



## JCPS 2025-2026 Phase One: Executive Summary for Districts

2025-2026 Phase One: Executive Summary for Districts

**Jefferson County**  
**Brian Yearwood**  
3332 Newburg Rd  
Louisville, Kentucky, 40218  
United States of America

---

**Table of Contents**

2025-2026 Phase One: Executive Summary for Districts ..... 3

## 2025-2026 Phase One: Executive Summary for Districts

### Description of the District

Describe the district's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the district serves?

Jefferson County Public Schools is located in Louisville, Kentucky, in the Ohio River Valley. The school District has roots as early as 1829 when Louisville Public Schools began as an independent system in Louisville. In 1975, Jefferson County School District, a county district, merged with Louisville Public Schools to form a single unitary school district, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS). JCPS is the largest public school system for the Louisville metropolitan area (Louisville Metro), serving 78% of all school-age children. JCPS is the 30th largest school district in the United States with 168 schools, 6,364 teachers, and 94,861 students.

Approximately 6,364 teachers are employed by JCPS, with an average of 12.9 years of experience, and 82% have a master's degree or higher. A total of 6.2% of teachers are National Board Certified. JCPS is under the leadership of Dr. Brian Yearwood, who began serving as the Superintendent of JCPS this 2025-2026 school year. The governing authority of JCPS is a seven-member publicly elected Board of Education.

The diversity of students enrolled in JCPS is considered an asset for our students, staff, and community. There are over 138 languages spoken in JCPS; in fact, our Multilingual Learner population has continued to rapidly grow, increasing from 7,224 students in 16-17 to 20,094 in 25-26. Which is a percentage increase of 178% in the last 10 years. The student population in JCPS is 33% White, 36% African American, 20% Hispanic, and 12% identify as other ethnic minorities. Approximately 63% percent of JCPS students qualify for free or reduced lunch and over 13,000 receive exceptional childhood education (ECE) services.

On average, the percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch remains stable at 63%. JCPS serves over 3,950 homeless students. This translates to approximately 4% of JCPS students experiencing instability in living situations ranging from shelters to families doubling up in single-family housing by staying in relatives' or friends' homes.

Louisville, Kentucky, is a diverse and vibrant city with a rich blend of demographic and economic characteristics. As the largest city in Kentucky, Louisville has a population that reflects a broad spectrum of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, with significant African American, Hispanic, and immigrant communities. The city is known for its economic diversity, with key industries including healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, and bourbon production. Louisville is also home to a growing tech sector, fueled by a highly educated workforce and several major universities. Despite its economic strengths, the city faces challenges

such as income inequality and areas of concentrated poverty, which impact certain neighborhoods more than others.

The Louisville Economic Development dashboard shows the city's population has increased 7% from 1,202,710 in 2010 to 1,282,588 in 2022. While diverse communities are important to Louisville's culture, the gap is evident with the white population consisting of 74%, highlighting a significant disparity compared to other racial and ethnic groups. Meanwhile, 6.5% of the area's population is foreign-born with 7% non-English languages spoken in homes. In Louisville, the number of people in the labor force is currently 676,466 after a sharp increase from 649,405 during January 2024. The average annual wage increased from \$52,982 in 2019 to \$61,766 in 2022 but still below the national average of \$69,986. Louisville's current employment rate is 4.4% an increase from 3.8% in April 2024. Education attainment in Louisville for people aged 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher is 32.3%. Forty percent of degree holders in Louisville have STEM related majors resulting in over 34,000 people in STEM employment. This aligns to Louisville's growth in the tech industry with a steady increase in tech businesses from 564 in 2018 to 667 in 2020. The cost-of-living index is 91.8, making Louisville more affordable compared to peer cities in the Indiana and Ohio areas and more than 10% below the national average. While Louisville is making economic strides, Metro is transparent with the city's challenges and has commissioned a strategic plan focusing on key areas toward "Growing Louisville Together".

## District Stakeholders

Identify and describe the district's stakeholder groups. How does the district ensure stakeholder involvement and engagement in the improvement planning process?

As part of the development of the 2025-2026 Comprehensive District Improvement Plan, key stakeholders review multiple data sources as part of a thorough needs assessment. In late November, school and district leadership teams will analyze their 24-25 Kentucky Summative Assessment results and key performance indicators in academic and non-academic areas from the first six weeks of the 25-26 school year (i.e., vital signs). From this initial data review process, JCPS identifies areas of strength and improvement as well as possible contributing factors and next steps, which are then incorporated into the CDIP. The information below outlines the key processes and stakeholder groups that review key performance indicators throughout the school year.

Our Cabinet Members, Academic and Schools Division Leaders, and Jefferson County Board of Education are involved in monitoring district- and school-level data regularly and prioritizing district work relative to those data. Cabinet meets weekly, while the Academic and Schools Division meets as a team monthly and meets bi-weekly in individual zones/level leadership meetings. The Diversity, Equity, and Poverty leadership meets bi-monthly with Cabinet members and their division leadership team to review progress on the District's Racial Equity Plan. Additional

---

data reviews are occurring in the 2025-2026 school year on key metrics. Meetings are documented through meeting agendas and meeting minutes.

Our principals meet monthly within their respective zones and levels throughout the year. During these meetings, the Superintendent and Chief of Schools share major initiatives and updates, while principals provide feedback and input. Zone- and level-specific meetings also allow for more targeted training and differentiated support in smaller groups. Beginning this school year (2025–2026), our MRI schools will lead data reviews with Cabinet leadership to share outcomes, reflect on effective strategies, and identify supports needed. Additionally, schools will begin presenting data at Board meetings.

Lastly, district leadership provides a summary of the progress of the Goals and Guardrails during regular board meetings of the Jefferson County Board of Education. Those reports outline the Theory of Action, evidence-based strategies, progress toward the goal, followed by identified effective strategies, opportunities for growth, and next steps.

### District's Purpose

Provide the district's purpose statement and supplementary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs, including the year in which they were last reviewed or revised. Describe how the district embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students and how stakeholders are involved in its development.

The district's purpose, mission, vision, and values guide its work and are reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with stakeholder needs. As a diverse and urban district, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) is committed to ensuring every student achieves success, regardless of their starting point. This commitment is reflected in the district's core values of caring, equity, excellence, respect, individuality, diversity, opportunity, creativity, collaboration, and stewardship. These values shape both the educational environments and the opportunities provided to students.

The JCPS vision is for "all students to graduate prepared, empowered, and inspired to reach their full potential and contribute as thoughtful, responsible citizens." The mission aligns with this by aiming "to challenge and engage each learner to grow through effective teaching and meaningful experiences within caring, supportive environments." The vision and mission are included in all district Board presentations to keep the work centered on these shared commitments.

In 2024, JCPS adopted new Board Goals and Guardrails, aligned with community feedback, and following the Student Outcome Focused Governance Framework (SOFG). The SOFG Framework is built around six research-informed competencies that describe school board behaviors and the degree to which they create the conditions for improvements in student outcomes: Vision & Goals, Values & Guardrails, Monitoring & Accountability, Communication & Collaboration, Unity & Trust, and Continuous Improvement. In addition, JCPS has sustained its Vision 2020

in Action, which includes our three key pillars: Journey to Success, Culture and Climate, and Racial Equity. These three pillars strategically align with the newly adopted board goals and guardrails outlined below:

#### Goals-

1. The percentage of 5th-grade students who score “ready” on the JCPS Academic Readiness measures will increase from % in June 2025 to % by June 2030.
2. The percentage of 8th-grade students who score “ready” on the JCPS Academic Readiness measures will increase from % in June 2025 to % by June 2030.
3. The percentage of 12th-grade students who score “ready” on the JCPS Academic Readiness measures will increase from % in June 2025 to % by June 2030.
4. The percentage of 3rd-grade students who met their expected growth and/or achievement benchmarks (50th percentile) in Reading according to the Spring Map assessment will increase from 68% in June 2023 to 83% by June 2030.
5. The percentage of 8th-grade students who met their expected growth and/or achievement benchmarks (50th percentile) in Math according to the Spring Map assessment will increase from 58% in June 2023 to 73% by June 2030.

#### Guardrails –

1. JCPS shall not allow unsafe conditions (either socially, emotionally, or physically)
2. JCPS shall not make significant decisions without first ensuring alignment with the Racial Equity Plan.
3. JCPS shall not make significant decisions without collaborating with impacted stakeholders.
4. JCPS shall not allow inequitable resource allocation for Exceptional Childhood Education (ECE) students and/or Multilingual Learners (ML) students.
5. JCPS shall not utilize more than the minimum number of district-mandated assessments to monitor student outcomes.

Additionally, district leaders developed Interim Goals and Guardrails to allow for effective monitoring and accountability. The interim metrics serve as lead measures that should be knowable throughout the school year, influenceable by district leadership, and predictive of the goals and guardrails. Progress on meeting these goals will be reported at board meetings throughout the year.

Key programs and initiatives supporting the JCPS strategic plan and board goals and guardrails are based in part on data analysis of learning outcomes, stakeholder surveys, and independent audit findings. These initiatives include academic innovation (i.e., Journey to Success), enhanced core instruction with high-quality literacy and math resources, extended learning opportunities, restorative practices, and student safety enhancements. Through its academic programs, district-wide equity initiatives, and strategic goals, JCPS embodies its purpose by fostering

---

student growth and preparing them for college, career, and life in an increasingly global world.

### Notable Achievements

Describe the district's notable achievements in the last three years.

Over the past three years, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) has implemented transformative changes that have reshaped the district's trajectory. These efforts have focused on equity, infrastructure, academic recovery, and student opportunity.

In 2022, JCPS passed its first-ever tax referendum, generating an additional \$54 million annually and doubling the district's bonding capacity. This historic investment supports a 20-year facilities improvement plan, prioritizing high-need schools and communities. Building on this momentum, JCPS broke ground on Hudson Middle School and opened the Elev8 Center in Newburg, further expanding access to innovative learning environments.

The district also embarked on a student assignment overhaul. For the first time in four decades, JCPS restructured its plan to provide equitable school choice. The new model gives families in Louisville's West End, 95% of whom are Black, both choice and proximity, while also strengthening magnet school supports. As of August 2024, eight JCPS magnet schools have earned National Magnet School Certification, with six recognized in the past year alone.

JCPS created a national model for school safety by establishing its own police department, placing safety administrators in every middle and high school, and ensuring all secondary schools are equipped with weapons detection systems. Officers receive training in racial equity, de-escalation, and mental health supports, underscoring the district's commitment to keeping students safe while avoiding the school-to-prison pipeline.

Academic innovation has also accelerated. Following Kentucky's Senate Bill 1 in 2022, JCPS adopted a common curriculum in Math and Language Arts for grades K-8 and has since expanded to high school Algebra and English with Illustrative Mathematics, EL Education, and My Perspectives. These shifts have moved classrooms from traditional lectures to engaging, real-world learning experiences. The approach aligns with the Journey to Success framework, now launched districtwide, which refines student-driven learning through guiding documents, milestone checkpoints, reflection systems, and a new digital platform.

Students are benefiting in tangible ways. In 2024 alone, more than 7,300 graduated, including 4,350 from the Academies of Louisville with career pathways. Nearly 3,000 earned college credit through AP or dual enrollment, more than 2,000 achieved industry certifications, and the senior class collectively earned over \$87 million in scholarships. Historic milestones include W.E.B. DuBois Academy's first graduating class and five seniors receiving more than \$75,000 in scholarships. With the class of 2025, the average (4 & 5 yr.) graduation rate in JCPS has jumped to 89.2%. In



addition, the gap between Black and white students has narrowed to just 0.1 percentage points. The post-secondary readiness for the class of 2025 rose to 84%.

These outcomes are matched by innovation and recognition across the district. Western High School powered up Kentucky's first in-school Esports arena, three middle schools opened Verizon Innovative Learning Labs, and JCPS won a national award for its on-demand interpretation services. Two JCPS educators received the nation's highest award for excellence in math and science teaching. Meanwhile, JCPS nurses provided more than 341,000 student visits and tens of thousands of screenings in hearing, vision, and dental health, underscoring the district's commitment to caring for the whole child.

Together, these accomplishments reflect how JCPS is building stronger foundations, expanding opportunity, and preparing students for success in college, career, and life.

### Areas of Improvement

Describe areas for improvement that the district is striving to achieve in the next three years.

While JCPS remains committed to the board goals and our three pillars, we are also entering a new chapter under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Brian Yearwood. With a clear vision for the future, JCPS is focused on stabilizing and transforming the district through three interconnected strategic priorities:

**1. Financial Stability** - JCPS is committed to responsible fiscal stewardship. A comprehensive line-item review of expenditures is underway, with short- and long-term recovery recommendations to be presented to the Board. This work ensures that resources are aligned with instructional and safety priorities and that the community has confidence in the district's financial management.

**2. Student Achievement** - The district's mission is to ensure academic growth for every student. A district-wide academic review will guide Phase One of the Academic Acceleration Plan, with a focus on reading growth, as measured by MAP, Lexile levels, and benchmark assessments. The "Every Student. Every Year." campaign sets a clear expectation that each student will demonstrate at least one year of academic growth annually. Instructional rigor, relevance, and teacher support are central to this effort.

**3. School Safety** - JCPS will conduct a comprehensive safety review of facilities, staffing, and policies. Strengthened partnerships with law enforcement, mental health providers, and community organizations will support a multi-layered approach. Emergency preparedness protocols and embedded social-emotional supports will foster secure, inclusive environments where students feel a sense of belonging.

Under the leadership of Dr. Brian Yearwood, JCPS is prioritizing meaningful stakeholder engagement and transparent communication. Districtwide listening sessions and school visits are underway, culminating in a comprehensive "What I Heard" report that will be shared with the Board and the community. To further support accountability and responsiveness, weekly superintendent updates and



engagement metrics will be published. By summer 2026, JCPS expects to have a board-approved financial recovery plan with clear deficit reduction milestones and transparent community reporting; a completed academic plan review to guide instructional improvements and expanded supports for students and teachers; and updated safety protocols that promote consistent, secure learning environments across all schools.

## **COMMENTS**

### Additional Information

Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) has demonstrated a transformative commitment to comprehensive and sustained efforts to improve educational quality, equity, governance, and student outcomes, including these key factors that contributed to the district being awarded Accredited status by Cognia and its regional commissions:

**1. Strong Governance and Strategic Vision** - JCPS Board of Education adopted and then implemented the Student Outcomes Focused Governance (SOFG) framework in 2024. This framework ensures that district goals are measurable, student-centered, and monitored through interim metrics. The Board's commitment to transparency, accountability, and community engagement aligns with Cognia's emphasis on effective leadership and continuous improvement.

**2. Equity and Inclusion** - JCPS serves a diverse student population, with over 139 languages spoken, 19% multilingual learners, and 63% qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The district's strategic focus on racial equity, individualized learning, and inclusive hiring practices demonstrates a commitment to equitable access and culturally responsive education which are key to Cognia's accreditation criteria.

**3. Academic Innovation and Curriculum Reform** - JCPS has implemented a districtwide K-12 curriculum in reading and math, including Illustrative Mathematics (IM) and EL Education, to ensure consistency and equity across schools. These reforms support high-quality instruction and align with Cognia's standards for curriculum and instructional effectiveness.

**4. Student-Centered Learning and Performance** - The Journey to Success framework empowers students to take ownership of their learning through personalized pathways, defense of learning, and milestone checkpoints. JCPS's focus is on academic growth, not just proficiency.

**5. Facilities, Safety, and Infrastructure** - JCPS launched the largest facilities improvement plan in its history, addressing aging infrastructure and expanding safe, modern learning environments. The district also implemented a comprehensive school safety plan, including partnerships with law enforcement and mental health providers, and embedded social-emotional supports.

**6. Stakeholder Engagement and Community Partnerships** - JCPS actively engages families, staff, and community members through listening sessions, surveys, and collaborative initiatives. Programs like the Academies of Louisville, Evolve502, and the Everybody Counts initiative connect students with real-world experiences, college access, and career pathways, demonstrating a commitment to holistic student development.

These achievements reflect JCPS's alignment with Cognia's standards for continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and student-centered leadership. The district's strategic reforms, measurable outcomes, and commitment to equity and excellence directly contributed to its Accredited status, conferred by the Cognia Global Commission on June 26, 2025.

# Attachment Summary

Attachment Name	Description	Associated Item(s)
-----------------	-------------	--------------------