



## Fox Chapel Area School District

The Fox Chapel Area School District (FCASD) is a nationally recognized, award-winning district located in a suburban area about 10 miles northeast of Pittsburgh, PA. Its population represents a wide range of social, economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. This AASA Lighthouse District emphasizes the Whole Learner, with a continuing focus and commitment to implementing and sustaining innovative supports for learners. These include a comprehensive early learning program, extensive data-driven instructional response practices to support individual student needs, and a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). Major emphasis throughout the district is on students' social-emotional development as a key component of their cognitive growth and academic achievement.

Key AASA Learning 2025 components evident in FCASD include a major focus on the integration of students' social-emotional and cognitive growth (G1), a cognitive growth model (G3), and early learning as a foundation for students' future growth and development (Accelerator A2). As students progress from their early learning years toward graduation, staff members sustain an in-depth view of student data and instructional response—a focus that reinforces high expectations for learning and utilizes multiple metrics to focus on closing achievement and growth gaps. As a result, all learners have access to and succeed in rigorous and engaging learning experiences, regardless of their race, ethnicity, ability, gender, or socioeconomic status.

The district's strong and sustained commitment to early childhood education is evident in the design of its programs to ensure alignment with students' future learning. Structural frameworks used to design the district's early learning programs include the following: (1) emphasis upon hands-on and experience-based learning, including STEAM integration of students' SEL development, oral language, literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, art, and physical development; (2) use of a core phonics-based program as a foundation for literacy; (3) providing students with foundational skills and concepts using through grade 5; and (4) focus on the Responsive Classroom to teach students emotional competencies (e.g., cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control) as well as key academic dispositions (e.g., academic mindset, perseverance, learning strategies, and academic behaviors).

FCASD also provides a comprehensive series of parent and community workshops and learning opportunities to help students, including: (1) Fine Motor Parent Night (to foster independence at home); (2) Pre-K Math and Literacy Parent Nights; (3) Early Learning Forums (in collaboration with community-based Head Start and early learning programs); and (4) Parent Orientation Programs (e.g., Story Time, Discover Kindergarten, Kindergarten Meet and Greet, and Transition Information Sessions).

Like all AASA Lighthouse Districts, the Fox Chapel Area School District uses student benchmark data as part of a comprehensive, systemic approach to instructional planning. This process systematizes and maximizes student growth and achievement, pinpointing the individual needs of students. In addition to standards-driven diagnostic and formative assessment, the district ensures that all students in grade K-8 as well as some high school learners are engaged in quarterly benchmark assessments as a basis for

instructional planning. Open dialogue between teachers and administrators becomes a part of communities of practice within the school district.

Teachers collaborate on written plans using data and feedback, including consideration of Tier II and III MTSS interventions and coaching to support students' mastery of Pennsylvania Core Standards. An important part of data use involves the monitoring of student engagement and how to promote it (i.e., curriculum alignment, resources, professional development, and strategies to address non-academic variables that can be a barrier to student learning and growth). Diagnostic, formative, and summative data analysis and interpretation is collegial, engaging communities of learning that include teachers, RTII Facilitators, principals, and education support personnel. These teams work to identify coaching and intervention services for identified learners.

Additional support programs include elementary summer learning academies for students in grade 3-5 (requiring extra support in reading and mathematics), as well as Children of Steel (grades 3-5), a program designed by district high school students for students in grades 3-5 who require homework support and assistance. Similarly, the district offers a wide range of secondary level support programs, including a supplemental reading and writing course for grades 6-8; extensive mathematics and literacy support programs; summer learning academies; and a wide range of high school offerings designed to promote student literacy, mathematics skills and dispositions, and at both the middle and high school levels a "Back-on-Track" program that allows students to make up work due to absences and complete and/or re-take assignments to ensure standards proficiency.

Finally, the district's commitment to students' social-emotional learning is evident in the wide range of support programs and services it offers. These range from both individual and group support in emotional management, problem solving, and self-regulation to cross-institutional partnerships promoting student mental health. The district also participates in the University of Pittsburgh's Maximizing Adolescent Potentials, student assistance programs, and shared mental health resources and facilities, including Care Solace to provide mental health services 24 hours per day, seven days a week.