

Springfield Preparatory Charter School Title I Schoolwide Plan, 2017-18

BASIS FOR ELIGIBILITY

Springfield Preparatory Charter School: As of October 1, 2017 67.6% of students at Springfield Preparatory Charter School qualify as Economically Disadvantaged.

PLAN REVIEW

The Leadership Team of Springfield Preparatory Charter School, consisting of the Head of School, the Directors of Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Finance and Operations, met at the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year to review achievement data and program measures to determine the Title I School-wide Plan for 2017-18. This plan was then reviewed with members of the school community at the October 2017 PAC meeting.

OBJECTIVE

The mission of Springfield Preparatory Charter School is to be an inclusive K – 8 public charter school that prepares all students for success in high school, college, and life through a focus on rigorous academics and character development. As such, the goal of the Springfield Preparatory Charter Plan is to ensure all students are receiving a rigorous education that will prepare them for future success.

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT (Means for Measuring Outcomes)

In order to measure gains in student achievement, we have identified three primary assessment components at Springfield Preparatory Charter School:

The first and most central assessment mechanisms are the MCAS exams administered annually in each grade starting in third grade. As the only assessments available that are completely aligned with the state curriculum frameworks, MCAS results provide the clearest indication of the school's success in helping students to meet academic goals.

Because 2017-18 will be the first year in which the school will take the MCAS exam, the school will also rely on data from the Achievement Network ("ANet") exam. This exam is administered to all students beginning in third grade and provides data about the school's performance on an assessment aligned to the MCAS and state curriculum frameworks. ANet also provides comparison data, which allows the school to gauge its performance in relation to other schools, as well as specific information related to standards mastery.

In addition, the school relies heavily on the STEP Assessment to assess reading achievement in all grades, but particularly in the early elementary grades where MCAS results are not yet available.

ANTICIPATED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

The success of the implementation of the Springfield Preparatory Charter School Schoolwide Plan will be measured by the extent to which the school has met the annual academic achievement goals identified in its Accountability Plan.

PLAN COMPONENTS

A) Increased Time Devoted to Learning

Results from the first baseline administration of the STEP reading exam at Springfield Preparatory Charter School demonstrate that students, on average, enter Springfield Preparatory Charter School significantly below grade level in reading. Bringing students up to grade level and beyond will require several measures, but all of those will depend on a commitment by students, teachers, and parents alike to work hard.

Consequently, the school has instituted calendars with a longer school year than required by state law and a daily schedule, which includes significantly more academic instructional time. The daily schedule runs from 7:40 to 4:00 each day, except for Fridays, when students are dismissed at 12:30 in order to provide a weekly professional development block for teachers.

B) Focus on Data

We rely heavily on the administration of interim assessments aligned with Springfield Prep standards and the Massachusetts state curriculum frameworks to track student progress. These interim assessments include STEP assessments, ANet assessments, and standards-mastery assessments. All teachers meet in small teams regularly to analyze those assessment results and to create detailed tutoring and intervention plans for all students on the basis of those results. This data also informs the school's academic intervention program, which consists of small group instruction and push-in support.

Teachers in all grades track standard mastery by administering standards mastery assessments and reporting on progress in the school's report cards. These report cards indicate standards mastery data, as opposed to more traditional grades.

C) Identifying and Supporting Struggling Students

In order to ensure that students are learning to their full potential, we believe that teachers must employ a two- step approach. The first step involves providing excellent whole class instruction by developing a standards-based course of study and thoughtful and detailed lessons that serve that course of study. The second step is the act of following up that excellent instruction with targeted individual student support, based on detailed understanding of what each student knows and does not know.

"Second step" instruction takes place during the independent work segments of class time and during targeted academic support groups. Whether it be during class time, or in the course of working with academic support groups, teachers provide individualized "second step" instruction by using formative and summative assessment data to understand the areas of weaknesses for each individual student. This understanding is used to develop lesson plans for targeted one-on-one assistance to each student.

Our ability to address the diverse learning needs of our student population rests on the skill, ability, and insight of our teachers. Springfield Preparatory Charter School teachers structure their lessons to allow access by students with a variety of ability levels and skills. Regular class visits and consultations from the Head of School and Directors of Curriculum and Instruction throughout the school year include a

focus on meeting the varied learning needs of our students.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of this instruction, our teachers meet every Friday afternoon in their Grade Level Teams to reflect on instructional strategies that may or may not be working across academic disciplines. Once a month, the Grade Level Team conducts a Child Study Team (CST) meeting to discuss concerns about students and to present case studies of students who are currently struggling to make adequate progress with the current instruction. Teachers then provide suggestions and recommended strategies to their colleagues on how to better meet the specific learning style or needs of that child. The teacher implements the interventions and then reports back to the grade level team on their success.

Students identified as homeless (either self-reporting, or through case management), will receive transportation support in cooperation with the sending district, as well as counseling support as necessary, uniform support, and/or free or reduced afterschool programming if requested by the family. Springfield Preparatory Charter School staff will work cooperatively with case managers and/or social workers supporting the student and family.

D) Challenging Advanced Students

Because Springfield Prep does not track classes on the basis of academic ability, it is important that the school pay particular attention to challenging the most advanced students. Teachers monitor the reading level of every student and ensure that at all times, students are reading books at the appropriate reading level, and that all students are being challenged to the appropriate extent. In math classes, teachers provide “challenge-work” to the most advanced students (work that is related to the concepts/skills being learned by the class as a whole but which further extends the relevant concept or an application.)

E) Attracting and retaining high-quality and highly-qualified teachers

In order to ensure that all Springfield Prep teachers meet state licensure requirements, the school has instituted the following policy:

- In order to ensure that all of our teachers are highly qualified by the close of the 2017-18 school year, any teacher who is not highly qualified in their subject area will take and pass the relevant MTEL test by the end of the 2017-18 school year.

In order to ensure that the school is able to attract and retain teachers of the highest possible quality, the school is currently carrying out all of the following measures:

- Teachers are provided with extensive administrative support, particularly in the area of classroom and school-wide discipline, such that teachers are able to focus on teaching.
- Teachers are provided with an extensive professional development program (details below).
- The Head of School and Directors of Curriculum and Instruction closely monitor student achievement results and provides ongoing coaching to ensure that all students are making adequate progress.

F) Professional Development

The school schedules early release days on Fridays in order to schedule regular meetings and supplementary professional development activities. This time is used for four primary purposes:

- Ongoing professional development – The Directors of Curriculum and Instruction lead training to help teachers improve their content knowledge and instructional skill.
- Data Analysis and Standards Mastery Analysis – Teachers meet in groups to analyze academic performance data and develop action plans. These include plans for what standards, skills, and content to teach, and whether to do so as whole-class, small-group, and/or individual instruction.
- Collaborative Lesson Planning and Study – In Grade Level Teams, teachers meet to discuss and improve the curriculum they will teach the following week.
- Child Study Team – As explained above, Grade Level Teams present case studies and provide each other with feedback to determine how best to meet students' needs.

G) Plan for Parent Involvement

School policies to facilitate parental involvement and delineate parental rights and responsibilities were developed by school founder in conjunction with school administrators and teachers. These policies are made available to parents in the school's Student and Family Handbook, which is issued to all families at the beginning of each school year. The Springfield Preparatory Charter Schoolwide Plan will also be posted on the school's website.

Parents are able to make recommendations for improving these through each school's Parent Action Committee or alternately by a direct request to the Head of School. The Springfield Preparatory Charter Schoolwide Plan is presented each year for review to the school's Parent Action Committee.

Those policies requiring the greatest contributions from parents are also delineated in the school's School-Family-Scholar Contract of Commitment, which all families are required to sign in conjunction with a representative of the school. The contract is reviewed and discussed in depth with parents at the school's orientation sessions, which are held prior to the start of each school year. Parents are able to recommend changes to the contract through the school's Parent Action Committee.

The contract delineates parents' responsibilities for:

- Providing a quiet place for their child to complete nightly homework assignments;
- Checking their child's homework planner nightly (where students are required to record their nightly assignments) and signing the homework log to indicate that their child has completed those assignments;
- Reading with their child regularly;
- Attending parent conferences regularly;
- Maintaining regular communication with their child's teacher; and
- Ensure their child is at school on time every day.

Parent conferences are held at the close of each of the first two marking periods and all parents are strongly encouraged to attend.

It is difficult to have an objective measure of the effectiveness of parent involvement, although student achievement might be considered one such measure. Because many other factors also impact student achievement, the school conducts an annual survey to parents asking them to gauge the extent of the effectiveness of their own involvement over the previous year. The Head of School, in conjunction with teachers, administrators, and the Parent Action Committee, conducts a year-end review of the extent and effectiveness of current parent involvement policies.

H) Coordination with other federal programs

Federal Nutrition – Springfield Preparatory Charter School provides free breakfast, lunch and snack to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision.

Teacher Quality – In addition to other efforts to ensure teacher quality (described in Part II – Required Program Information), Springfield Prep operates an Associate Teacher Program, which is funded in part by federal support through the Federal Teacher Quality Entitlement Grant (Title II: Fund Code 140).

Safe and Drug Free Schools – Springfield Prep does not receive funds under Safe and Drug Free Schools.

Special Education – Springfield Preparatory Charter School provides extensive special education services, with federal support through the special education entitlement grants made available through the Massachusetts DESE.