

## Portrait of a Graduate & Strategic Planning Update from the Superintendent May 2, 2022

Springfield Public Schools staff,

Let me start with a thank you to each and every one of you for the work you have done supporting each other and our students to be our best selves and do our best work over these last two years navigating a pandemic.



As you know, we have partnered with our community over several years to develop Springfield's vision of what students need upon graduating high school to be successful in college, career, and life, our Portrait of a Graduate.

Once the Portrait was completed, we continued working with our community to create a strategic plan focused on reimagining instruction and revising our systems and processes to best support students to realize the vision outlined in the Portrait.

The draft strategic plan is on track to be released for public review in June and this update is a preview of key activities and changes anticipated in our next strategic plan. I want to emphasize that this is a six-year strategic plan and we will take the time necessary to effectively and thoughtfully implement this plan.

Superintendent Daniel J. Warwick

### What is the Portrait of a Graduate?

Our **community-created** vision of what **EVERY student** in the Springfield Public Schools should **know and be able to do** by the time they **graduate high school**.

### Portrait of a Graduate Cohort Schools

The strategic plan will outline the high-level strategies and activities that will drive our work over the next six years, but it is schools that will take the lead in implementing our reimagined vision for instruction, assessment, family engagement, and more.

Over the next six years, *every SPS school* will participate in a Portrait of a Graduate Cohort, engaging in a three-year process of partnering with the entire school community to reimagine instruction and the life of the school in alignment with the Portrait of a Graduate.

Seven schools went first, choosing to be part of the PoG Cohort One and starting their three-year process this year. *Bradley, Brunton, Dorman, Walsh, and Warner elementary schools, Public Day Middle School, Emergence Academy, the Conservatory of the Arts, and the High School of Science and Technology* have served as trailblazers, experimenting with opportunities to reimagine instruction and assessment to support all students to realize the Portrait of a Graduate.

**In the next several weeks, schools will be invited to consider signing on to be part of Cohort Two, launching their own reimagining process this summer and into next year.**

### Taking the Time to Scaffold Change

The next strategic plan will outline an ambitious agenda, but we will proceed thoughtfully over the next six years and scaffold change by implementing different parts of the plan over time and not all at once.

This scaffolding will be particularly evident in our cohort schools process (see above) which will allow each school community to decide when to begin their reimagining process and how to align that process with the existing life of the school.



**Portrait of a Graduate**

Learn	Communicate	Persist	Thrive	Lead	Work
I have the academic knowledge and skills to critically understand the world, form opinions, and solve problems.	I listen carefully to others and convey ideas with respect, openness, and clarity.	I practice resilience, self-awareness, and advocacy to navigate challenges and new situations.	I can independently navigate the world as an empathetic and respectful adult.	I will lead with confidence, empathy, and kindness in my family, my community, in Springfield, and beyond.	I can identify and pursue career pathways that empower and sustain me.

## Emerging Key Changes and Opportunities

Described here are a few key changes and opportunities being pursued in alignment with the Portrait of a Graduate. These will be further detailed in the strategic plan, but we are previewing these changes and how they emanate from perspectives shared by internal and external stakeholders throughout this process. *To highlight the phased implementation of this strategic plan, we have italicized the references to when key changes could be anticipated.*

### Redesigning Grading

**We heard** that the current grading framework does not assess progress toward mastery of standards or adequately recognize student improvement and progress. Presently, grades often serve as permanent milestones rather than gauges of progress toward mastery. We heard that students should have frequent opportunities to revise, resubmit, and demonstrate their progressive learning.

Starting this summer, teams at elementary, middle, and high school levels will be convened to review best practices in standards-based grading and propose revisions to the district grading framework and report cards. *Implementation of proposed changes to the grading framework and report cards will not begin before the 2023-2024 school year and may be piloted in select schools or grades initially.*

### Creating Space for Depth and Interdisciplinary Learning

**We heard** a desire for students to have learning experiences that are connected to their lives and real world applications, allowing them to develop deep mastery in areas of interest, learn through inquiry and projects, and explore topics through interdisciplinary activities.

We also heard that the district's current pacing guides and instructional schedules can make it challenging to introduce these kinds of learning experiences to the classroom because of the number of standards that have to be covered and limited flexible time. Lastly, we heard that we have made wise investments in high-quality and standards-aligned resources that support instruction and student mastery of standards.

With all that in mind, and recognizing the need to balance coverage of standards with depth of mastery, teams will be convened in each content area to review current pacing guides and propose alternate pacing that uses our existing curricular resources, prioritizes particular standards for deeper exploration, and creates opportunities for inquiry-focused, interdisciplinary, and student-directed learning activities. *These alternate pacing guides will be available for schools to voluntarily pilot starting in the 2023-2024.*

### Expanding Community Partnerships

**We heard** that a more efficient and effective system is needed to connect schools with community partners who can provide services that enhance, extend, and expand supports for students to realize the Portrait of a Graduate.

The district will create a system for schools to identify partner opportunities, for partners to identify resources and capacity they can offer to schools, and to match the two. In development over next school year, the goal is to ensure that schools can find and partner with organizations who can provide services to students during and outside the school day.

### Modifying the District Assessment Program

**We heard** that student learning should be assessed in multiple ways and there are too many district-directed assessments to create space for alternate forms of assessment.

*Starting next year (2022-2023), the ANet assessment will no longer be administered in K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.* Instead, the iReady Diagnostic that is already administered in ELA and Math in these grades will be used for data cycles, PLC meetings, and to inform instructional planning. High schools will continue to administer the ANet assessment during 2022-2023 while consideration is given to alternate high school formatives. At all grade levels, the assessment program and calendar will be revisited to ensure that no student takes more than one district-directed assessment per subject in any given month of the school year.

Our intention is that the district have a three times per year formative assessment program in all grades in ELA and Math and unit assessments in all subjects to assess student mastery of unit content.

### Reimagining the Use of Time

**We heard** that there is not enough time in the school day and week, as currently designed, for instruction in all content areas, social-emotional learning and student wellness activities, and essential educator collaboration and planning.

This summer, teams at elementary, middle, and high school levels will be convened to develop alternate daily and weekly schedules or instructional blocks that reimagine the use of time during the day and week. The teams will focus on time for all content areas while creating space for student wellness and educator collaboration through creative strategies like interdisciplinary or student-directed blocks. *Portrait of a Graduate Cohort One and Two Schools will have permission to experiment with alternate schedules for the 2022-2023 school year and alternate schedules will be available to other schools in future school years.*

### Focusing on Diversity, Inclusion, and Racial Equity

**We heard** that the district focus on Diversity, Inclusion, and Racial Equity needs to grow and the work of implementing the Portrait of a Graduate needs to be aligned with the work of the DIRE Committee formed in partnership with the Springfield Education Association.

The district will continue and expand ongoing efforts in two key areas: 1) recruitment, support, and retention of a racially diverse workforce increasingly reflective of our student population; and, 2) professional development and learning for all staff on diversity, inclusion, and racial equity. In addition, the district will work closely with the DIRE Committee on the formation and membership of teams reviewing grading, pacing, and use of time.