved academic reports, decreased security calls, and decreased discipline reports for students on teacher caseloads. The program closely monitors student needs to ensure resources are available and provided when needed.

The school nurse has continued to foster a close working relationship with the Department of Health to ensure all students receive necessary immunizations. Additionally, the school nurse collaborates with the UPMC Health Mobile to provide regular health visits for our students in need, as well as, coordinates with Mobile Dentistry for dental services and Vision to Learn for vision services. Tending to the physical health needs increases attendance and overall performance in school. Meeting the needs of the whole child and supporting partnerships that enhance the Community School model will continue to be marked with improved and successful student outcomes.

## **18. District Cyber Academy and Marketing / Recruiting Plan**

The District Cyber Academy, in partnership with Allegheny Intermediate Unit / Waterfront Learning, provides asynchronous online learning through the platform, Accelerate. Parents inquiring about cyber education are encouraged to take advantage of the District Cyber Academy. School District teachers provide the online instruction and are available for student and parent consultations. The District Cyber program is research-based and embraces best practices for online learning, offering Duquesne children a flexible and high-quality curriculum and instruction. A District cyber student has all the benefits of a Duquesne student, including participation in all programs, activities, sports, and clubs.

The Marketing / Recruiting Plan, as amended for 2023 – 2024, is a continuous effort to increase the overall student enrollment at the Duquesne K – 8 School and to reduce the amount of charter / cyber and brick and mortar charter school tuition paid by the School District. The plan includes the use of current resources, social media, and personnel to engage the community in legacy-building and to share the traditions, pride, and history of Duquesne City School District. “**REDISCOVER DUQUESNE**” is the marketing brand to promote a flexible, online cyber education option for parents and families.

## **19. Financial Recovery Plan (YTD)**

Consistent with the Financial Recovery Act 141 of 2012, the Duquesne City School District Financial Recovery Plan was issued on February 11, 2013 and implemented on April 2, 2013. On November 12, 2020, a Fourth Amendment was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and final approval granted by the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas on November 16, 2020. In 2023 – 2024, a Fifth Amended Recovery Plan for academics and finances

will be developed with strategic and operational goals for continuous school improvement and sustainability.

## **20. Budget and Finance (YTD)**

The 2023 – 2024 Final General Fund Budget was implemented, effective July 1, 2023. The Budget includes Revenues of \$22,256,893 and Expenditures of \$22,046,254. The budget also includes a millage increase of 1 mill (19.48 mills) but is offset by a millage reduction provided by the Property Tax Reduction Subsidy. The proposed net effect is a 6.63% real estate tax increase compared to 2022. The median assessed homestead property will pay \$23.78 more for the year or \$1.98 more per month.

The Business Manager completed and filed the required September 2023 – 2024 Cash Flow Report for the Department of Education. It is intended to be a monthly report, with some flexibility, that shares financial data by the School District accounting for local revenue and expenditures and PDE accounting for state and federal funds and deductions.

Every fiscal quarter since 2013 – 2014, the Duquesne City School District has been in good financial standing. There have been no unpaid or contested invoices; and, all payroll, benefit expenditures, debt service obligations and tuition payments have been made in a timely manner. The local audit for the 2022 – 2023 school year is set to begin in October 2023.

The Governor’s 2023 – 2024 Enacted Budget results in an overall 10.2% increase for the Duquesne City School District, as follows:

- Basic Subsidy Funding \$14,537,262
- Special Education Subsidy \$ 945,363

School District officials continue to monitor State budget talks and progressive steps by the State legislators and the Governor to finalize the 2023 – 2024 budget. The School District is closely watching the reports about Level Up funding which may provide additional funding for 100 of the poorest school districts in Pennsylvania.

The Receiver, Superintendent, and Business Manager continue to correspond with Public Financial Management consultants regarding the five-year model assumptions and financial projections, including submission by the Business Manager of Trial Balances as of June 30, 2023. Upon compilation of updated financial data regarding the potential re-opening of the Duquesne High School, School District officials will schedule additional PFM virtual meetings to ensure effective communication throughout the planning process.

Based on the present formula, the tuition rate increases each year by the District’s Adjusted Act 1 Index or the increase in the District’s budgeted revenues, whichever is greater. Given the projected shortfalls in the District’s multi-year financial projections, these increases are not sustainable in the long run when considering the District’s limited ability to raise revenues, which are largely driven by state subsidies and a low tax base. PFM’s financial projections show that alternative tuition rates will help stabilize Duquesne’s long-term financial position. The School District contends that a formula based on actual instructional costs is a better method than using the Act 1 Index formula.

On September 21, 2023, the School District received a letter from PDE that 2023 ESSER funds monitoring includes an on-site review. The Administration selected field work dates of December 12 – 14, 2023 for the on-site monitoring. The Business Manager is currently completing the 2023 – 2024 ESSER Monitoring Questionnaire as required.

A significant financial challenge facing the School District continues to be the rising costs of charter school tuition. Actual charter school rates, as calculated on the PDE-363 for FY 2023 – 2024 reflect federal ESSER funding revenue. The tuition rate for each non-special education charter school student for 2023 – 2024 was \$13,558.24 (\$1,636 lower than the previous year) based on actual, calculated rates. For each special education student who attended a charter school, the student rate was \$ 36,884.20 (\$2,052 lower than the previous year) based on actual, calculated rates. The District continues to face an unprecedented special education calculation due to the nature of the formula assuming a 16% special education population. Because the District’s special education population is appreciably higher at 23.5%, the formula incorrectly divides total special education expenditures by a smaller number of students than are actually enrolled at Duquesne.

The following chart provides a visual with specific data to Duquesne’s Average Daily Membership for 2021 – 2022; Special Education Population with 16% assumption required by PDE; Actual Special Education Population of the District at 23.5%; and Additional Cost to the District using the required 16% assumption.

Categories and Descriptions	Average Daily Memberships	Special Education Tuition Rate for 2022-23	Number of Special Education Students at Charter Schools as of June 30, 2023	Charter School Tuition Cost for Special Education Students
DCSD Average Daily Membership for 2021-2022	928.348	-	-	-
Special Education Population with 16% assumption required by PDE	148.536	\$36,884.20	45	\$1,659,789.00
Actual Special Education Population of District is 23.5%	218.162	\$29,439.78	45	\$1,324,790.09
Additional Cost to District using required 16% assumption	-	\$7,444.42	-	\$334,998.91

## 21. General Fund Balance Analysis

### Duquesne City School District General Fund Balance Analysis June 30, 2022

GF Balance Analysis June 30, 2022		
Non-spendable		
Pre-paid	\$137,121	-
Other	-	-
Total non-spendable	-	\$137,121
Restricted	-	-
Committed	-	-
Unassigned	-	\$315,164

<b>GF Balance Analysis June 30, 2022</b>		
Total fund balance as of June 30, 2021 (audited)	-	\$1,017,081
Surplus (deficit) for FY 2021-2022	-	(\$564,796)
<b>Total fund balance as of June 30, 2022 (audited)</b>	-	\$452,285

## 22. Bonds and Notes Payable

The Department of Education approved a Transitional Loan Agreement Amendment in 2022 for remaining amortized payments: June 30, 2024 - \$221,667; and June 30, 2025 - \$221,666.

A summary of bonds and notes payable is shown on the following table.

### Bonds and Notes Payable September 30, 2023

<b>Fiscal Year Ending June 30</b>	<b>Bonds Payable</b>	<b>Notes Payable</b>	<b>Total Bonds and Notes Payable</b>	<b>Total Annual Debt Service</b>
2014*	9,272,501	\$1,000,000	10,272,501	-
2015*	6,616,667	2,335,000	8,951,667	2,926,206
2016*	6,110,883	1,500,000	7,610,883	1,553,989
2017*	5,590,000	1,000,000	6,590,000	1,224,589
2018*	5,054,167	1,000,000	6,054,167	729,888
2019*	4,503,333	850,000	5,353,333	883,639
2020*	3,122,500	790,000	3,912,500	1,610,764
2021*	11,661,667	730,000	12,391,667	3,105,492
2022**	10,980,834	665,000	11,645,834	1,075,424
2023**	10,935,000	443,334	11,378,333	584,191
2024**	10,319,167	221,666	10,540,833	1,153,990
2025**	9,803,334	-	9,803,334	1,042,391
2026**	9,337,500	-	9,337,500	758,374
2027**	8,856,667	-	8,856.667	756,174

\*Audited financial statements

\*\*Projected

## 23. Receiving Schools, Tuition Enrollments, and Projected Costs

After personnel costs for the Duquesne City School District's staff, the next largest categories of spending are tuition costs for secondary schools and charter schools. These two costs contribute to the School District's long-term financial challenges for a variety of reasons.

Current student tuition enrollments are tabulated below. The chart also compares the list of enrollments to the prior Quarter's totals to give some perspective on student enrollment trends.

**Duquesne City School District  
Tuition Enrollment  
September 30, 2023**

<b>Receiving Schools</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Students June 30</b>	<b>Students Sept 30</b>	<b>Projected 2023-2024 Tuition</b>
West Mifflin Area School District	9 – 12	220	220	\$3,712,918
East Allegheny School District	9 – 12	17	17	286,907
Charter schools, regular education	K – 6	111	112	1,518,523
Charter schools, special education	K – 6	27	28	1,032,758
Charter schools, regular education	7 – 12	49	59	799,936
Charter schools, special education	7 – 12	19	17	627,031
Special Education schools	K – 12	18	15	605,897
<b>Totals</b>		<b>461</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>\$8,583,970</b>

Changes in individual tuition enrollments in the categories of receiving schools during the First Quarter can be seen by comparing enrollments from June 30, 2023 to September 30, 2023 in the table above. Enrollment figures for East Allegheny and West Mifflin will be reconciled at the end of FY 2023 – 2024.

It should also be noted that the table above includes Allegheny Intermediate Unit special education classroom tuition, whereas the tuition schedule on the Annual Financial Report does not include these costs.

In the case of secondary students, the tuition rate is determined by the greater of the annual increase in the District’s revenue budget or the District’s Adjusted Act 1 Index. Based on current estimates from the Commonwealth’s Independent Fiscal Office, the District’s Act 1 Index is expected to increase significantly and then slowly decrease but still not reach 2022 – 2023 levels, as shown in the table below.

**Duquesne City School District, Act 1 Index, 2022-2023 to 2027-2028**

<b>2022-2023 Actual</b>	<b>2023-2024 Actual</b>	<b>2024-2025 Actual</b>	<b>2025-2026 Projected</b>	<b>2026-2027 Projected</b>	<b>2027-2028 Projected</b>
5.6%	6.7%	8.8%	6.9%	6.4%	5.9%

The School District received correspondence from the Pennsylvania Department Education regarding the calculated student tuition rate of \$16,876.90 that Duquesne will pay East Allegheny and West Mifflin School Districts for 2023 – 2024, based on the original Settlement Agreement of 2017 and Section 1607(b)(4) of the Pennsylvania School Code. The tuition rate formula will continue to be an ever-growing financial burden for the District because it will never remain flat or decrease. As noted above, it will continue to grow by at least the District’s Adjusted Act 1 Index or the annual growth in the District’s revenue budget. When the Act 1 Index projected figures are

taken from the Independent Fiscal Office, the District’s tuition rate is expected to be \$22,118 by the 2027 – 2028 school year.

Secondary-level enrollment in East Allegheny and West Mifflin decreased in 2021 – 2022 and 2022 – 2023 due to the addition of 7th and 8th grade in the School District, noting that there are approximately 237 secondary students in grades 9 – 12 at East Allegheny and West Mifflin. Tuition costs for these students continue to increase each year; and, raising taxes to the Act I Index still fails to cover one-half of the annual increase.

The School District is developing a strategy to address the annual percentage increases of tuition with East Allegheny and West Mifflin Area school officials. The intent is to seek a more reasonable secondary student tuition formula near a 2% to 3% annual increase.

#### **24. Duquesne City Education Foundation**

The Duquesne City Education Foundation articles of incorporation and by-laws as a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit, charitable organization was established. The Foundation supports Duquesne City School District by encouraging innovation, recognizing excellence, creating vital partnerships, and developing community philanthropy. It is expected that Foundation revenues will help support academic programs, athletics, and other school community activities.

#### **25. Human Resources – Personnel / Staffing Assignments**

##### *Settlements and other Personnel Actions*

There was one personnel settlement and release during this Quarter.

##### *Personnel / Staffing Assignments*

The following chart presents a summary of staffing at the DCSD as of September 30, 2023. Parentheses indicate changes from the June 30, 2023 summary.

**Duquesne City School District  
2023-2024 Staffing Summary  
September 30, 2023**

<b>DCSD Staffing Summary</b>			
Professional staff (+3)	48	Administrators (+1.5)	7.5
Instructional support staff (-1.0)	17	Coordinators and supervisors	4
Other support staff (+2.0)	15	Confidential exempt staff	2

Staffing changes reflect resignations, replacements, and new hires to meet the changing needs of the School District:

- Following four vacancies from the previous quarter, the resignation of nine teachers and the reassignment of two teachers to non-teaching positions within the collective bargaining agreement, fifteen new teachers were hired.
- Following a vacant Secretary position from the previous quarter, a new K – 8 School Office Secretary was hired.



- Following two Paraprofessional vacancies and the resignation of one Paraprofessional, two Paraprofessionals were hired. There is currently one Paraprofessional vacancy.
- Following two Personal Care Assistant vacancies from the previous quarter, no current vacancies exist.
- Following the reassignment of a Custodian to Coordinator of Safety and Security, one Custodian was hired.
- Following the resignation of the School Social Worker, the position remains vacant.
- One Behavior Support and Intervention Specialist was hired.
- The K – 8 Principal was reassigned as High School Principal-designate; the Assistant Principal was reassigned as Acting K – 8 Principal; and a part-time Acting Assistant K – 8 Principal was hired for 2023 – 2024.
- The AIU Special Education Service Agreement concluded; therefore, a Director of Special Education Services was hired.

## **26. Board Policies and Administrative Regulations**

The following Board Policies and Administrative Regulations are new or revised and approved during this Quarter:

### **Board Policies:**

006 Meetings

137 Home Education Programs

137.1 Extracurricular Participation by Home Education Students

137.2 Participation in Co-Curricular Activities and Academic Courses

137.3 Participation / Career and Technical Education Programs - Home Education Students

216.1 Supplemental Discipline Records

251 Students Experiencing Homelessness, Foster Care, and Other Educational Instability

### **Administrative Regulations:**

R05-AR-0 Monthly Updates and Quarterly Reports

808-AR-4 Nondiscrimination Statement and Civil Rights in the School Nutrition Program

## **27. Facilities and Property Services – Stadium, Maintenance, and School Safety & Security**

### **A. Stadium Project**

The Superintendent continues to network with non-profit entities and business associates to seek outside funding for a proposed new Stadium Complex. The Superintendent developed “*A Case for Support*” document to promote an ambitious community-wide / regional fundraising campaign, which includes a three-year phase-in plan. The Reynold’s Company recently demolished the former Stadium as an in-kind service contribution.

### **B. Maintenance**

Highlighted Completed Projects: Water mitigation project and new patio decking installation; new concrete and drain replacement at the Kennedy Avenue entrance; and new lower playground surface to alleviate hazardous conditions; demolition and environmental

permits for mitigated asbestos areas and demolition of the former stadium; and new data line installations to connect servers with the new centralized copy room.

### **C. School Safety & Security**

A new Coordinator of School Safety and Security was approved at the August Receiver Business Meeting. The Coordinator, a United States Air Force veteran with earned college credits, resulted in a change of assignment within the School District. The Coordinator successfully completed professional development courses to comply with Act 67 – School Security Personnel Basic Training, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

Law enforcement agencies conducted an active shooter drill on August 14, 2023.

As recommended by the Pennsylvania State Police Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, the School District: installed ten (10) additional interior building security cameras to remediate blind spots; upgraded exterior building public announcement speakers; and removed Kennedy Avenue bushes along the fence line to prevent hiding places by perpetrators.

The Yondr Device Pouch program was initiated for student utilization to support a “no device use policy” during academic hours of instruction. The “Rocket Sense of Safety” program, in cooperation with the National Association of School Resource Officers, was initiated for K – 2 students.

On September 19, 2023, the City of Duquesne police and fire departments and the Allegheny County bomb squad responded to a K – 8 School Building bomb threat, which was the same email hoax administrators received at other Allegheny County school districts. Duquesne K – 8 School students, including Head Start and Pre-K, were evacuated and all emergency notifications and protocols for students, staff, and parents were initiated. The evacuation also identified procedures that are being refined in the DCSD Emergency Operations Plan.

Executive Session (RBM, September 26): The Coordinator of School Safety and Security provided a follow-up briefing about the hoax bomb threat and the K – 8 School Building evacuation. Also, other school safety and security planning measures for 2023 – 2024 were presented and discussed.

## **28. Governance and Administration**

Dr. Sue A. Mariani, Chief School Administrator, is supervised by Dr. William H. Kerr, who was reappointed Receiver, effective March 31, 2022 through April 1, 2025. Dr. Kerr reports to the Duquesne City Board of School Directors, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas. Dr. Kerr reports to Judge Alan D. Hertzberg and to Dr. Khalid N. Mumin, Secretary of Education, via Dr. Debora Carrera, Special Advisor to the Secretary.

The Duquesne City Board of School Directors, with whom the administration meets in Executive Session prior to every Receiver Business Meeting, consists of the following members:

1. Board President Rosia Reid
2. Board Vice President Calvina Harris
3. School Director Denise Brownfield

4. School Director Candice Butler-Davis
5. School Director Burton Comensky
6. School Director Laura Elmore
7. School Director Sonya Gooden
8. School Director Cedric Robertson
9. School Director DeWayne Tucker

Dr. Sue Mariani, Superintendent of Schools, acknowledged, congratulated, and presented PSBA Honor Roll Service Certificates to elected School Board Directors: Cedric Robertson (8 Years); DeWayne Tucker (39 years); Calvina Harris (16 years); Laura Elmore (12 years); Sonya Gooden (16 years); Burton Comensky (12 years); and Rosia Reid (16 years). The Superintendent also acknowledged and congratulated Mr. Eric Harper, School Administrator, as a 2023 Pittsburgh Courier Men of Excellence Honoree.

Elected members of the Duquesne City Board of School Directors participated in three Receiver Business Meetings during the First Quarter: August 8 and 15 and September 25, 2023. Respective meetings included elected Board members in attendance as follows: August (6) and (5) respectively and September (6). There was no July RBM scheduled.

## **29. Next Report**

The next Quarterly Progress Report will cover the Second Quarter of Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024, October 1 through December 31, 2023. That report is expected to be filed in January 2024.

## **30. Acknowledgements**

*The following individuals contributed to this report:*

- William H. Kerr, Ed.D., Receiver
- Sue A. Mariani, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
- Jennifer Tressler, Business Manager, B.S., CPA
- Jamie Schmidt, Ed.D., Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- Celeste Rudge, M. Ed., Director of Literacy and Innovation
- Alison DeMarco, M. Ed., Director of Technology, Digital Learning and Innovation
- Pam Zackel, M. Ed. Director of Special Education
- Eric Harper, M. Ed., High School Principal-designate
- George Little, MSW, Acting K – 8 Principal
- Janice Nuzzo, Ed.D., Acting K – 8 Assistant Principal
- Brian Stowell, MBA, Director of Facilities, Transportation, and Safety and Security Director
- Brandon Irdi, Act 44 Safety and Security Coordinator
- Crystal Irdi, AAS, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent / Board Secretary / RTK Officer