

Action Item - 2

Title: Contract with Thread, Inc. for Dropout Prevention Support for Students Facing Significant Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (\$100,000)

Board of Education Meeting Date: 3/27/2025

Action Under Consideration:

The Administration recommends that the Board of Education authorize The School District of Philadelphia, through the Superintendent or his designee, to execute and perform a contract, subject to funding, as follows:

With:

Thread, Inc.

Purpose:

For the administrative costs for a dropout prevention support program

Start date: 4/1/2025

End Date: 3/31/2030

Compensation not to exceed:

\$100,000

Location:

Franklin, Benjamin High School and up to 20 additional District schools to be determined in collaboration with the Office of Strategic Partnerships and Office of School Performance over the next 5 years

Renewal Option:

N/A

Description:

Why is this contract needed?

At the Action Meeting on 10/24/2024, the Board via Action Item #5 approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Thread, Inc. (Thread) to provide comprehensive, wrap-around supports for School District of Philadelphia (District) students at a high risk of dropout. Thread will provide these services over a 5-year period at no cost to the District with those services valued at \$10.8 million. However, in subsequent discussions, the District felt it was appropriate for the District to contribute \$20,000 per year over 5 years (\$100,000 in total) to Thread for administrative costs associated with the \$10.8 million program.

How will the success of this contract be measured?

Key outcomes that will be measured include:

- % of young people who completed high school;
- % of young people who completed a post-secondary program;
- % of young people retained in Thread throughout 10 years.

When applicable, is this an evidence-based strategy? If so, what evidence exists to support this approach?

In Baltimore, where Thread currently operates, first-year high school students with GPAs below 1.0 graduate at a rate of 6%. Despite having an average incoming GPA of 0.76, Baltimore City Public Schools' students enrolled in Thread's program have an overall graduation rate of 74%. Additionally, 57% of these students have completed a post-high school pathway: entrepreneurship, straight to workforce, a certification program, or two- or four-year college degree. All are critical milestones in dismantling the pervasive cycle of poverty. These outcomes – and Thread's model – are based on never giving up on a single young person.

When applicable, was a larger community of District community members and/or stakeholders involved in this selection process? If so, what groups and how?

The Pepper Center for Public Service has led a coalition; comprised of local business leaders, university partners and District staff in the evaluation of Thread's program in Baltimore. This cross functional group has been actively involved in advocating for Thread's expansion to Philadelphia for eight years and is pleased that Thread has chosen Philadelphia for its first expansion outside of Baltimore. Within the District, the Offices of Strategic Partnerships and School Performance have worked collaboratively to inform District leadership and relevant program offices.

Which Goal and/or Guardrail does this Action Item support?

Has this investment been discussed during a progress monitoring session? Which session?

Thread works to help students build relationships across lines of difference which can break down walls of separation, leading to improved and more equitable individual and collective outcomes while creating a community where everyone can thrive. These outcomes include increased graduation rates and completion of post high school pathways which directly supports Goal 4: Every student graduates ready for college and careers.

Does this Action Item support a specific strategy/intervention identified in the Strategic Plan?

Thread's model is positioned to complement the District's efforts in Priority Areas 1, 2, and 3. The District's strategy focusing on 9th Grade On-Track is particularly relevant to: 3.13: Expand 9th Grade On-Track (Success Networks) to reduce dropouts and increase four-year graduation rates. Thread commits to working with students who are in the lowest 25% of their class and are often hard to engage. The program focuses on outcomes that directly align with the District's goals for high school students (e.g. graduation, post-secondary readiness).

Related resolution(s)/action item(s)

October 24, 2024; #5

Funding Source(s)

FY25-26 Operating

FY26-27 Operating

FY27-28 Operating

FY28-29 Operating

FY29-30 Operating

Office Originating Request:

Superintendent's Office (CEO)