

Superintendent's Report Orange Public Schools “Good to Great”

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

“The Teaching Superintendent”

April 9, 2025

Focus Core Area Numbers 1- 4 District Goal Number 1-4 and All
Sub Sections





Celebration of Students

March 2025

Student of the Month Announcement

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

FOCUS CORE AREA NUMBERS 1 & 2

DISTRICT GOAL NUMBER 1&4 AND ALL SUB SECTIONS

Students of the Month
March 2025
Congratulations to our STAR Students!



Name of School	Student of the Month
Central Elementary School	Kiara Gonzalez
Cleveland Street School	Daniel Mejia Ortiz
Forest Street Community School	Paola Chuqui Alvarez
Heywood Avenue School	Lens Pierre Richemond
Lincoln Avenue School	Miayah Leandre
Oakwood Avenue Community School	Samuel Contreras

Name of School	Student of the Month
Orange High School	Giounaldine Aristilde
Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation	Michelle Contant
Park Avenue School	Abigail Poliard
Rosa Parks Community School	Camila Ulloa Landy
STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges	Mohamed Ahmed
The Twilight Program	Alejandro Buchanan

District Goals for SY 24-25



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2) By May 2025, 60% of students in each preparedness group will meet or exceed their assigned end of year growth target in mathematics.

- The assessments that will be used to measure progress towards the assigned growth targets include the iReady Diagnostic, NWEA MAP, District Benchmark Assessments, and select Performance Tasks in the area of Mathematics.
- The district will continue to report out all data in the area of mathematics in Curriculum Committee as per the assessment calendar as well as the Board of Education Meeting.

- The assessments that will be used to measure progress towards the assigned growth targets include Reading Diagnostics, District Benchmarks, and Performance Tasks in the area of English Language Arts.

- The district will continue to report out all data in the area of English Language Arts in Curriculum Committee as per the assessment calendar as well as the Board of Education Meeting.

The background of the slide features a row of light bulbs hanging from above. Most of the bulbs are dark and unlit, but one bulb in the center-right is illuminated with a warm yellow glow. The title text is centered over the bulbs.

District Goal #1: 21st Century Integration

Overarching Overview of the Goal

4) By May 2025, 60% of students in each preparedness group will meet or exceed their assigned end of year growth target in Science.

- The assessments that will be used to measure progress towards the assigned growth targets include benchmark assessments in the area of Science.
- The district will continue to report out all data in the area of Science in Curriculum Committee as per the assessment calendar as well as the Board of Education Meeting.

5) By June 2025, 5% increases across all areas on the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (Mathematics, Science, and English Language Arts)

- The district will provide assessments to prepare students and staff for the high stakes assessment.
- Review of data from the assessments in public as well as during several points throughout the year.

District Goal #1: 21st Century Integration

Overarching Overview of the Goal

6) By June 2025, 100% of students will have access to meaningful experiences of powerful learning opportunities and will demonstrate competencies and skills for the digital age.

- All students will receive dedicated devices (Chromebooks) and accessories for year-round access in and out of school
- The district will strengthen its device management plan to address repairs of accidental damage and provide extended warranties
- The district will ensure processes and protocols at the school level are followed to replace lost, damaged, or stolen devices. This will include device management and inventory systems.
- The district will allow for gap orders for additional devices that considers growing student enrollment and continuous digital access when devices are out for repair
- The district will ensure continued support of full-time, school-based Technology Coordinators and VILS Coaches to help build educator capacity districtwide in the integration of technology across all subjects
- Schools will establish and cultivate student tech teams to involve students directly in the planning, execution, and day-to-day management of implementation
- The district will incorporate a 3-tiered system of assessing the degree of technology integration across the schools to include Technology Integration Matrix Lesson Observation Tool (TIM-O) walk throughs, Fall/Winter/Spring teacher/student surveys, and Usage Inventories (Time and Data).

District Goal #2: Community Engagement

Overarching Overview of the Goal:

Goal #2: Community Engagement

The Orange Public Schools will continue a system of consistent communication system for disseminating and receiving information between school administration, teachers, staff, students, parents, and the community.

1) Increase the timeliness, access, and effectiveness of all communication with all stakeholders via multiple measures by 60% from the previous school year (the previous year was at a 50% increase.) With the year after returning to school five days per week, it is important to provide in the moment information to families

- Social Media Platforms & Website (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter)-Utilize the platforms for immediate news-worthy information as well as the district website via the latest news and announcements section.
- RoboCalls via School Wires at the district and school levels; we are incorporating more text to speech and emails for as well as translated versions of all messages both district and at the school level.

District Goal #2: Community Engagement

Overarching Overview of the Goal:

2) Increase the timeliness, access, and effectiveness of all communication with all stakeholders via multiple measures by 60% from the previous school year (the previous year was at a 50% increase).

- Social Media Platforms & Website (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter)-Utilize the platforms for immediate news-worthy information as well as the district website via the latest news and announcements section.
- RoboCalls via School Wires at the district and school levels; we are incorporating more text to speech and emails for as well as translated versions of all messages both district and at the school level.
- Superintendent's Report (online access to staff and community stakeholders) the day immediately following the board meeting by noon.
- Routine face-to-face opportunities to engage with community and stakeholders via PTO, Back to School Nights, Report Card Conference Nights, Community Events within Orange Township as well as partnership meetings based on those established and forthcoming within the school district. We will continue the parent and student councils at the Superintendent's Level.
- Provide Bilingual Supports for all families to ensure their engagement within the school district via translations, translator supports, and district as well as social level meetings.

District Goal #2: Community Engagement

Overarching Overview of the Goal:

3) Increase the use of emerging and available communications outlets to transmit information by 45%

- Partner with universities (local and throughout the state) in order to get information to prospective candidates for job fairs and other industry level announcements. We will conduct virtual and in person job fairs as well to widen the search for potential candidates outside of the University realm.
- Continue to utilize the Orange Public School App for more timeless information.
- Continue to utilize the Emergency Pop Up on the website for transmitting important, time sensitive information weekly.
- Provide Translations on all documents that are disseminated from schools and district offices.

4) Continue Parent and Student Councils at the Superintendent's Level

- Have monthly meetings with parents and students about academics as well as self-care supports; student council meetings will take place separately from the parent council.
- Continue the Bilingual Parent Advisory and ensure that the meetings are quarterly.
- Continue the Special Education Advisory Council Meetings and ensure that the meetings take place quarterly.
- Continue the Early Childhood Advisory Council Meetings and ensure that the meetings take place quarterly.
- Establish the Nutrition Advisory Council alongside school level student councils. Ensure that the meetings take place quarterly.

District Goal #3: Facilities and Finance

Overarching Overview of the Goal:

Goal #3: Facilities, Finance, and Staff Support: The Orange Public Schools will continue to redesign the fiscal management, operations, and human resources of the organization to ensure a system of accountability, transparency, and efficiency for the optimal delivery of services for partnerships to flourish and staff to be retained across the district.

1) Create a district budget under constraints that accommodates and supports the needs of central office departments, all schools and students while sustaining systems that have yielded results through a strategic assessment of data

- Analyze and clarify how all budgeted funds are allocated and expended at the department and school levels.
- Examine and evaluate contracted services provided to the district and continuously improve effectiveness.
- Identify and execute capital projects (short term/long term, prioritized, and categorized on the basis of need.)
- The transfers money from account lines on the district level will decrease by 25% from the previous school year

District Goal #3: Facilities and Finance

Overarching Overview of the Goal:

2) Implement innovations that empower teaching and learning as well as efficiently allocate funding within their locations

- Continue to monitor the budgeting module My Budget File to ensure adherence to staff and federal mandates.
- Create a long-term and short-term facilities development plan to outfit buildings district wide in the effort of expanding programming throughout the school district. These plans will be presented at the Facilities and Finance Committee Meetings as well as via the Regular Board of Education Meeting as we have several aging buildings in the district.

3) Maximize employee expertise and create a positive and supportive environment

- Continue to have roundtable conversations with staff in order to provide an optimal work environment.
- Continue to offer the Employee Assistance Program to allow for continue support of our staff holistically.
- District level personnel attending meetings at the school level in order to bridge the gap between the schools and district office.

District Goal #4: Social and Emotional Supports

Overarching Overview of the Goal:

Goal #4: Social and Emotional Supports The Orange Public Schools will continue to ensure that all students will receive social and emotional support to become adaptable, confident citizens who embody self-awareness and strong interpersonal skills, and who are capable of responsible decision-making and managing their emotions and behaviors.

1) Provide research-based curriculum to strengthen students' social/emotional relationships

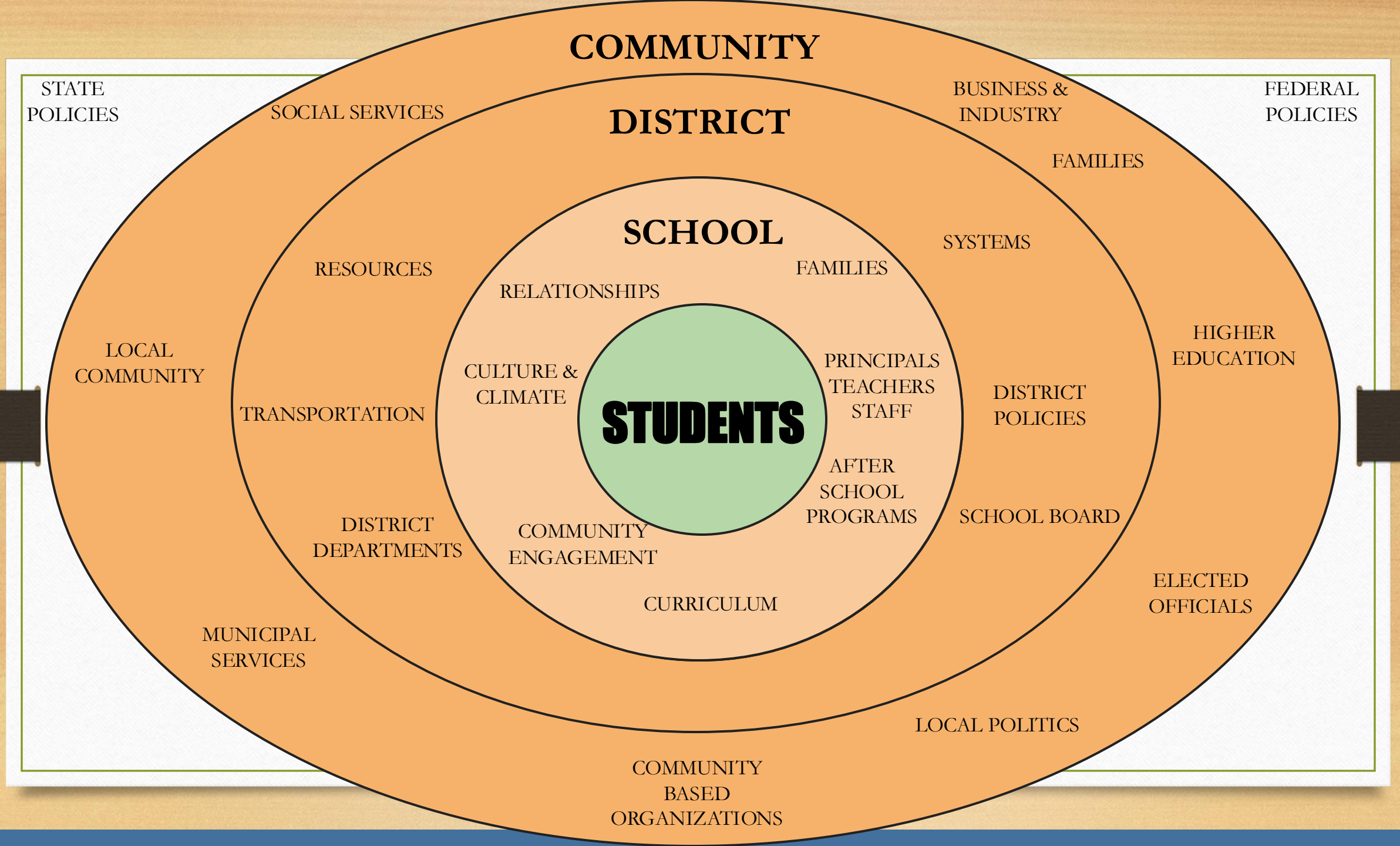
- Continue to utilize Restorative Practices as a means of providing effective supports to students in the effort of problem solving. This includes at both the elementary and secondary levels.
- Continue the monitoring of mental health to provide students another avenue to combat social-emotional concerns and thus remediate areas of deficiency related to mental health.
- Ensure that staff and students continue to have resources readily available by the district to ensure their social-emotional needs are met with fidelity.

District Goal #4: Social and Emotional Supports

Overarching Overview of the Goal:

2) Enhance community-based partnerships in order to assist students and families

- Continue to utilize the District's community engagement officer as well as community school liaisons to assist school-based staff with establishing partnerships to support families and students and thus have a vehicle to support families Pre-K through Twelve.
- Provide self-care supports for students and families based on surveys (conducted twice per year) as well as discussion with support staff members including the Superintendent's Trauma Informed Team.



National Assistant Principals' Week

National Assistant Principals' Week was April 7-11, 2025. Join me in honoring the enormous contributions of our Orange School District Assistant Principals. Thank you for your continued support of staff, students, and families. Your support has not gone unnoticed. It is important to share that our assistant principals have demonstrated unwavering leadership and continue to be a source of strength and inspiration for us all. Thank you thank you thank you.



National Paraprofessional Appreciation Day

Paraprofessional Appreciation Day was celebrated nationally on April 2, 2025. This special day is dedicated to those who work in a classroom under a teacher's direction. A paraprofessional is someone who works under a professional's guidance to help them in their job. In the school sector, paraprofessional educators are also known as teacher's aides, paraeducators, para-pros, and classroom assistants.

These fantastic staff members within the Orange School District deliver targeted support to students who may need extra help and work to maintain the classroom, assist with running it smoothly. Paraprofessionals are the unsung heroes of our education system. Join me in celebrating all of our paraprofessionals within our district, you are certainly appreciated.



Week of the Young Child

Week of the Young Child is currently taking place this week. Established in 1971 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Week of the Young Child will take place the Week of April 7th. The Week of the Young Child promotes the needs of young children, their families and the early childhood programs that serve them. Thank you all schools that service Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten for aligning your thinking to that of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.



SCHOLARSHIP UPDATES



- Each month, Supervisor of Guidance, Mrs. Williams-Ware, provides our Superintendent with scholarship totals. Ok, so here we go:
- **Orange High School** as of **April 9, 2025**, has amassed: **\$12,290,612.00**
- **STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges** as of **April 9, 2025**, has amassed: **\$14,061,856.00**
- **Total: \$26,352,468.00**
- We are so very proud of our scholars. Thank you to our fantastic staff at Orange High School and STEM Academy for working so closely with our scholars to ensure that they have the opportunities to amass millions of dollars in scholarships.
- **WE ARE WELL ON OUR WAY....MORE TO COME!**

Women of Worth Program at Scholars Academy

- Throughout the month of March, Principal Machuca invited key women members of our school community to take part in reading and sharing experiences with students in our pre-kindergarten as well as Gifted and Talented program. The stories and support offered were second to none. Special thank you to: Board Vice President Dr. Fatimah Turner, Board Member Ms. India Williams, Executive Director Ms. Faith Alcantara, Supervisor Ms. Amina Mateen, and Board Attorney Ms. Jessika Kleen, Esq. We appreciate you beyond measure for your time and dedication to our students. All, let's salute our partners in this work!

Autism Awareness Month April 2025

The Significance of Blue

- The color blue holds significant meaning in autism awareness. It is the most well-known color associated with autism, symbolizing understanding, support, and a sense of calm. The color blue signifies calmness, serenity, and is recognized as the primary color to represent autism.

Why is the rainbow infinity symbol used instead of the puzzle pieces?

In the autism world the puzzle piece is considered problematic as it suggests that autism is a mystery or a puzzle to be solved!

The rainbow infinity symbol represents vibrant colors that are associated with Neurodiversity. The colors of the rainbow promote positivity and acceptance of diversity.

Autism Awareness Month April 2025

Suggested Autism Activities:

- Bulletin boards for autism recognition
- Writing assignments on autism
- Art projects using Autism infinity symbols

Books on Autism:

- *My Friend Julia: A Sesame Street Book about Autism*
- *Amazing Me: A kids Guide to Understanding Autism*
- *Masterpiece: an inclusive kids book celebrating a child on the autism spectrum (The Incredible Kids).*
- *Since We're Friends: An Autism Picture Books*

Autism Awareness

Autism Activities:

- <https://www.twinkl.com/resource/autism-awareness-week-activity-pack-t-s-2547227>
- <https://www.twinkl.com/resource/understanding-the-autistic-spectrum-staff-cpd-t-s-1631092876>
- <https://www.twinkl.com/resource/us2-p-001-embrace-our-differences-powerpoint>
- Just a few ideas that can be used to promote Autism Awareness and to embrace differences through kindness and social skills.

Attendance Presentation from the Month of March 2025



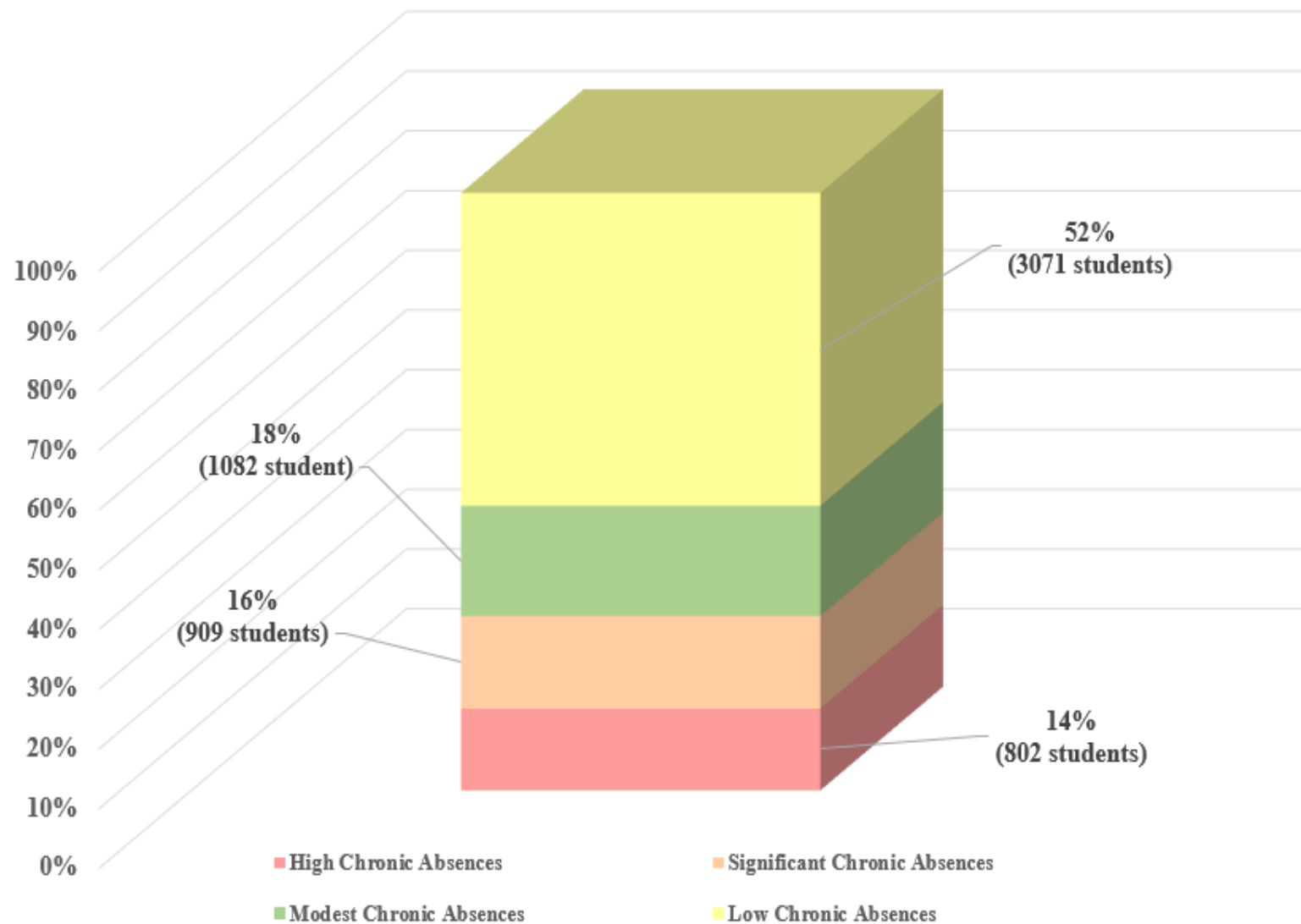
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Chronically
Absence
Categories
are Identified
As:

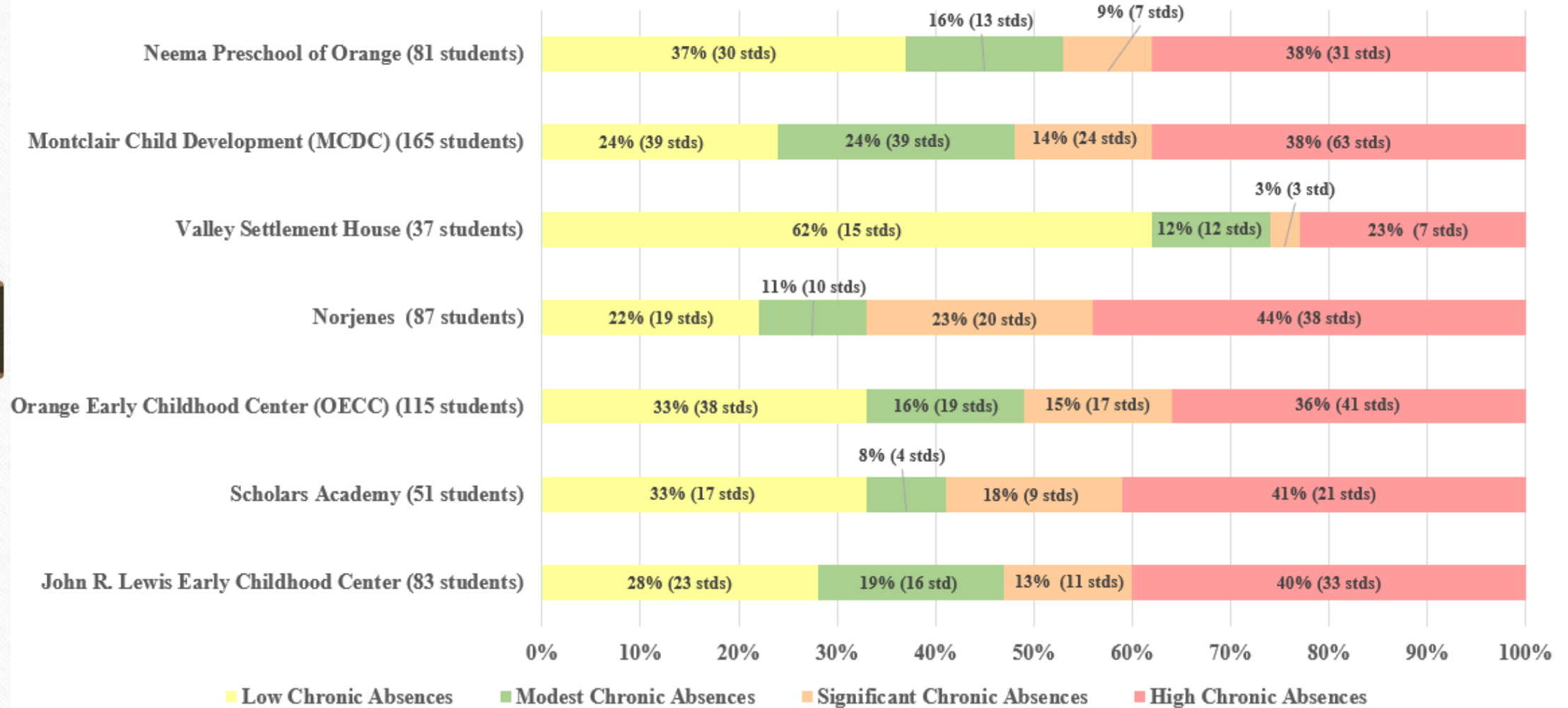
Absences Category	Cumulative Days Absent for the Month of March 2025
Low Chronic Absences	0 to 5.99 days
Modest Chronic Absences	6 to 8.99 days
Significant Chronic Absences	9 to 12.99 days
High Chronic Absences	13 days or more

*Students are chronically absent when excused or unexcused absences are equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days enrolled in the school year.

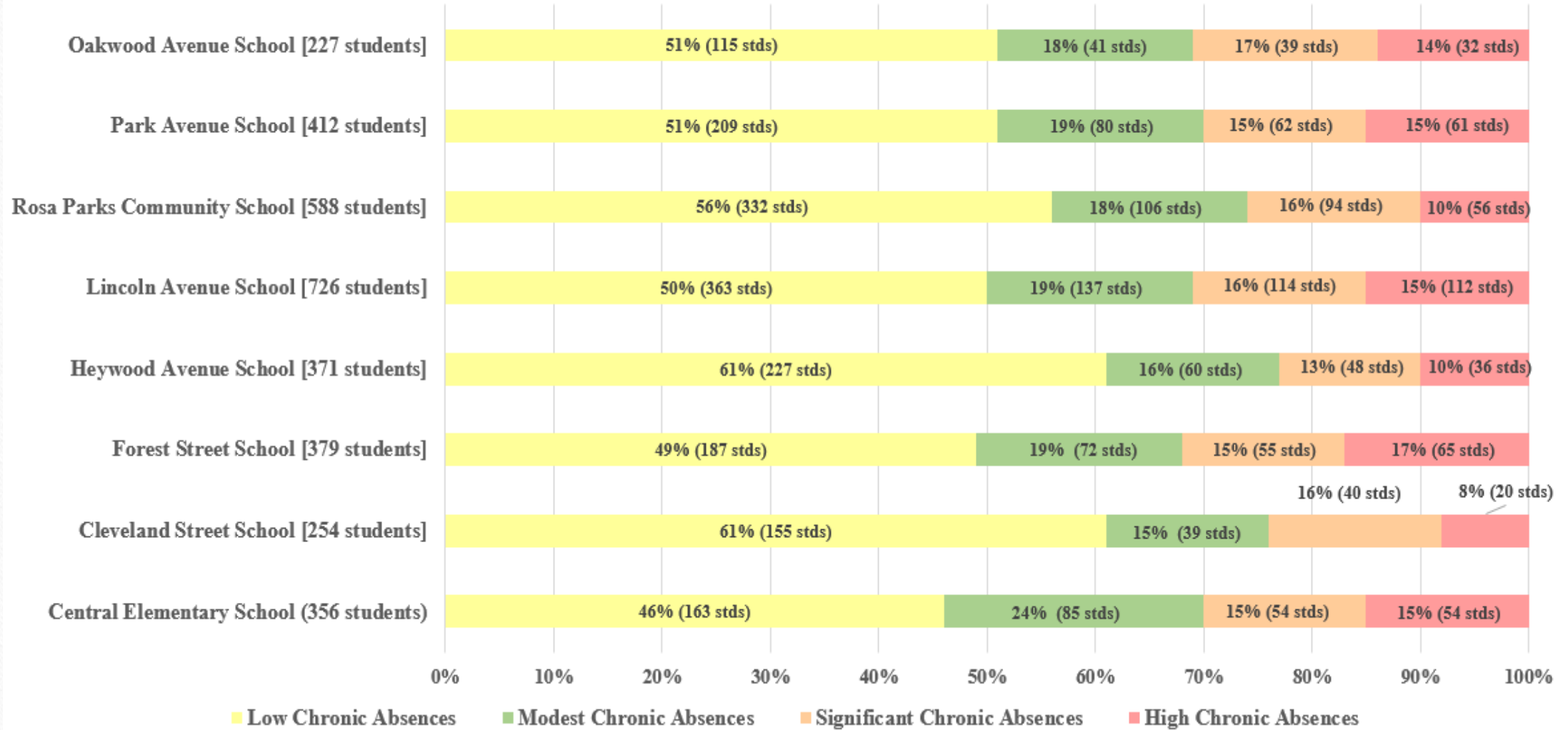
Cumulative Absences for the Month of March by Category



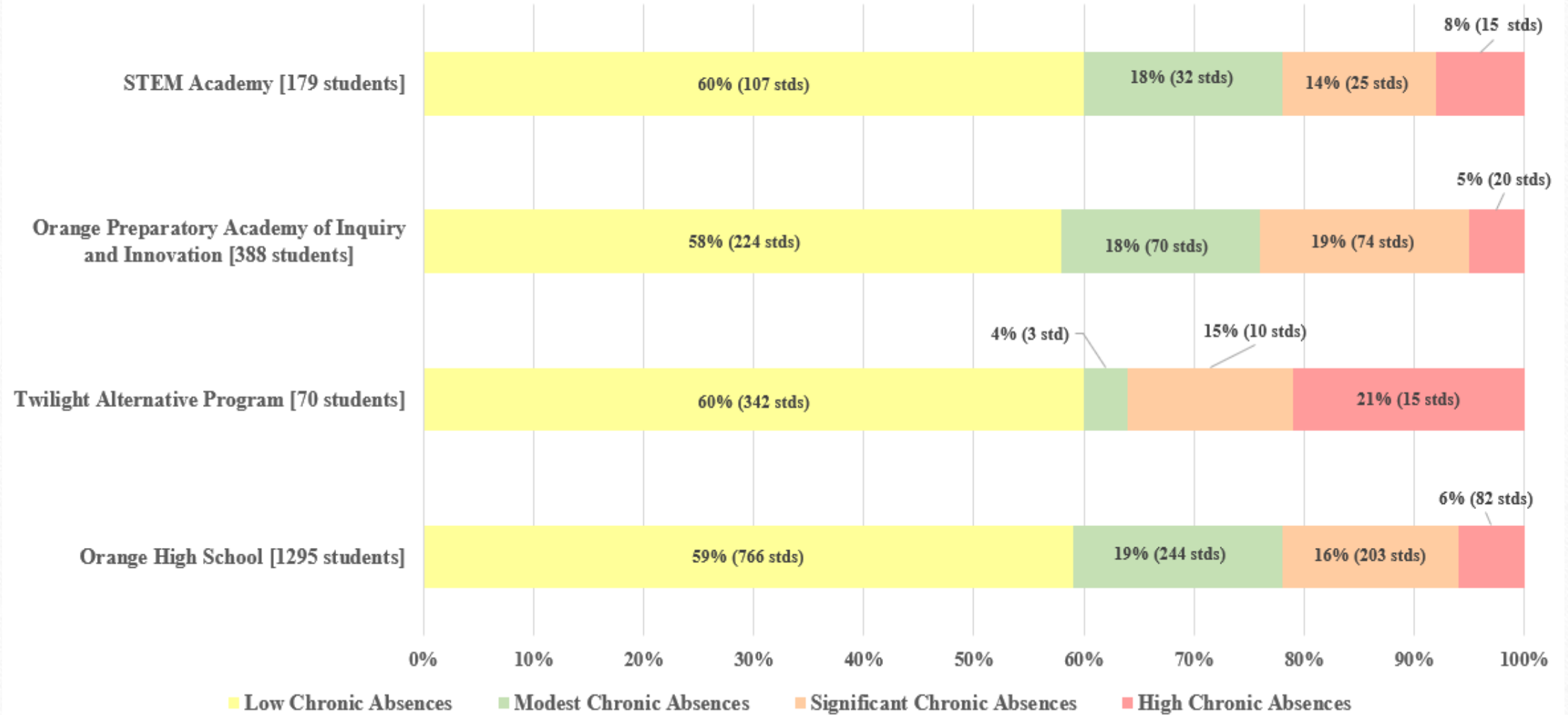
Cumulative Absences by School for the Month of March Early Childhood Program



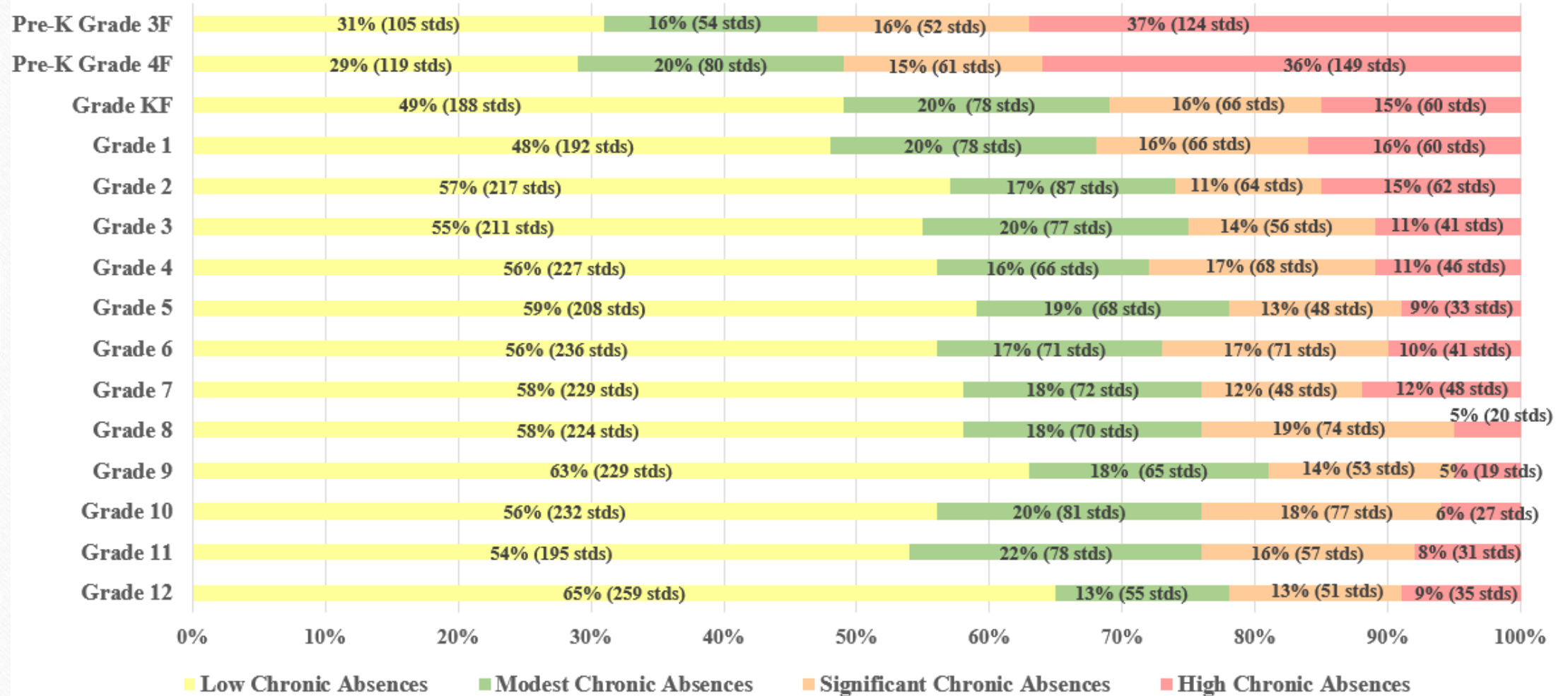
Cumulative Absences by School for the Month of March Kindergarten through Grade 7



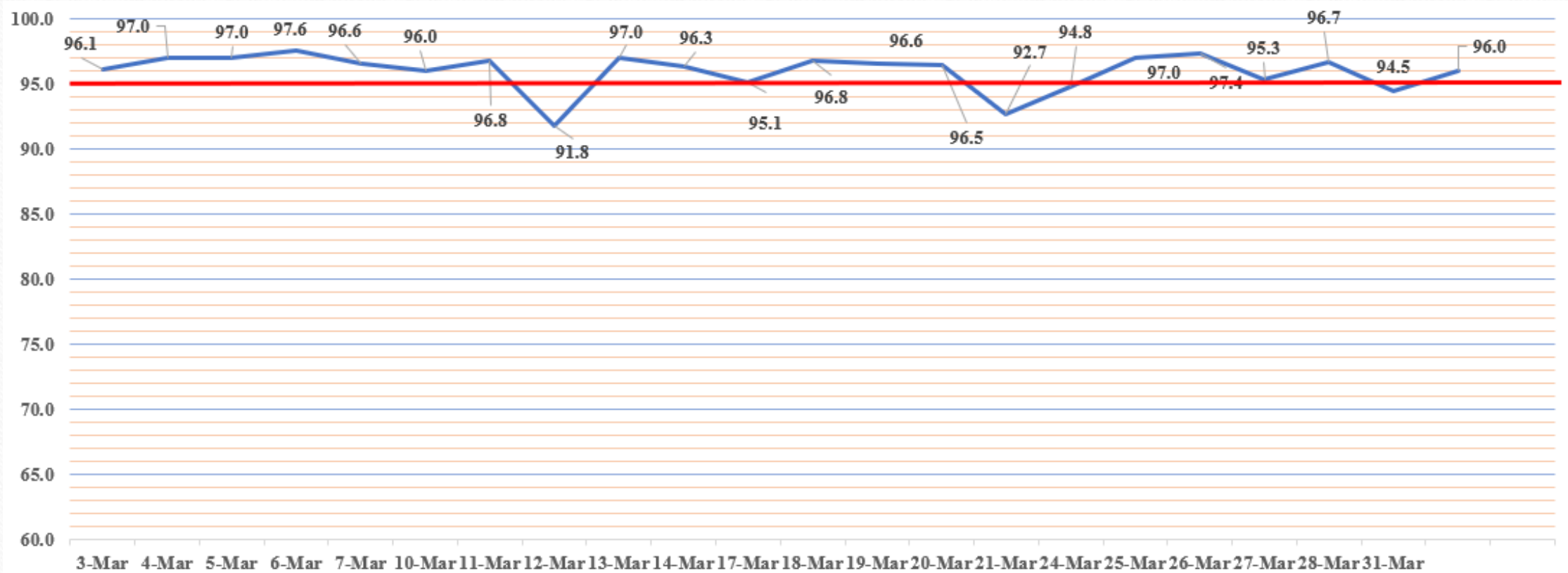
Cumulative Absences by School for the Month of March Grades 8 through 12



Cumulative Absences for the Month of March by Grade Level



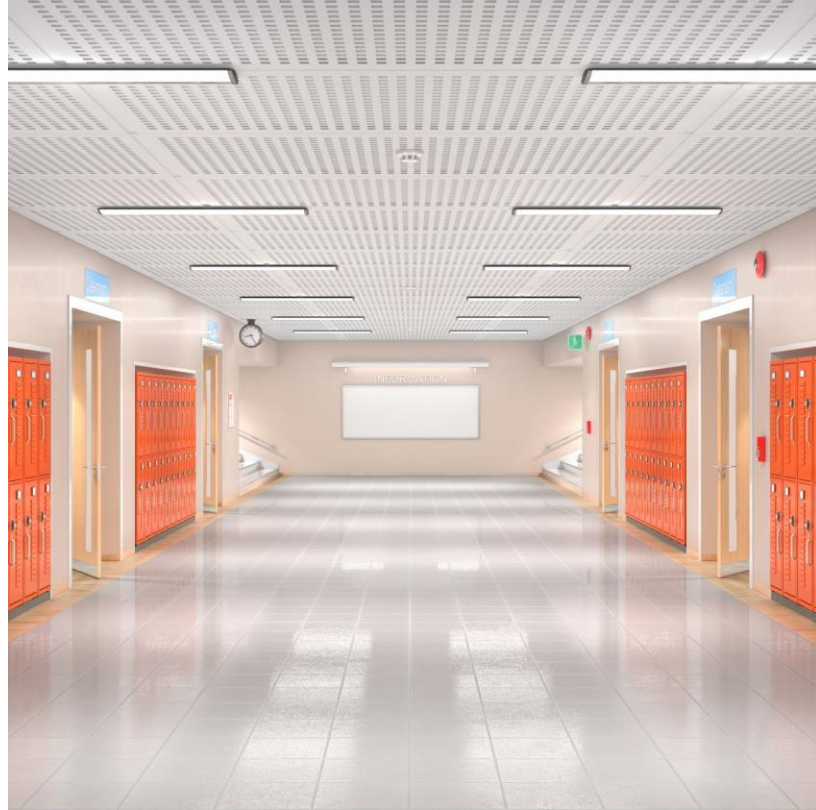
March 2025
Average Daily Attendance Percentages
***State Average is 96%**
District Average Daily Attendance was 96%



April 2025 Facilities Update

Presented By: Mr. Edwin Vasquez
Manager of Facilities and Grounds
April 9, 2025





District Facility Maintenance & Custodial Services Updates

- **Thorough cleaning and disinfecting occurs daily for all of our touch points in the building (examples include but are not limited to door handles, bathrooms, entrances, exits, and handrails)**
- **Walk-throughs of all district school facilities**
- **Meetings between the District and PCI are held regularly based on updates related to COVID-19 mandates and expectations**
- **Facility projects continue so we can ensure a safe and clean learning environment for our children and staff.**

Facilities Updates

March 2025

We continue to collaborate with our vendor to complete projects related to the ESIP program. Currently, we are upgrading to LED lighting at Rosa Parks Community School and repairing the roof in preparation for the installation of solar panels. Additionally, we are working on building envelope repairs, such as re-caulking windows and replacing or adding door sweeps. These improvements are important for climate control and will help make our building more energy efficient.

Facilities Updates

March 2025

- During the month of March, the Facilities Team focused on addressing a variety of work orders and resolving significant issues related to aging infrastructure, particularly concerning old pipes and other urgent maintenance challenges. We tackled several critical repairs to ensure the continued safety and functionality of our facilities. In the following slides, we will provide an overview of the specific projects we completed, highlighting our efforts to improve the overall reliability of our systems and enhance the working environment for everyone.

Facilities Updates

March 2025

- At Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation, we had a pipe break inside a storage room. The team jumped into action, stopped the leak, and replaced the pipe.



Facilities Updates

March 2025

- A tree fell at the John Robert Lewis Early Childhood Center. Once we were notified, the team and the Orange Public Works Department quickly cut down the tree and removed it to ensure there was no disruption to the school day.





Facilities Updates March 2025

Facilities Updates

March 2025

- At STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges. The retaining wall collapsed due to high winds. We are in the process of repairing the wall



Facilities Updates March 2025

- We are currently making significant progress on the Forest Street School Annex. The interior painting of the building has been completed, giving it a fresh and inviting look. Now, our team is focused on the intricate process of sanding and screening the wood floors in the classrooms, ensuring they are smooth and polished for an optimal learning environment. The attention to detail in every step reflects our commitment to creating a welcoming space for students and staff alike.



Facilities Updates March 2025

Forest Street School Annex before picture of classroom floor



Forest Street School Annex

In the Month of April 2025

- The team and I, under the direction of Mr. Ballard, will continue to meet with the Schools Development Authority and Terminal Construction to make sure that there is progress related to the Construction at the Orange High School Punch-list items and the Cleveland Street School Project.


Reminder from the Office of Facilities

- We will continue to update the community, staff, and Board of Education members of all progress.
- The health and safety of staff and students are at the apex of all facilities undertakings.

Spring Break is Coming Up!

- Friday, April 18th; the District will be closed in Observance of Good Friday.
- Monday, April, 21st through Friday, April 25th the District will be closed for Spring Break
- We will reopen on Monday, April 28, 2025 at regular time. Please mark your calendars.

Reminder: The Orange
App Have you signed up?
You know I am sending blasts out for folks to sign up...Stay Tuned



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#OrangeStrong

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