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

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.

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

- Coach, develop and evaluate educators with a clear vision of effective, engaging, and personalized instruction.
- All decisions for students, schools and the district are based on timely, accurate and relevant data.
- Implement an aligned, rigorous curriculum built on standards and 21st century knowledge and skills.
- Expand level of access to social, emotional and academic safety nets for all students and families.
- Effective instruction in every class, every day.
- Shared, high expectations for all students.
- Students achieve grade level proficiency.
- Students graduate ready for college and career.
- 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.

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

"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
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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposeful Teaching</th>
<th>Empowered Learners</th>
<th>Culturally Responsive Instruction</th>
<th>Collaborative Learning Environments</th>
<th>Joyful and Meaningful Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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</tbody>
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## Strategies and Initiatives—What is our work for the next six years?

### Prioritize Wellbeing

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.

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

### Reimagine Schooling

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.

1a. Reimagine Schools through Cohorts
1b. Create Pacing Guides Aligned to Reimagined Instruction
1c. Design Models for Flexible Use of Time

### Expand Partnerships

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.

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

### Empower Educators

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.

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

### 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

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### 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.
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.