

SPS PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

NEWSLETTER

PROJECT NEWSLETTER

We are pleased to send you this first edition of the Springfield Public Schools' Portrait of a Graduate newsletter. Because you have participated in our working team or one of our Community Conversations, we are sending you this update on the work of the project. Our goal is to provide regular updates (every 4-6 weeks) to anyone who has participated in the project.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS UPDATE

Since the end of October, there have been 13 community conversations to begin the work of developing a collective vision of the skills, knowledge, and attributes that are essential for all young people in the Springfield Public Schools. Thus far, more than 130 people have shared their hopes and dreams for our children, outlining essential skills and attributes. Of these participants, 96% felt they had the opportunity to share their perspective.

While by no means an exhaustive list, following are some recurring themes that have emerged across these 13 first conversations.

Hopes and Dreams

- Successful, realize potential (or opportunity to realize their potential)
- Good citizens
- Good, well-rounded, kind people
- Have hopes and dreams and knowledge about what is necessary to reach them
- Optimistic about the future
- Know and value themselves (self-awareness), understand their value
- Convictions and the courage to stand up for them
- Pride in being a student in SPS

- See education as an opportunity
- Students know there is a place for them
- Access to meaningful work

Essential Skills and Attributes

- Financial literacy and skills
- Effective communicator in different contexts (knowing the context)
- Courage, able and willing to speak up (find their voice)
- Skills for dealing with stress
- Understanding of what is necessary for success (diploma, college, etc.)
- Able to solve problems they have not seen before
- Able to advocate for themselves (and others)
- Critical thinking and intellectual curiosity
- Reading, literacy, numeracy, and digital skills
- Persistent and internally motivated
- In control of (not controlled by) their technology
- Cultural identify, knowing their history
- Able to problem-solve around mistakes

We fully expect more themes to emerge as this community-wide conversation continues, but we want to share some of what we have heard.

ACTING ON INPUT

The Springfield Public Schools are not waiting for the portrait project to finish before acting on what we are hearing in community meetings. In one early conversation, we heard from community members that some students and families, especially among families of our English Learner students, do not fully understand the difference between earning a high school diploma and earning a certificate of attainment. Students in Massachusetts do not earn a diploma without passing the 10th grade MCAS assessment in English, Math, and Science and a certificate of attainment (which means completing all credits, but not passing MCAS) is not accepted for admission to college.

Hearing stories from our community, we are actively working to develop strategies to better educate our families on the various requirements to earn a diploma and proceed to higher education.

FUTURE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Community conversations are ongoing and if you would like to host a community conversation (or have a conversation during an existing meeting you attend), please email Paul Foster (fosterp@springfieldpublicschools.com) with dates and times when you would like to meet.

COMMUNITY CONVENINGS

In May we will host three large community convenings to gather feedback from a broad range of community members. We hope you will join us for one of the following dates (and bring people with you).

- Saturday, May 16th; 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
 - Tuesday, May 19th; 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
 - Thursday, May 28th; 11:00 am to 1:00 pm
- Locations to be determined.

Thanks for being part of building a shared, Springfield-wide vision of success for our students!

