

THE NEXT STEP PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Strategic Plan
2023 - 2028

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Next Step Public Charter School has long been known as a place in Columbia Heights and across the District for exceptional students facing uncommon challenges. Since our founding as the first public charter school in 1996, we've provided GED preparation and English as a Second Language (ESL) education and found ways to meet our students' needs, from child care to meals to supporting them with immigration to the U.S.

Like our students, we are at a unique moment in deciding our own next steps. After six months and multiple rounds of conversation with our community, this strategic plan recommits The Next Step to our mission and takes us further: finding new ways to serve the students who come through our doors and make sure they are truly equipped for professional success in the DC-area economy and to contribute the richness of their lives and experiences to their communities. It also pushes us to think about how we can continue to be a wonderful place for our educators to grow professionally, and to ensure that The Next Step is sustainable for many years into the future.

Deep thanks to the community that directed us, including students and alumni, our incredible staff, Board of Trustees, and partner organizations. I look forward to a bright future for our community and our students.

Best,



Doctora Vivian Robledo
Executive Director, The Next Step Public Charter School

ABOUT THE NEXT STEP

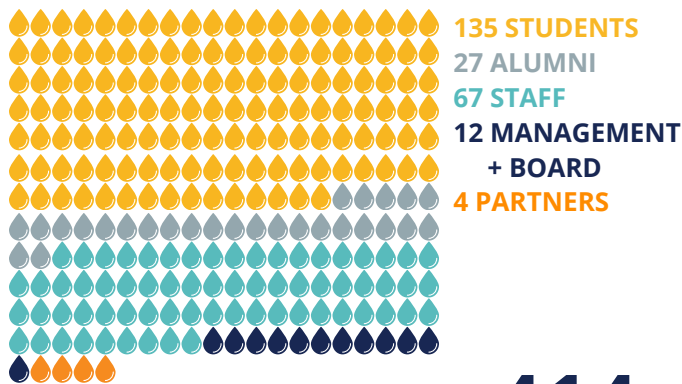
The Next Step Public Charter School (TNS) provides students who face extraordinary challenges and who are not supported in traditional high schools with the opportunity to continue their education. We offer a full-time day program and part-time evening program, serving nearly 500 students between the ages of 16 and 30 each year. Our students are working to pass the GED, learn English, go to college, and prepare for a career – and we are there alongside our students as they stride forward on their paths.

DEVELOPING OUR VISION

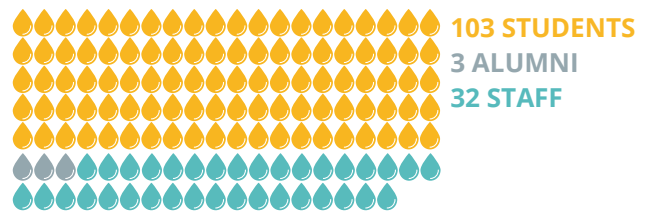
In creating our five-year vision for the future of The Next Step, it was critical that our direction be rooted in guidance from our community as well as student outcomes, research, and promising practices from peer educational institutions in the District and around the county.

Over six months, we heard from students, alumni of The Next Step, our staff, Board members, and partner organizations – over 400 touchpoints with our community.

Initial Engagement



Emerging Strategies Engagement



Final Plan Engagement



414
TOTAL TOUCHPOINTS

Our vision for the next five years: The Next Step's 2027-28 strategic plan will advance positive outcomes for the students we serve, setting them up for real-world success in career and community – while building a school culture that is collaborative, rigorously focused on individual and collective growth, and welcoming and inclusive to all.

THE NEXT STEP'S COMMUNITY CORE VALUES

COMMUNITY

We center our students in our work, recognizing and honoring the distinct contributions of all, and creating a place in which everyone feels welcome and included.

COLLABORATION

We prioritize positive relationships, working together to expand our practices and knowledge.

TRUST

We assume the good intent of one another and operate from a place of respect and transparency.

COURAGE

We advocate for ourselves and our community, connecting students to what they need and finding a way to get things done.

EQUITY & EXCELLENCE

We are an unapologetically anti-racist, anti-bias organization. We strive to set students on life-changing trajectories by meeting the unique needs of each individual in our community.

NORTH STAR GOALS

How we will measure success:

Goal #1: By 2027-28, 90% of enrolled students will be on a path toward GED completion.

Goal #2: By 2027-28, 85% of students who attempted the GED (all four sections, at least one within the specific school year) during school year 2027-28 will obtain their GED by July 2028.

Goal #3: By the close of 2027-28, 85% of ESL students enrolled in ESL less than 5/6 during the start of the 2026-27 school year who remain continuously enrolled at TNS will complete ESL level 5/6 and leave TNS workforce-ready with a plan to secure employment in a high-skill/high-demand field or in a profession with a living wage.

Goal #4: By 2027-28, 90% of 2026-27 graduates will be employed in a high-wage, high-growth industry and/or profession with a living wage or enrolled in two- or four-year postsecondary education within one year of graduation.

OUR APPROACH

Priority areas of focus and advancement – to ensure our students are well-prepared to thrive in the DC-area economy.



STRATEGY #1

Create and sustain a staff culture that is inclusive, collaborative, and invested in continuous improvement.



STRATEGY #2

Increase students' pursuit of the GED by evolving our academic model to one that is more flexible, engaging, and grounded in their real-world, work-oriented experiences.



STRATEGY #3

Expand students' exposure to career and college options aligned to high-wage, high-growth career pathways providing a living wage.



STRATEGY #4

Enhance transition supports for recent graduates and alumni to support competitiveness within the DC economy.



STRATEGY #5

Develop a sustainable school funding model that secures diverse sources of funding and strategic partnerships.



STRATEGY 1



Create and sustain a staff culture that is inclusive, collaborative, and invested in continuous improvement.

The bedrock of our strength as a community lies in our talented and dedicated team of teachers, counselors, case managers, staff, and school leaders. The Next Step is committed to creating and sustaining an organizational culture that feels welcoming and inclusive for all, and provides opportunities for staff to grow professionally. To achieve this goal, we will further put our values into action, as well as building professional development, coaching, and career advancement opportunities for staff. We will actively work to identify and support opportunities for cross-division and cross-functional collaboration.

What success looks like:

- 98% of staff meeting or exceeding core values metrics within performance management
- 5.9 score on Insight related to DEI and 5.5 score related to career progression
- 70% of staff will agree or strongly agree that all staff are equally committed to mission
- 80% of staff indicate that they would recommend TNS as a great place to work to a colleague
- 96% of staff indicate intention to stay for next three years
- 85% of staff will respond agree or strongly agree in response to whether they are provided resources, tools, and professional development to support their work
- 85% of staff respond in the affirmative when asked about positive changes in collaboration
- 70% of staff will agree or strongly agree that there are equitable structures in place for professional growth

STRATEGY 2



Increase students' pursuit of the GED by evolving our academic model to one that is more flexible, engaging, and grounded in their real-world, work-oriented experiences.

Our students are facing extraordinary odds – many of them are new to the United States, and most are juggling work and family commitments in addition to advancing their education. Having a high school credential is the first step for students to pursue their dreams. The Next Step will explore virtual and hybrid learning options that help reach our students wherever they are, and will increase enrollment in our GED track.

What success looks like:

- 98% of students agree or strongly agree that the TNS schedule is a good fit for them
- 95% of students agree or strongly agree that TNS is welcoming, inclusive, and centers on student voice
- 90% of enrolled students will be on a path toward GED completion



STRATEGY 3



Expand students' exposure to career and college options aligned to high-wage, high-growth career pathways providing a living wage.

The Next Step's mission is to provide educational opportunities for our students to continue their education and pursue a career. In the next five years, our school will develop blended academic programs that combine workforce programming and academics in priority areas, to ensure students have exposure to promising career areas in the DC area.

What success looks like:

- Develop, implement, and evaluate a cohort-based pilot program with three priority career clusters
- 98% of students in career exposure and workforce development cohort will demonstrate academic progress and growth within GED, career, workforce, and/or early college
- 80% of eligible students secure credential or dual credit



STRATEGY 4



Enhance transition supports for recent graduates and alumni to support competitiveness within the DC economy.

To further our goal of preparing students facing extraordinary challenges to excel in the DC-area economy, The Next Step commits to further extending our services beyond the time students are with us – providing proactive, intentional, and structured services to support the continued growth and progression of alumni.

What success looks like:

- 50% of alumni from previous five years engaged; supports provided where needed
- Data collected for all graduating students (2027-28) and 60% of alumni from previous five years
- 100% alumni tracking project externally funded



STRATEGY 5



Develop a sustainable school funding model that secures diverse sources of funding and strategic partnerships.

To accomplish our goals, The Next Step will put into place a funding model that allows us to sustain ongoing work and accelerate new work, including diversifying our funding streams and establishing key strategic partnerships with other aligned organizations.

What success looks like:

- 80% of workforce, career, and early college programs funded through external funds or partnerships
- 2% additional increase in external sources



¡MUCHAS GRACIAS!

- Students and alumni of The Next Step Public Charter School
- The Next Step Public Charter School Staff
- The Next Step Public Charter School Strategic Planning Committee
- The Next Step Public Charter School Board of Trustees
- International Youth Foundation (IYF)
- Greater DC Diaper Bank
- Family Life Community Center
- Latin American Youth Center

Want to learn more? Visit us at
NextStepPCS.org/StrategicPlan

