



Learning 2025  
**LEARNER-CENTERED  
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EDUCATION**



# LEARNING 2025 LIGHTHOUSE DEMONSTRATION SYSTEM

## AASA Learning 2025

### Lighthouse Demonstration System Vignette

## Fayetteville-Manlius School District (N.Y.)

Recognized Fall 2024

Focus Area: Community Alignment

Located in the southeastern suburbs of the city of Syracuse, New York, the Fayetteville-Manlius School District is home to approximately 25,000 residents. The district has more than 4,100 students, 370 certified teachers, and 150 teacher aides and assistants.

The district is a regular recipient of top regional, state, and national awards in the areas of academics, athletics, and the arts. Four of the six school buildings within the district have individually earned National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Awards.

A major focus area of the district is its commitment to community alignment. According to its vision statement, "Our vision as a school community is to inspire students and promote personal success." Its mission is to: "Build on our commitment to academic excellence with a focus on authentic learning experiences, civic responsibility, and innovative programs. We will accomplish this within an environment that fosters meaningful relationships, honors and affirms the diverse identities and experiences of our students, supports the overall wellness of each student, and promotes continuous improvement in each of the priority areas: teaching and learning; school environment; service learning and community partnerships; and fiscal capacity and responsibility."



**4,147**  
Students



**6**  
Schools



**4**  
National Blue Ribbon  
School of Excellence  
Awards

The district's strategic plan identifies four priority areas:

- Teaching and Learning
- School Environment
- Service Learning and Community Partnerships
- Fiscal Capacity and Responsibility

District leaders emphasize innovation, so that students are prepared to contribute to an ever-changing world.

The Fayetteville-Manlius Central School District embraces family and community engagement in an effort to mobilize assets and enlist support for the school district and children. Recent projects include the district's efforts to bring community perspective into decisions involving capital projects, communications around school safety and security, deliberations about school start times, dialogues about Diversity-Equity-Inclusion initiatives, discourse about mental health supports, and collaborative conversations about the challenges of parenting.

The impact of family engagement has been powerful, allowing for parent and guardian voice in school operations. For example, the district routinely administers surveys to students, staff, administrators, parents, guardians, and community members. Surveys, including WE Survey from the Successful Practices Network, the BIMAS-2 mental health screener and most recently a three-part survey aligned to the national Education Department School Climate Survey. Each of these assessment instruments demonstrate the high value the District places on feedback and encourages decision making based on continuous improvement.

In addition to surveys, the district's efforts to bring community perspective into decisions have included capital projects, school safety and security, school start times, dialogues about Diversity-Equity-Inclusion initiatives, discourse about mental health supports, and collaborative conversations about the challenges of parenting.

The results of these community involvement activities have informed the strategic planning process to promote innovative school change.

Additionally, the district offers a "Let's Talk!" portal that allows stakeholders to dialogue, ask questions, share concerns, and see clarification about key issues with the school superintendent.

Finally, community involvement is evident in the district's ongoing implementation of the "Big Read" book study for all families and community members. This effort is a collaborative commitment to bring together stakeholders to discuss the challenges of families in the modern world. A range of resources are available, including extensive opportunities to attend presentations by nationally recognized parenting experts.

Additionally, the district offers extensive opportunities for cross-organizational collaboration with a range of family and community partners. These include extensive social-emotional and mental health services, innovative curricular projects (seismic design), charitable projects to benefit local food pantries and anti-poverty organizations.

## Reflections on the Power of Community Involvement

As evidenced by its commitment to aligning community resources for educators, learners, and their families, Fayetteville-Manlius CSD constantly seeks to create community cabinets (committees, task forces, parent councils, etc.) to coordinate multiple internal and external support services.

The district understands its invaluable resources to transform practice by providing services and assistance, hosting community building and service-oriented events, and functioning as a hub for inclusion and strength.

Members of the school community enthusiastically welcome the expectations of an AASA Lighthouse designation in order to advance teaching and learning at Fayetteville-Manlius CSD. These priority areas are aligned with the AASA Lighthouse District's Accelerator A4. Community Alignment:

“[Our] Educational system recognizes that quality education for all learners depends upon unlocking resources of the entire community, engaging families and community and business leaders with educators to ensure access to a robust, multi-tiered system of support for children, and ensures that the community is actively engaged and invested in future-driven education.”

## District Profile, Vision & Mission

The district serves 4,147 students enrolled in three elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school.

The Fayetteville-Manlius CSD is regularly a recipient of top regional, state, and national awards and acknowledgements. For example, four of its six buildings have individually earned National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Awards. In addition, for the last 19 consecutive years, the district has been recognized as one of the National Association of Music Merchants' (NAMM) Best Communities for Music Education. The district's varsity athletic teams routinely appear as honorees of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) Scholar-Athlete program for the athletes' high academic achievement. Fayetteville-Manlius student artists and authors are frequently recognized during the prestigious Scholastic Art & Writing competition.

The District's vision statement, "Our vision as a school community is to inspire students and promote personal success," provides direction to curriculum, instruction, extracurricular activities and support services. The mission statement clarifies how the district intends to fulfill its promise to inspire students and promote personal success: "...build on our commitment to academic excellence with a focus on authentic learning experiences, civic responsibility, and innovative programs. We will accomplish this within an environment that fosters meaningful relationships, honors and affirms the diverse identities and experiences of our students, supports the overall wellness of each student, and promotes continuous improvement in each of the priority areas: teaching and learning; school environment; service learning and community partnerships; and fiscal capacity and responsibility."

Complementing the mission and vision statements' priorities, the Fayetteville-Manlius CSD Diversity, Equity & Inclusion statement asserts that the district is "committed to creating a collaborative learning environment where all members feel included, respected, valued, connected by affirming individual identities, fostering relationships, and recognizing diversity as an asset for teaching and learning." Taken together, the three statements reinforce the district's obligation to be future-driven and future-focused where all stakeholders come together for the preparation of the next generation of learners.

As mentioned above, the district's strategic plan identifies four priority areas: Teaching and Learning, School Environment, Service Learning and Community Partnerships, and Fiscal Capacity and Responsibility.

School buildings each develop an annual action plan which defines goals in alignment with the strategic plan.

District leaders emphasize innovation, so that students are prepared to contribute to an ever-changing world. To that end, the district has made significant investments in ongoing professional learning for staff, including:

- graduate coursework,
- after-school workshops,
- summer curriculum development and training,
- conferences & workshops, and
- participation in study groups.

The district vision statement honors the district's collective commitment that: "Our vision as a school community is to inspire students and to promote personal success."

This vision reminds all community members that they must endeavor to meet each student where they are (student-centered and whole learner focused) in an effort to "promote personal success" on an individualized level.

## Family Engagement as a District Priority

The Fayetteville-Manlius Central School District embraces family and community engagement in an effort to mobilize assets and enlist support for the school district and children. Recent projects include the district's efforts to bring community perspective into decisions involving capital projects, communications around school safety and security, deliberations about school start times, dialogues about Diversity-Equity-Inclusion initiatives, discourse about mental health supports, and collaborative conversations about the challenges of parenting.

The impact of family engagement has been powerful, allowing for parent and guardian voice in school operations. For example, the district administered the WE Survey from the Successful Practices Network to students, staff, administrators, parents, guardians, and community members. The surveys provided a wealth of information about perceptions concerning the district's learning environment, quality of instruction, and school/district leadership. The results were used to inform the strategic planning process to promote innovative school change.

Additionally, the district's "Let's Talk!" portal allows stakeholders to dialogue, ask questions, share concerns, and see clarification about key issues with the school superintendent. Also, due to the administration of the WE Surveys, the district has completed a school start time study with Dr. Daniel Lewin of Children's National Health System/George Washington University School of Medicine.

Finally, community involvement is evident in the district's ongoing implementation of the "Big Read" book study for all families and community members. This effort is a collaborative commitment to bring together stakeholders to discuss the challenges of families in the modern world. A range of resources are available, including extensive opportunities to attend presentations by nationally recognized parenting experts.

Additionally, the district offers extensive opportunities for cross-organizational collaboration with a range of family and community partners. These include extensive social-emotional and mental health services, with a commitment to accessing the support and services of a range of experts.