



Reimagining School to Realize the Portrait of a Graduate

Springfield Public Schools Strategic Plan for 2022-2028

Strategic Plan Summary



The Portrait of a Graduate is not a document that sits on a shelf. It is a living breathing blueprint, and the process of achieving it has personified what it means to work together as a community to ensure that every child has every opportunity to reach their fullest potential."

-Mayor Domenic J. Sarno

"The Portrait of a Graduate has been and continues to be a process that I wholeheartedly embrace. This strategic plan, and the changes it envisions, will create an equitable system that supports all students to achieve their goals and the global outcomes put forth in this plan."

-Superintendent Daniel J. Warwick



Why create a Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Plan?

Education must adapt to prepare students for a rapidly changing economy. According to the 2016 *Future of Jobs* Report from the World Economic Forum, the following are the top 10 skills needed for jobs of the future and it is our purpose to prepare students for success in this future.

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordinating with Others
6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Judgement and Decision Making
8. Service Orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility

Who created the Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Plan?

From September of 2019 and June of 2022, more than 3,000 members of our community - from students and teachers to parents, pastors, and business leaders - participated in 400 meetings responding to three essential questions.

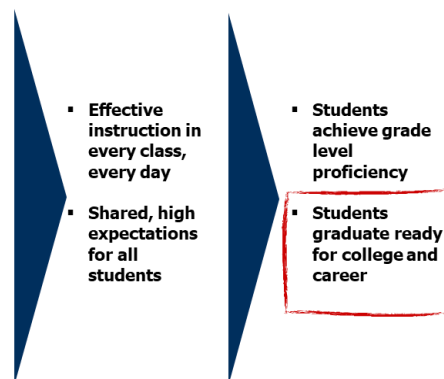
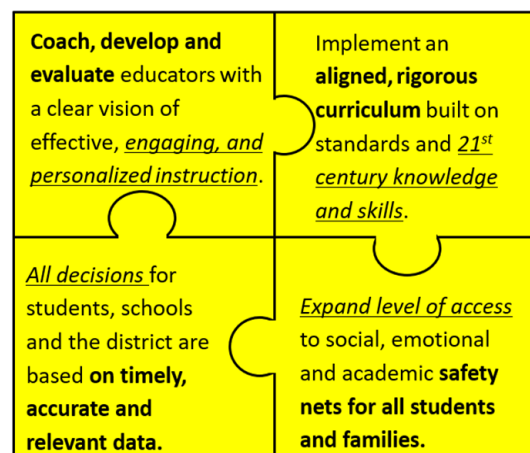
1. What are your hopes and dreams for children growing up in Springfield?
2. What knowledge and skills are needed to realize those dreams?
3. What needs to change or stay the same in SPS to support all students to achieve the Portrait?

The Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Plan reflect our community's responses to these questions coupled with research and best practices in education.

"The Portrait of a Graduate is a wonderful general guideline that Springfield Public Schools follows to ensure that the students in our school system gain all the basic life skills to help them prepare for their future careers. Each skill that is listed on that guideline was carefully thought of to make sure that the students of our amazing city get the necessary instruction that is needed for the future."

-Xyomara, Grade 10, Putnam

Since 2012, the Springfield Public Schools made significant progress under our previous strategic plan: The Springfield Promise.



- ◆ Our graduation rate has climbed from 57% to 84%
- ◆ Our dropout rate has fallen from 10% to 1.9%.
- ◆ Chronic absenteeism has fallen by 25%
- ◆ The number of Out-of-School Suspensions dropped by 70%.
- ◆ The percent of teachers who identify as persons of color rose from 17% to 25%.
- ◆ MCAS gaps between Springfield and Massachusetts have been narrowed in all subject areas.

Springfield's Strategic Plan, 2022-2028

Vision and Mission

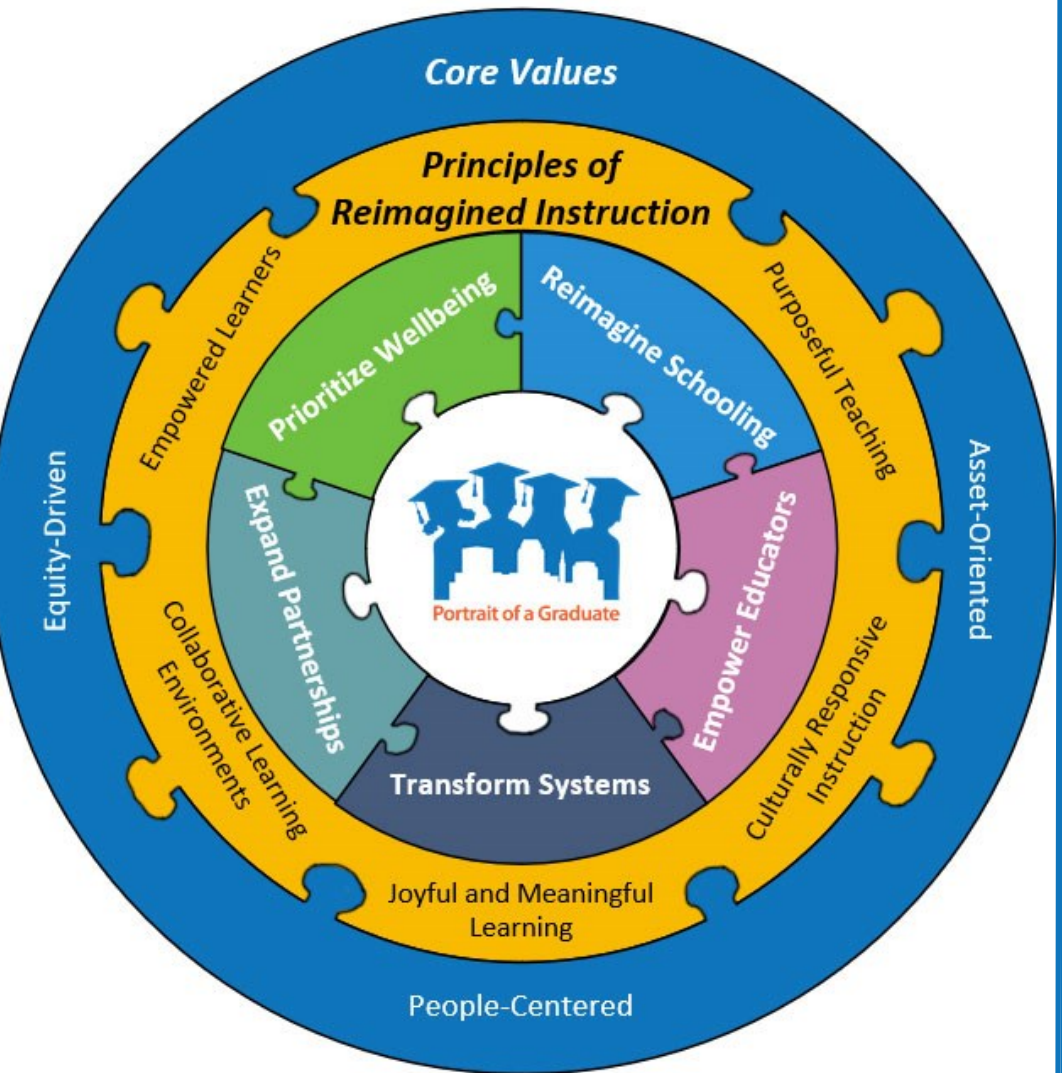
Vision – Students Envisioning and Achieving their Success

Mission - The Springfield promise is reimagining school to:

- Partner with families and the community as essential to student success;
- Attract, develop, support, retain, and promote exceptional and diverse educators and staff;
- Prioritize purposeful teaching, empowered learners, culturally responsive instruction, collaborative learning environments, and joyful and meaningful learning;
- Empower students to grow as whole people; and,
- Graduate students ready for success in college, career, and life.

Theory of Action

If the Springfield Public Schools commit to our values, prioritize our Principles of Reimagined Instruction, and implement strategies to reimagine schooling, prioritize wellbeing, empower educators, expand partnerships, and transform systems; then, all students will achieve Springfield's Portrait of a Graduate and be prepared to identify and realize their pathway to success in college, career, and life.



Core Values - How do we go about our work?

- We are committed to advancing educational equity through ensuring just outcomes for each student, raising historically marginalized voices, and challenging imbalances of power and privilege.
- We value and center our student's diverse experiences by practicing culturally and historically responsive practices; relying on resources and teaching practices that support students to develop their identity and critical perspectives on the world.
- We focus on opportunities to improve outcomes by adopting an asset-oriented mindset; learning from and building on the strengths of our students, families, staff, and community partners.
- We prioritize people by listening before we speak, practicing empathy, hearing before we decide, choosing collaboration, and showing kindness.

"No matter the color, no matter the age, no matter the gender, everyone deserves to gain knowledge. Because knowledge is powerful and bright. No child should see learning as dull and grey. They should have stars in their eyes and view learning as an opportunity to accomplish more than what they may be told they're capable of."

-Angelo, Grade 11, Conservatory of the Arts

Defining Terms

Reimagined instruction means redesigning what happens in the classroom to put students at the center of their learning, prioritize choice, problem-solving, depth of mastery, engagement, rigor, and real-world connections.

Cohort: Over the next six years, every Springfield school will join a "cohort" to reimagine their school, ensuring all students achieve the Portrait. With guidance from the district, each school will have flexibility to design changes for their school.

Principles of Reimagined Instruction - What should school look and feel like in every classroom?

<i>Purposeful Teaching</i>	<i>Empowered Learners</i>	<i>Culturally Responsive Instruction</i>	<i>Collaborative Learning Environments</i>	<i>Joyful and Meaningful Learning</i>
Students experience high-quality standards-based instruction that is aligned to the Portrait of a Graduate and through which students explore essential questions, solve problems, and make meaning of the world around them.	Students are empowered and supported to make choices about their learning and monitor their progress through activities that build on students' strengths, goal-setting, concrete feedback, and rubrics clearly defining mastery.	Instruction and curricula prioritize the development of student identity and critical perspectives on the world through resources and practices that center and value the experiences of our diverse students.	Students, families, and teachers are thought partners in a transparent cycle of learning and decision-making through schools and classrooms that are intentionally designed to promote belonging and collaboration.	Students regularly experience joy and excitement about their learning by consistently engaging in projects, interdisciplinary units, and other activities through which students lead the work, productively struggle, and make real-world connections.

Strategies and Initiatives—What is our work for the next six years?

<i>Prioritize Wellbeing</i>	<i>Reimagine Schooling</i>
<p>We cultivate students' wellness by building relationships with students, responding to opportunities to support students and families, prioritizing time for social-emotional learning and intervention, and engaging students and families with community supports when needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2a. Implement a Primary Person Model in all Schools 2b. Expand Social-Emotional Learning 2c. Evolve and Align Supports for Student Wellbeing 2d. Collaborate with Local Mental Health Providers to Improve Access 	<p>We reimagine instruction in every classroom and in all schools by consistently designing, implementing, and refining classroom practices aligned to our Principles of Reimagined Instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Reimagine Schools through Cohorts 1b. Create Pacing Guides Aligned to Reimagined Instruction 1c. Design Models for Flexible Use of Time
<i>Expand Partnerships</i>	<i>Empower Educators</i>
<p>We build intentional relationships with families and community partners by listening for and pursuing opportunities to deeply engage families and partners in the life of the school and the academic experience of students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3a. Expand School Engagement with Families 3b. Engage Families and Partners in Decision-Making 3c. Invite Partners to Share their Expertise with Students 3d. Create a System to Match Partners with School Opportunities 3e. Collaborate with Partners to Create Student Pathways 	<p>We proactively recruit, train, support, retain, and promote a highly diverse team of talented educators with high expectations for all students, a commitment to reimagining instruction, belief in families as partners in children's learning, and a commitment to continuous improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4a. Increase Staff Diversity 4b. Empower Educators to Create Transformative Learning Experiences 4c. Implement a Five-Year Professional Development Plan 4d. Create more Time for Teacher Collaboration 4e. Prioritize Educator and Staff Wellbeing

Defining Terms

Social-emotional learning helps students develop self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills.

A **Portfolio** is a collection of work completed by a student that demonstrates their mastery of particular knowledge or skills.

Pacing guides inform teachers what lessons should be taught at each time of year and how much time they should spend on each.

A **Primary Person Model** means each student has an adult who is assigned to them as their first point of contact. The primary person meets regularly with each student to discuss academic progress, provide support, and communicate from the school to the family.

Transform Systems

We engage in a continuous improvement cycle, listening to internal and external stakeholders, to identify and revise district systems, structures, and policies to promote, and remove barriers to, educator, school, and student success.

- 5a. Redesign Grading Systems
- 5b. Create a K-12 Portfolio to Assess Progress toward the Portrait
- 5c. Align Evaluation and Accountability Systems
- 5d. Revise Policies and Systems that Impact Reimagining Instruction
- 5e. Align Resources and Central Office Supports

How will Implementation of the Strategic Plan be monitored?

The implementation of the strategic plan will be monitored through monthly meetings of the Superintendent's Cabinet and quarterly meetings of the Portrait of a Graduate Community Cabinet (composed of families, community and business leaders, and higher education partners).

Following are some of the goals we will achieve through this plan.

- Increase MCAS scores in English, Math, and Science, closing gaps with the state.
- Improving attendance and reducing the number of students chronically absent.
- Increase graduation rates and reduce dropout rates.
- Increase graduates enrolling in two- and four-year colleges and earning a degree.
- Increase student participation in work-based learning (for example internships).
- Improve student and family satisfaction with school (measured with surveys).
- Increase the percent of staff who are racially and ethnically diverse.
- Ensure every school is implementing a primary person model (see definitions).
- Ensure all students create portfolios showing their mastery of the Portrait.
- Improve the number and quality of community partnerships in schools.

About our District

- ♦ 2nd largest district in New England
- ♦ 70 schools, including 9 alternative schools, 4 specialized programs, and 1 virtual school
- ♦ 24,232 students
 - 66% Hispanic or Latinx
 - 19% Black or African American
 - 9% White
 - 81.8% Economically Disadvantaged
 - 29.8% First Language not English
 - 24.7% students with Disabilities
- ♦ 4,632 Staff (33% of staff come from racially diverse backgrounds)
- ♦ \$691 million annual budget



Portrait of a Graduate

Springfield Public Schools Portrait of a Graduate

LEARN



"I have the academic knowledge and skills to critically understand the world, form opinions, and solve problems."

COMMUNICATE



"I listen to others and convey ideas with respect, openness and clarity."

PERSIST



"I practice resilience, self-awareness, and advocacy to navigate challenges and new situations"

THRIVE



"I can independently navigate the world as an empathetic and respectful adult."

LEAD



"I will lead with confidence, empathy and kindness in my family, my community, in Springfield, and beyond."

WORK



"I can identify and pursue career pathways that empower and sustain me."

The Springfield Public Schools and the Springfield Community will prepare students to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master and apply the academic content knowledge and skills essential for success in college, vocation, or service. • Think critically, be innovative, and solve real-world problems. • Understand the impact of systemic racism in America. • Apply technology and computational skills to advance learning and solve problems. • Find and analyze all kinds of information and critically evaluate each source. • Understand themselves as learners and pursue learning throughout life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write and speak with clarity, evidence, and purpose. • Communicate ideas with confidence that their voice can and should be heard. • Select an appropriate communication style and platform for the situation and audience. • Know how to listen to others, ask questions, and seek to understand. • Practice thoughtful responses to others in all communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain focused on goals, using coping strategies and flexibility to overcome obstacles. • Speak up for themselves and the issues that are important to them. • Engage in self-reflection to build on strengths and work on weaknesses. • Evaluate choices and outcomes when making decisions. • Give, receive, and respond to constructive feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand, respect and communicate with people from different cultures and backgrounds. • Care for themselves, and navigate the challenges of everyday life. • Understand financial systems and manage personal finances. • Nurture healthy and rewarding relationships at home, school and beyond. • Manage time and resources to achieve goals. • Identify interests, passions, and purpose, and envision possibilities for the future. • Prioritize and implement long and short term goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in difficult conversations to address conflict and solve problems. • Actively oppose bias, discrimination and racism. • Advocate for themselves and for others. • Seek opportunities to understand and serve the community. • Be curious, creative, open-minded and flexible in new situations. • Lead with empathy and kindness. • Actively participate in democracy and vote as an informed citizen in local and national elections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make connections between their interests and possible career opportunities. • Understand and obtain the education and training required to enter and advance in their chosen career. • Know how to adapt and seek new opportunities as the workplace changes. • Practice essential workplace habits and attention to detail to produce quality work in any environment. • Collaborate with others on diverse teams to achieve shared goals.
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