

# Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

## STRATEGIC PLAN

2022



**Springfield Prep**  
CHARTER SCHOOL





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## Dear Springfield Prep Community,

Springfield Prep began with a commitment to equity as its driving force. How could it be that in this country, the richest in the world, schools serve some children so well, and others so inadequately? And how come the quality of education so often differed based on the income level of the neighborhood they lived in?

We set out to do our small part to change that and build a community where every scholar could access an education that empowered them to achieve their full potential.

**Educational equity has been, and continues to be, our north star.** Yet, while we were founded to address inequities in education, and have achieved a number of successes at leveling the academic playing field, **our community has come to acknowledge that educational equity on its own, is not sufficient.** In conversations with staff members, families, and scholars, we have had hard conversations about how systemic inequities, structural racism, and deeply embedded power dynamics play out in our classrooms and in our school community.

We realized that we needed to do more to directly and proactively work against these systems of inequity. What aspects of our students' lives and identities are subconsciously "othered" in our classrooms and spaces? What messages are sent –and received–based on the lack of representation of characters in the books we read, or by the language we use as a school? What power dynamics are silently present in our interactions with each other, with our students, and with families?

We needed to interrogate these, root these out, and actively work to replace them with new systems, messages, and commitments. This would require policy change and change in our thinking, but the end result would be a school community more affirming for all, inclusive for all, and representative of all.

Fortunately, we are a school designed to evolve, to grow and improve to meet the needs of our students, families, and staff over time, and our community is made up of thoughtful, dedicated educators and staff members who embrace positive change.

So, in 2018, we began to invest a great deal of time, energy and resources towards our Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) work.

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*"What aspects of our students' lives and identities are subconsciously "othered" in our classrooms and spaces?"*

*"What messages are sent –and received–based on the lack of representation of characters in the books we read, or by the language we use as a school?"*

*"What power dynamics are silently present in our interactions with each other, with our students, and with families?"*

**-BILL SPIERER**  
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## PHASE 1

### The Beginning of our Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work (2018)

- We engaged national leaders in guiding our REDI work.
- We conducted surveys and focus groups to assess areas of strength and growth areas in terms of REDI practice.
- We collaborated to develop an Equity Statement.
- A team of teachers created a **Curriculum Audit Team** to audit and support colleagues to increase the representation of diverse identities in our curriculum.
- We made **culturally responsive teaching a professional development a priority** to make classrooms more affirming and inclusive.
- We audited our hiring processes and developed a Staff Hiring Committee to reduce bias and bring more perspectives into our hiring process.
- We conducted multiple all-staff professional development sessions annually, as well as staff-led Reading Groups and a REDI Book Club.
- We have worked to ensure our school's physical space reflects and honors our students' identities and have developed ways to celebrate heritage months like Black History Month and Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in cross-curricular ways.

We have done a lot of work and have made significant progress, but we have not always had a clear vision in mind, benchmarks to help track our progress along the way, or mechanisms to help keep us accountable towards our goals. This plan will help us do this and will guide "Phase 2" of our school's REDI work.

## PHASE 2

### The Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan (Now)

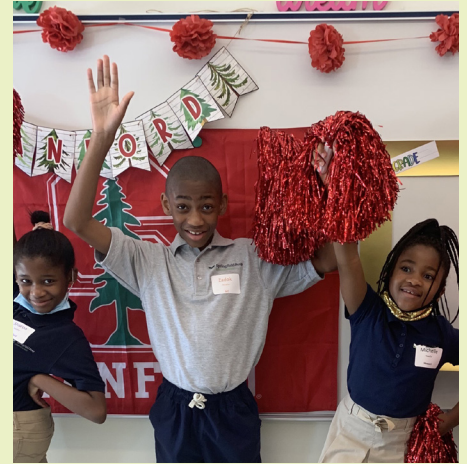
Guided by Chante' Chambers from Chambers North Star Consulting, and developed over the course of a year by a REDI Working Group and in consultation with the school's leadership team, board members, staff members, families, and students, this REDI Strategic Plan outlines our goals and will help us to stay focused on achieving the outcomes that will make our school a more diverse, inclusive, equitable and anti-racist organization. We thank you for being a part of our community and a part of this important work.

Sincerely,



**Bill Spiran**

Founder & Executive Director



*It is important that we have a shared understanding of what anti-racism in schools looks like, that we have an understanding of what it is not, and that we embrace the understanding that anti-racist work is never completely finished, nor does it always look the same. I hope, however, we may begin to think about anti-racist work in schools in ways that are holistic and practical."*

**-JAMILAH PITTS**  
EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT





## Dear Springfield Prep Community,

As an African American woman, Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) work is deeply rooted in my choice to become and remain an educator in Western Massachusetts. Having worked at Springfield Prep Charter School since 2016, and transitioning from being a teacher to being a leader, I am constantly reflecting on how far we have come with our REDI work and how much farther we need to go.

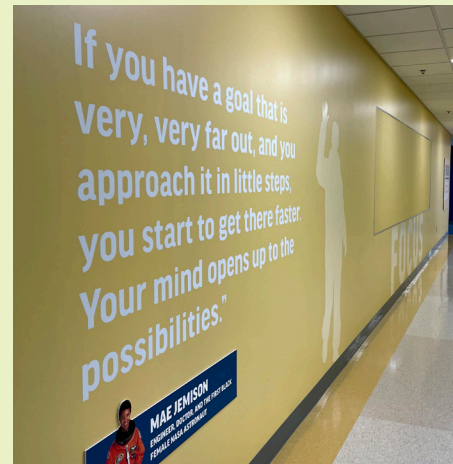
When we think of the beautiful brown and Black children that we have the privilege of educating we must consider how our instructional methods will impact them for the remainder of their lives. We understand that as educators we hold incredible power in schools and every decision we make can truly impact a child's educational experience.

As a school we have committed to culturally responsive teaching and will continue to improve all pieces of the curriculum by reflecting on the representation seen in our books, ensuring that all students are participating in rigorous, engaging learning, but most importantly committing to REDI work as individuals. We know that there is no strategy, checklist, or series of professional development that "completes" this work but we are committed to consistently and proactively designing the SPCS educational experience to be culturally relevant for all. We have and will continue to dedicate professional development time, team meetings, and coaching meetings to culturally responsive pedagogy.

A large part of this commitment includes frequently hearing from our scholars and allowing them space to voice their needs as students and individuals. Over the past few years, we have realized just how much our scholars want to study their cultures, celebrate their collective and individual identities, and share their views about injustices they see in the world, and in our school.

During the closure, I remember speaking with a few of our students about the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. We held town halls for students and families to express their concerns and to provide their own vision for Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Springfield Prep. Two of my former students' words have lived in my head and shaped the work that I do every day. One fourth grader, who has been enrolled at our school for 5 years, shared his experience as an African American male at SPCS. As he grappled with the societal challenges happening in his own community, he also reflected on how little he was learning about Black history in his classroom. He shared his strong connection to a few staff members and named a desire to express himself freely without the burden of "changing himself". This year he frequently rallies with a few other African American students at Springfield Prep who rightfully brag about their academic accomplishments and their ability to be their true Black selves in most spaces. In a brief check-in at the end of this year, I asked how things are going and he shared that "it's better but we still have goals for ya'll". I couldn't agree more.

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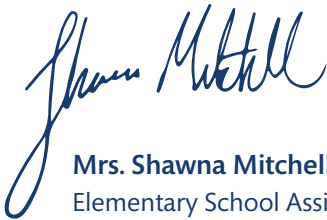
*When we think of the beautiful brown and Black children that we have the privilege of educating we must consider how our instructional methods will impact them for the remainder of their lives.*

**-SHAWNA MITCHELL  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ASSISTANT  
PRINCIPAL**

One of this student's classmates is very passionate about his Puerto Rican culture. He along with others at Springfield Prep inspire our "Rep Your Culture" day celebration during Latinx Heritage Month. His end of year reflection echoes the sentiments of many Latinx leaders in Western Massachusetts. This student told me, "I am grateful for everything I learned this year and I want to learn more about Puerto Rican Culture, I want to know more about the Puerto Ricans who made a positive impact on the world. Sometimes I feel like people see Puerto Ricans as harsh and that's not true. I want people in our community to know that we are special."

What I carry with me always is the weight of ensuring that every student at Springfield Prep knows their identities are celebrated, they are empowered to advocate for themselves and they are fully supported by every staff member in our school. If I'm being honest, this can be a burden at times. Yet, ensuring that all students feel this way, especially those who are Black and Brown and have historically been marginalized in school spaces, cannot be separated from my work as an educator, nor should it.

Sincerely,



**Mrs. Shawna Mitchell**  
Elementary School Assistant Principal



*What I carry with me always is the weight of ensuring that every student at Springfield Prep knows their identities are celebrated, they are empowered to advocate for themselves and they are fully supported by every staff member in our school.*

**-SHAWNA MITCHELL**  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ASSISTANT  
PRINCIPAL

## Our Mission

Springfield Preparatory Charter School is an inclusive K-8 public charter school that prepares all students for success in high school, college, and life through a focus in rigorous academics and character development.

## Our Vision

Springfield Prep's vision is to provide all students with a rigorous, well-rounded education to prepare them for high school, college, and rewarding careers. We combine a high expectations instructional model with a highly supportive environment to help a diverse group of scholars achieve academic excellence and grow as leaders.

### We envision...

- A school community made up of students, teachers, staff members, and families who have high expectations for what students can accomplish, and who work together as partners to support students on their educational path.
- Students who see themselves as scholars—who identify as learners capable of, interested in, and motivated to do challenging intellectual work.
- Classrooms where all scholars engage actively in learning, where they feel safe to take risks, and where authentic learning occurs by working through difficult problems.
- Teachers and staff members know students and families as individuals, are dedicated to doing the highest quality work on behalf of their students, and relentlessly remove barriers to student success.
- All students have access to the arts, enrichment, and sports, and a curriculum and school experience infused with performances, field trips, and guest speakers so students have opportunities to develop interests, knowledge, and passions in and out of the classroom.
- A community-wide commitment to equity, innovation and evolution so that our program becomes more responsive and supportive to our students, families, and staff members and their needs over time.

## Our Core Values

**Focus** | We work hard and do our best, every day.

**Integrity** | We do what's right just because it's right.

**Respect** | We are kind and supportive to ourselves and others.

**Self-Determination** | We know that hard work makes anything possible.

**Teamwork** | We work with fellow scholars to achieve excellence.



## OUR COMMITMENT TO

## Racial Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

At the root of our mission is a commitment to creating a school community that empowers students of diverse identities to become scholars and leaders. We strive to help our students, most of whom identify as Latinx and Black, develop an ambitious vision of what they can achieve and support them in achieving their goals. We must, then, proactively seek to understand and work against the inequities that have unfairly created barriers for students of color and other historically marginalized groups.

We are therefore committed to being a diverse organization at all levels where every member of our community is comfortable being their authentic self and feels that opportunity is equally accessible, regardless of background. We believe diverse perspectives help us to make better decisions alongside our students and families and also make our school a place where everyone feels heard, valued, and respected.

We understand that this is an ongoing process that will require constant work, dialogue, and reflection. We see it as a valuable opportunity and a responsibility that we take seriously.

## Diversity

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups that most often come to mind when the term “diversity” is used—but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

At Springfield Prep, we define diversity as the broad set of visible and invisible dimensions encompassing all the ways in which people, processes and perspectives differ within the SP family. Dimensions can include race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, abilities/disabilities, age, education, gender/gender identity, geography, socioeconomic status, language, learning style, life/lived experience, military/veteran status, occupation, parental/family status, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

## Equity

The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically marginalized and unrepresented populations, and that fairness regarding these unfair conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups. Equality is treating all people the same, regardless of their different circumstances and/or needs.<sup>1</sup> In other words, equality refers to giving each individual or group of people the same resources or opportunities while equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances, challenges, or needs and allocates the appropriate resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. Equity is about removing barriers and ensuring that all can thrive whereas equality doesn't necessarily guarantee this outcome.

At Springfield Prep, we define equity as the result of ensuring each individual has what they need to lead and succeed. Equity includes identifying and removing personal and systemic barriers that limit the full participation of all individuals and groups.

## Inclusion

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

At Springfield Prep, in the context of this REDI Plan, we define inclusion as the active process of welcoming, respecting, supporting, connecting and valuing while acknowledging the uniqueness and identity of all Springfield Prep community members.

## Racial Equity

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or that fail to eliminate them.<sup>3</sup>

*“A mindset and method for solving problems that have endured for generations, seem intractable, harm people and communities of color most acutely, and ultimately affect people of all races. This will require seeing differently, thinking differently, and doing the work differently. Racial equity is about results that make a difference and last.”<sup>4</sup>*

## Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI)

Dr. Benjamin D. Reese Jr. notes, “the obligation of individuals and organizations to identify and actively develop strategies to eliminate systemic racism in their environments and in our nation. In a country built on the subjugation of Indigenous and Black people, it is going to take more than respect for all differences to deal with the structures and unconscious biases that continue to marginalize—and kill—Black Americans. Further, by simply adding race to the list of differences to be equally targeted in an institution's diversity strategy, we may feel some degree of comfort that we are being “inclusive,” but that doesn't begin to systemically or institutionally address America's original sin: racism.”<sup>5</sup>

## Centering Race Equity

The process of paying disciplined attention to race and ethnicity while analyzing problems, looking for solutions, and defining success. Centering race equity critiques a “color blind” approach, arguing that color blindness perpetuates systems of disadvantage in that it prevents structural racism from being acknowledged. Application of a racial equity lens helps to illuminate disparate outcomes, patterns of disadvantage, and root cause.<sup>6</sup>

1. The San Diego Foundation. (2021). Equity vs Equality: What's the Difference? Available at: <https://www.sdfoundation.org/news-events/sdf-news/equity-vs-equality-whats-the-difference/>. Accessed on July 20, 2021.

2. In schools, this term often refers to the practice of educating people with disabilities in the same classrooms as those who do not live with disabilities. We are committed to inclusive practices using this definition as well.

3. Center for Assessment and Policy Development. (n.d.). Helping to craft thoughtful responses to pressing social issues. Available at: <https://www.capd.org/>. Accessed on July 20, 2021.

4. Open Source. (n.d.). Power to Change. Available at: <https://www.opensourceleadership.com/>. Accessed on July 20, 2021.

5. Inside Higher Ed. (2020). Diversity and Inclusion are not Enough. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/06/18/colleges-shouldnt-simply-focus-diversity-and-inclusion-also-attack-systemic-racism>. Accessed on July 20, 2021.

6. U.S. Climate Action Network (USCAN). (2020). USCAN's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Statement. Accessed on July 20, 2021.



## Why Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Matters

Systemic racism and other forms of inequity are still a reality in our country, and they continue to largely impact historically marginalized people/communities. In examining the history of the United States, it shows that racial oppression and other forms of oppression have been a prominent part of the country's founding, which in turn has resulted in countless examples of systemic inequity impacting social factors such as housing, financial attainment, employment, health care, criminal justice, and education.

This complex system of inequity pervades many institutions, policies, practices, ideas, and behaviors, and it accounts for individual, institutional, and structural forms of racism. This is why it is critical that we continue to build knowledge, commit to dismantling inequitable practices, and remove barriers that impact historically marginalized communities and/or perpetuate systems of inequity.

### There are several common terms to describe this work

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

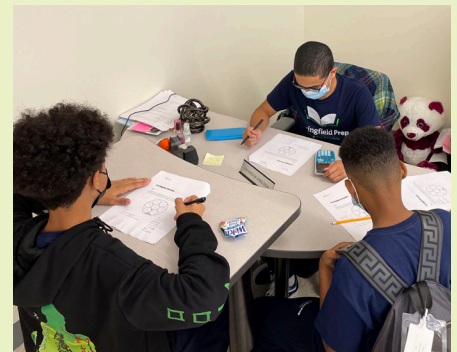
Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)

Anti-bias, Anti-racist (ABAR)

**Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI)** ◀ **The term we chose to use**

Research suggests that even when we are not explicitly talking about race, race is highly visible and influential in the social, economic, and political history of the United States. Race has been—and continues to be—a strong force in determining how opportunity is distributed in our society as well as how inequity is perpetuated. It is widely recognized that existing systems of power give privilege and access to resources and lead to inequities, including race-based inequities and oppression. Historically, the distribution of society's benefits and burdens are largely skewed by race, and individuals are more or less likely to experience them due to the color of their skin. By explicitly naming racial equity, this helps to illuminate disparate outcomes, patterns of disadvantage, and root cause; it requires the removal of conditions that might otherwise prohibit one's race identity having no influence on how one fares in society. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race.

So, we must address barriers and historical factors that have led to unfair conditions for marginalized populations, and by focusing on racial equity, it provides the opportunity to introduce a framework, tools and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization. This filter focuses on the critical need to address race intentionally and explicitly— but not exclusively. With our focus on race, we must also acknowledge and address the broader issues related to the multiple dimensions of diversity including, but not limited to, gender, gender identity, ability, and age. REDI refers to all types of diversity and inclusion including race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ability, age, socioeconomic class, nationality, etc.



*"Schools can change students in good or bad ways. But I think Springfield Prep is a place where you can come and be yourself. There are a lot of kids here who won't judge you and how you express yourself."*

**-SPCS STUDENT**

*"Ever since I got here, I have gotten more support in my work. I have been more open to sharing my thoughts and participating in class."*

**-SPCS STUDENT**

And although it requires an explicit focus on race, centering Race Equity doesn't mean the exclusion or deprioritization of other forms of identity. Moreover, REDI requires us to think about equity across all aspects of identities as well as embrace an intentional focus on being anti-racist/anti-bias.

Given this, REDI is central to our mission as an inclusive k-8 public charter school focused on preparing all students for success in high school, college, and life. In an effort to ensure that our mission becomes a reality, we must do so through an unwavering belief in students and their unlimited potential, an equitable approach to our policies and practices, a true sense of community and collaboration, and a constant commitment to provide culturally responsive and affirming experiences for everyone who enters Springfield Prep. We must also ensure that each member of our staff has the opportunity to build their REDI knowledge and capacity, thrive in our organization, and contribute in meaningful ways to the Springfield Prep mission, culture, community, and impact.

We remain committed to being a diverse school community, ensuring equity of opportunity, and creating a sense of inclusion and belonging for all of our students, staff, and families.

## To do so, we commit to work to

- Understand and address issues surrounding equity, which is critical to fully realizing our mission
- Elevate ongoing dialogue, learning, and awareness building opportunities pertaining to racial diversity, equity, and inclusion across our community
- Identify and foster the conditions required for Springfield Prep to be a place where all students thrive—academically, socially, culturally, and holistically
- Create a culture of belonging where differences, abilities and beliefs are respected, valued, and celebrated
- Continue to center people, particularly scholars, at the center of our work and decisions

It is our belief that in order to achieve these things and to heighten the level of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, organizations must articulate a vision and then operate with intentionality, urgency, and accountability. Therefore, we felt compelled to bring together people with diverse perspectives, identities, and experiences to play a key role in making Springfield Prep a more equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace and organization through the creation of the Springfield Prep REDI Plan.

Creating and maintaining equity is a constant journey. This coupled with our unwavering commitment to truly meet the needs of every scholar, educator, family member, and community member we encounter requires ongoing learning and unlearning, shared vision and investment, deliberate actions, and a true care for people. The creation of this REDI plan is not the beginning of the journey for us. It is, instead, an opportunity to build upon our previous learnings, previous actions, and impact while creating a path forward to further advance REDI at Springfield Prep. We believe that the intentional recommendations and strategies outlined below will guide us on our continued journey—creating clarity, direction, shared vision, accountability, and increased impact. This REDI strategic plan will serve as a roadmap and unifier of all aspects of our work including scholar and family engagement, staff experience cycle, accountability structures, increased opportunities for collaboration and partnership, as well as measures of success to realize this vision in the years to come.

Over the next 3 years, through staff input and the programmatic efforts outlined below, we hope to deepen our impact by providing scholars with a meaningful, rigorous, relevant, and responsive educational experience in which they thrive and reach their fullest potential. Part of doing so requires us to continue the intentional efforts we have put in place over the last several years as well as constantly apply an equity lens to how we approach our work and engage with those in the Springfield community. While we recognize that Springfield Prep, as well as the profession of education as a whole, is dynamic and constantly evolving, we also recognize that there is power in being intentional and transparent about the priorities and path ahead. We also understand and plan to review this REDI Strategic Plan in partnership with staff, students, families, and community members to determine progress towards our vision, responsive modification based on the school community needs, and additional strategies to enhance our collective impact.



## Leadership

Springfield Prep continues to reflect on its explicit commitment to examine the state of REDI-ness within the organization and the work. While REDI, particularly equity, has been a part of the school's DNA, over the past 3-5 years, the organization has made an explicit and intentional effort to further advance REDI in its day to day work, decisions, and outcomes. This required gathering diverse perspectives from all levels within the organization as well as perspective gathering from scholars, families, and community partners. As outlined in this document, Springfield Prep has invested a substantial amount of resources to build its REDI capacity, fostering a community that centers and celebrates people, identifying ways to continuously improve and increase its impact, and creating conditions to enhance the outcomes for scholars and the broader community. This has been ongoing work, and significant progress has been made.

However, embedding equity and building off of progress is something that is an ongoing process. To help Springfield Prep continue on their journey, we selected Chanté Chambers of Chambers North Star Consulting to provide support for the REDI planning and implementation process, which began in August 2021, and included conducting an initial organizational assessment, performing an organizational listening tour to gather perspectives, facilitating REDI-specific discussions and trainings to build knowledge and alignment across the organization, and identifying strategic priorities to help build organizational capacity and impact. Additionally, this also involved convening an internal REDI Working Group to help steward the development and creation of this plan.

## The REDI working group

The REDI working group was formed in November 2021 to contribute to the creation of a REDI strategic planning process and to develop a set of objectives, aligned actions, and measurable outcomes to help Springfield Prep continue to drive towards its collective REDI vision. This group, which was formulated and facilitated by Chanté Chambers of Chambers North Star Consulting, met bi-weekly starting in December 2021 and continued meeting over the course of 6 months.

### The REDI working group included members from across Springfield Prep

*Various levels, racial identities, varied tenures, and various positions*

- Formulated and facilitated by **Chanté Chambers** of Chambers North Star Consulting
- **Marelin Velazquez**, HR and Finance Coordinator
- **Meaghan Graul**, 6th Grade Math Teacher
- **Wendy Soref**, Director of Talent
- **Xavier Fowler**, P.E. Teacher

The ideation and reflection from this group complemented the perspectives and feedback gathered from scholars via focus groups, families, staff, and the Leadership Team. Springfield Prep wishes to thank the members of the REDI Working Group as well as members from across our organization for providing input, feedback, and time into the creation of this plan.



*“REDI supports the goal of my work as an educator which is to prepare students for the rest of their lives. REDI work is essential so students grow up understanding more about their own identity and are prepared to interact with a community of similar and different identities in a way that is constructive, aware and respectful.”*

**–SPCS STAFF MEMBER**

*“REDI work shows up all the time in our work with kiddos. When we let kids lead, and ensure their voices are heard, we are being culturally responsive.”*

**–SPCS STAFF MEMBER**

## Four Key Priorities

IDENTIFIED BY THE REDI WORKING GROUP

Through this collective process, we landed on four key priorities, which will serve as anchors as we strive to continuously strengthen equity, impact, and shared experiences across Springfield Prep.

1

### Staff Engagement, Growth, & Support

Maintain an inclusive culture that fosters a sense of belonging, feedback and support, and equitable opportunities for professional growth.

2

### Recruitment & Retention

Continue implementing ambitious, intentional efforts to attract, recruit, develop and retain a diverse, mission-aligned, high-performing employee body.

3

### Student Support & Engagement

Evaluate and develop the conditions that lead to developing the whole scholar, which includes academic success, identity appreciation, character development, life skills, and the resources and knowledge needed for students to thrive at and beyond Springfield Prep.

4

### Community Engagement and Partnerships

Build decision-making systems that provide increased transparency, opportunities for perspective gathering and sharing, stakeholder engagement and collaboration, and diverse representation on the school board and parent advisory councils.

[Learn more on the next page](#)



## PRIORITY 1

# Staff Engagement, Growth & Support

Maintain an inclusive culture that fosters a sense of belonging, feedback and support, and equitable opportunities for professional growth.

### Why this Priority?

Consistent strength in this area is foundational for our organization's success. Students, families, teachers, staff members, and leaders must feel that they belong at Springfield Prep, regardless of their identity, and that the conditions for them to succeed and grow exist here. The school has made a great deal of progress in this priority area through its REDI work over the past four years, and there remains more to do.

Over the past four years, REDI work in this area has included a REDI staff experience survey to get specific data and insight about strengths and growth areas, with data from other organizations as benchmarks. The school has built REDI capacity through twice annual all-staff REDI training sessions on topics such as implicit bias, microaggressions, and culturally responsive instruction. The management team all participated in a series of trainings around "managing for equity". The school increased professional development around culturally-responsive curriculum practices, made the study of Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* its core professional development text for the 2021-22 school year, and learned from the Curriculum Audit Team, a group of teachers who completed a Curriculum Audit to assess our curriculum with a culturally relevant lens and provide guidance to colleagues to update lessons and materials.

This work appears to have been meaningful. For example, from the 2020-21 to 2021-22 school years, the rate of staff members indicating that our REDI work is "effectively moving our organization towards a more diverse, equitable and inclusive" "school for students" increased from 69% to 92% and towards a more diverse, equitable and inclusive "workplace" increased

from 61% to 95%. In the 2021-22 school year, 88% of staff members said they felt that their "opinion seems to count at work" with only negligible difference in positive response rates between those who identify as White and BIPOC.

There are, however, important opportunities for growth in this area. In particular, there is a need to create a clearer plan for REDI development, especially as new staff members are onboarded; a group that helps school leaders to monitor progress on REDI work; more targeted REDI professional development; and changes to school structures (e.g., teacher evaluation) to incorporate the school's REDI commitments. Through focus groups, an analysis of survey data and the REDI Working Group process, the objectives and metrics below outline the school's goals over the next three years.

### OBJECTIVE 1

Foster a diverse, inclusive, and equitable culture for all staff members so staff members feel a strong sense of belonging.

#### STRATEGIES

- Create a formal REDI Committee to monitor progress for the REDI Plan, school culture, and staff experience.
- Formalize structured support and identity-based connection opportunities for staff, including but not limited to affinity groups.
- Incorporate additional strategies to receive input from staff members about school decisions and initiatives (e.g., pulse surveys, Team Chair Council, focus groups).
- Create a framework to collect and analyze comprehensive data on reported bias-related incidents, and use data to develop intervention strategies.

#### METRICS & INDICATORS

- By November 2022, there will be a REDI Committee made up of a diverse group of stakeholders whose role is to monitor progress on the school's REDI Plan.
- By January 2023, there will be an active plan and structure for optional Affinity Groups that support staff members' sense of belonging, connection, and learning
- By the 2022-23 school year, the school will implement a regular pulse survey for staff members.
- The average positive response rate to annual staff survey questions regarding a sense of belonging and having a voice at work will be at least 85%, with no disparity among those who identify as BIPOC and White. <sup>7</sup>
- By the 2023-24 school year, there is a framework in place to collect and analyze data on reported bias-related incidents.

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### OBJECTIVE 2

Build staff REDI capacity through embedded instructional coaching, culturally responsive education training, and staff engagement opportunities.

#### STRATEGIES

- Develop a structured REDI curriculum to provide at new staff orientation and to mid-year hires to ensure that all new staff members are equipped with foundational training in culturally responsive teaching practices and possess awareness and understanding of the school's REDI policies, history, resources and goals.
- Provide regular, effective REDI professional development options for staff members, including formal training sessions, customized professional development, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), modeling and coaching around what culturally responsive practices look like in school settings, and staff led PDs, discussions, or activities tailored to staff, student, and needs.
- Update the formal staff evaluation to ensure that there are REDI components embedded within, and ensure these components are embedded in annual professional development.

#### METRICS/INDICATORS

- By the 2023-24 school year, there is a structured REDI curriculum for all new staff members.
- Lead, host or sponsor a quarterly REDI training or engagement opportunity for all staff members.
- By the 2023-24 school year, implement the updated performance review system, incorporating REDI components.
- In the REDI section of the annual staff survey, the overall positive response rate is at least 85% and there is no disparity between staff members who identify as BIPOC and White.

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7. My colleagues seem to care about me as a person; There is at least one member of the Leadership Team who knows and cares about me as a person; I feel that my background, culture and perspective are respected and valued at work; My opinion seems to count at work.



## PRIORITY 2

# Recruitment, Development, & Retention

Continue implementing ambitious, intentional efforts to attract, recruit, develop and retain a diverse, mission-aligned, high-performing employee body.

### Why this Priority?

Research shows that students with teachers of the same race are (1) less likely to be suspended, more likely to be referred to gifted programs, and (2) more likely to complete high school and go on to college.<sup>8</sup> It is also important for leaders of the school and board members to reflect the student demographic so that decision-making is equitable and so that students see themselves represented in their school's leaders. As one student said in a focus group, "For me, having Black teachers or African American teachers makes me feel empowered."<sup>9</sup>

Over the past four years, Springfield Prep has engaged in targeted work to improve its workforce diversity. The school has hired a full-time Director of Talent to focus on recruitment and retention efforts; started a Staff Hiring Committee to involve a diverse group of staff members more systematically in the interview process and recruitment efforts; held retention interviews annually with all staff members; trained all Hiring Team members in anti-bias practices; incorporated the use of blind scorecards in all interviews; done targeted outreach to organizations and centers serving BIPOC students; shared information about promotion opportunities internally; presented the compensation model to all staff members annually to further salary transparency; provided all staff members with details about what skills, habits, and mindsets are necessary to progress into a leadership or management role; and provided a cohort-based leadership training program to all new managers and team leaders.

The school has also made significant investments in its Associate Teacher program. The Associate Teacher program provides an alternative pathway to full-time classroom teaching for career changers or teachers new to the profession and has been an important pipeline for talented teachers, including teachers of color. Over the past 5 years, 65% of ATs have identified as BIPOC and 88% have moved into classroom teacher roles within one year.

These efforts have led to change, and over the past three years, Springfield Prep has made significant progress in diversifying its teacher workforce. In the 2021-22 school year, 48% of all staff members identify as BIPOC. From the 2018-19 school year, to

the 2021-22 school year, the school has increased the percentage of instructional staff of color from 21% to 31% (42% when including all instructional staff, such as Associate Teachers and Paraprofessionals).<sup>10</sup>

In looking at administrators and classroom teachers specifically, during the 2021-22 school year, according to DESE, at Springfield Prep 22% of administrators and 38% of classroom teachers identify as BIPOC. In Springfield, this rate is 41% of administrators and 22% of teachers. In Massachusetts, it is 15% of administrators and 9% of teachers<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, currently, 40% of Springfield Prep board members identify as BIPOC.

Teacher retention at Springfield Prep has been strong, with an average of 86% of teachers retained over the past 3 years, which is in line with Springfield's rate. However, teachers of color have been slightly less likely to be retained compared to white teachers.<sup>12</sup>

There remain important opportunities for growth in this area. In particular, there is more to be done to address the gap between the numbers of Latinx students and Latinx teachers and leaders. Also, there is a need to commit to more structured training on an annual basis in anti-bias, competency based hiring for those on the Staff Hiring Committee and Hiring Team; to building intentional pipelines for leadership development; and in more clearly communicating to prospective candidates the value proposition for the school and its roles. Through focus groups, an analysis of survey data and the REDI Working Group process, the objectives and metrics below outline the school's goals over the next three years.

8. Data from:

[Teacher Race and School Discipline](#)

[Teacher and Principal Diversity and the Representation of Students of Color in Gifted Programs: Evidence from National Data](#)

[With Just One Black Teacher, Black Students More Likely to Graduate](#)

9. TNTP Report: Springfield Prep Diversifying the Educator Workforce (TNTP Report)

10. TNTP Report

11. [MA DESE Employed Educators Report](#)

12. In the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, 87% of White teachers were retained compared to 84% of Black teachers; 82% of Latinx teachers and 67% of all others combined. TNTP Report.

## OBJECTIVE 1

Increase the racial diversity across the teaching staff, leadership, and board, with an intentional focus on growing a workforce and board that is representative of our students.

### STRATEGIES

- Provide annual training to staff regarding equitable, competency-based hiring practices, including but not limited to Staff Hiring Committee members and the Hiring Team.
- Invest in marketing with a focus on telling authentic stories about workplace and instructional culture to appeal to a broad, diverse population in our recruitment efforts.
- Apply intentional efforts around Leadership and Board composition with a focus on increasing the representation reflective of the Springfield Prep community including but not limited to building racially diverse pipelines, deepening partnerships across the Springfield community, deepening the internal talent bench depth across leaders of color through targeted development and using innovative strategies to compete for talented BIPOC leaders.
- Build data systems to monitor strategic recruitment and hiring practices that allow for disaggregation by race and other identity.

### METRICS/INDICATORS

- Increase the number of lead teachers who identify as BIPOC to reach 60% by 2027 and thereafter. (Benchmark goals: 45% by 2024; 50% by 2025 55% by 2026.)
- Increase the number of leaders (defined as those on the school's leadership teams) who identify as BIPOC to reach 40% by 2026 and remain that way thereafter. (Benchmark goal: 50% of new department/team leaders roles are BIPOC.)
- Increase the number of board trustees who identify as BIPOC to reach 50% by 2025 and remain that way thereafter.
- In the Growth & PD section of the annual staff survey, the overall positive response rate is about 85% and there is no disparity between staff members who identify as BIPOC and White.

## OBJECTIVE 2

Demonstrate a commitment and ability to retain a diverse workforce while strengthening our reputation as being a highly desirable place to teach and work.

### STRATEGIES

- Conduct exit surveys and interviews and implement a clear mechanism for analyzing the insights, and apply feedback to efforts to improve retention of effective employees who left for reasons other than geographic relocation.
- Continue to invest in growth and leadership opportunities for all staff by providing meaningful, high quality, and relevant professional learning opportunities.
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis with a focus on promoting equity across the organization and ensuring competitive salaries and benefits for teachers, staff, and leaders.

### METRICS/INDICATORS

- Maintain an annual retention rate of 80% or higher of effective teachers, staff members, and leaders, excluding those who leave for the purposes of geographic relocation, with no gap or disparity among staff who identify as BIPOC or among staff who have been at the school for 3 or more years.
- The average positive response rate to annual staff survey questions regarding a sense of belonging and having a voice at work will be at least 85%, with no disparity among those who identify as BIPOC and White.
- In the Growth & PD section of the annual staff survey, the overall positive response rate is about 85% and there is no disparity between staff members who identify as BIPOC and White.
- Offers of employment are accepted at a rate of >85%, with no difference among candidates who identify as BIPOC.

## PRIORITY 3

# Student Support & Engagement

Evaluate and develop the conditions that lead to developing the whole scholar, which includes academic success, identity appreciation, character development, life skills, and the resources and knowledge needed for students to thrive at and beyond Springfield Prep.

### Why this Priority?

Overall, student engagement is high at Springfield Prep according to a variety of related metrics such as high academic performance, low student attrition, low rates of exclusionary discipline and low rates of out-of-class referrals. Additionally, family survey data indicates that families believe the school is a place that supports their children with academic and non-academic skills.<sup>13</sup> However, views of student engagement and school culture in middle school appear to be somewhat lower<sup>14</sup> and in one recent survey, just 46% of students of color reported feeling comfortable being themselves at school.<sup>15</sup> This may be related to an expected age-related change in the student-school dynamic as we develop our middle school, but it is a trend worth exploring.

Over the past four years, the school has engaged in a variety of initiatives intended to support positive student engagement, affirm students' identity and culture, and support non-academic skills. In 2019-20, the school held an "Equitable Culture & Discipline" working group with approximately 20 teachers and leaders to evolve classroom management systems to be more flexible and inclusive. In the middle school, the 7th graders participated in an outdoor-based experiential education program to build a sense of teamwork, belonging, and a growth mindset. The founding High School Success Counselor developed a "high school ready habits" curriculum to build study and organizational skills and to support students' autonomy and independence. The school also developed a schoolwide, interdisciplinary

approach to celebrating cultural heritage/identity affirming months (Native American Heritage Month, Black History Month, Latinx Heritage Month, and Asian American, Pacific Islander Heritage Month, and PRIDE Month). On the 2021-22 Annual Family Survey, 91% of families said "the school respects and includes my family's culture and background in learning materials and school activities", an indication that these efforts, along with the curriculum audit team's work to include texts that reflect students' identities, have been meaningful.

There are, however, important opportunities for growth in this area. In particular, there is a desire to give students—especially in the middle school—additional voice and agency in their school experience; to be explicit about how we view the development of the "whole scholar" so that we provide a well-rounded and opportunity-rich education; to provide students with opportunities to pursue their interests in school and after school; and to provide a purposeful course of study on social, emotional, and other global competencies such as critical thinking, creative problem solving, conflict resolution, collaboration, communication, and citizenship. Through focus groups, an analysis of survey data and the REDI Working Group process, the objectives and metrics below outline the school's goals over the next three years.

13. In the school's 2021-22 Annual Family Survey, the positive response rate for all questions related to school culture and behavior standards was above 90%. (E.g., The school is a caring and nurturing place for my child; the school does a good job teaching my child "good character" (e.g., respect, teamwork); My child has a close relationship with at least one adult in the school.)

14. In the school's 2021-22 Annual Family Survey, the average positive response rate on school culture questions was 87% for middle school families, versus 96% for elementary school families. Additionally, staff member positive response rates regarding student and family culture were lower in the middle school with a 75% average positive response rate for middle school staff members versus an 88% positive response rate for elementary school staff members. Finally, there was a difference in how staff members viewed school culture, depending on staff member identity: 72% of BIPOC staff members agreed or strongly agreed that "students were consistently engaged and invested in the school" versus 88% of white staff members.

15. TNTP Report



## OBJECTIVE 1

Create inclusive, culturally responsive and affirming spaces for scholars and a culture of positive engagement between and among students and staff.

### STRATEGIES

- Reestablish a Student Government to provide students with opportunities to provide recommendations to staff regarding school culture and student experience, learn advocacy strategies, become engaged in planning for school events and initiatives, and help facilitate conversations around student REDI-related issues.
- Implement a student experience survey for grades 4-8 to understand academic and extracurricular interests and feelings of belonging in school.
- Train school culture team members and administrators in trauma-informed practices, and embed trauma informed practices in new teacher training and ongoing professional development.

### METRICS/INDICATORS

- By the 2022-23 school year, Student Government is operational and meeting regularly.
- By the 2022-23 school year, administer a scholar experience survey annually across grades 4-8.
- On the annual scholar experience survey, at least 85% of student responders respond positively to questions about feelings of belonging in school.
- On the annual family survey, at least 85% of families will respond positively to questions in the "School culture and behavior standards" section (aimed at understanding student affirmation, sense of belonging, and equity).
- 100% of School Culture Team members and Administrators are trained in trauma informed practices by the fall of 2024.

## OBJECTIVE 2

Provide a variety of learning opportunities for students to develop knowledge, skills, and personal interests.

### STRATEGIES

- Re-invest our community in supporting students to see themselves as scholars capable of, interested in, and motivated to do challenging, rigorous academic work.
- Define Springfield Prep's views on the "developing the whole scholar" and create additional structures that allow students to develop the skills and experiences needed to achieve their personal and academic goals.
- Implement a scholarly habits curriculum in grades 6-8 focused on enhancing learning strategies, study habits, goal setting, and social engagement.
- Improve vertical alignment for social emotional curriculum aligned to student needs and school trends, including developing social emotional learning competencies in grades K-5 and providing opportunities for students in grades 6-8 to have opportunities to develop global competencies such as critical thinking, creative problem solving, conflict resolution, collaboration, communication, and citizenship.
- Offer opportunities for students to pursue extracurricular interests, such as specials elective courses for grades 6-8 that meet student interest and provide differentiated learning experiences; after-school clubs and sports programs; and other organizations.

### METRICS/INDICATORS

- On the annual MCAS, the percent of students meeting or exceeding expectations is above the state average by at least 10 points in ELA, Science, and Math, with subgroups of students (Black students, Latinx students, Students with Disabilities, and EL students) outperforming the state subgroup average by the same rates.
- By the end of the 2023-24 school year, publish a statement on the school's website about the meaning of "developing the whole scholar", after having engaged community stakeholders about this topic.
- By the 2023-24 school year, all scholars in grades 6-8 take a scholarly habits class to prepare them for high school.
- By the 2023-24 school year, all scholars in grades K-5 participate in structured social emotional learning opportunities and all scholars in 6-8 participate in learning opportunities to develop global competencies such as critical thinking, creative problem solving, conflict resolution, collaboration, communication, and citizenship.
- Annually, at least 25% of our ES students and 50% of our MS students will participate in a high-quality after-school extracurricular program at school or with partner organizations (e.g., sports, enrichment, tutoring, clubs).

## PRIORITY 4

# Community Engagement and Partnerships

Build decision-making systems that provide increased transparency, opportunities for perspective gathering and sharing, stakeholder engagement and collaboration, and diverse representation on the school board and parent advisory councils.

### Why this Priority?

The school has strong ties with its families and its parent community is one of the school's biggest assets. In focus groups, parents noted that they feel connected and represented at the school through the events taking place here. There are three active parent groups (Parent Action Committee, Special Education Advisory Council, and English Learner Advisory Council), parents are on campus frequently to participate in Community Meeting, special events (concerts, awards dinners, the book fair, etc.), and the Board of Trustees has multiple members who are Springfield Prep parents.

There are, however, important opportunities for growth in this area. In particular, there is an opportunity to build on the foundation of strong parental involvement to involve families more in decisions the school makes. Through focus groups, an analysis of survey data and the REDI Working Group process, the objectives and metrics below outline the school's goals over the next three years.

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## OBJECTIVE 1

**Develop clear channels of communication between families, school leadership, and the board, to increase collaboration, representation, and input in major school decisions.**

### STRATEGIES

- Audit our approach to Parent Action Committee meetings through a series of focus groups, conversations, best practices research, and data analysis to determine what is effective and what modifications are needed to advance the work and partnership.
- Apply intentional efforts around Board composition with a focus on making board representation reflective of the Springfield Prep community.
- Develop a sustainable community event calendar for the school community that identifies community events, cultural heritage months, and external events in the Springfield community.

### METRICS/INDICATORS

- By the end of the 2022-23 school year, there will be a formalized structure for the Parent Action Committee (e.g., elected leadership, regular meetings with the board, etc.)
- Maintain at least 2 current or former parents or guardians of Springfield Prep students on the board.
- By the fall of 2024, we have a public, sustainable community events calendar identifying opportunities for students, families, teachers, staff members and community members to come together to develop community.

# Work Plan Year by Year

	2022–2023 School Year	2023–2024 School Year	2024–2025 School Year
<b>Priority 1</b>	<p><b>Create a formal REDI Committee</b> to monitor progress for the REDI Plan, school culture, and staff experience.</p> <p><b>Incorporate additional strategies to receive input from staff members</b> about school decisions and initiatives.</p> <p><b>Formalize structured support and identity-based connection opportunities for staff</b>, including but not limited to affinity groups.</p> <p><b>Develop a structured REDI curriculum</b> to provide at new staff orientation and to mid-year hires to ensure that all new staff members are equipped with foundational training in culturally responsive teaching practices.</p>	<p><b>Update the formal staff evaluation to ensure that there are REDI components embedded within</b>, and ensure these components are embedded in annual professional development.</p> <p><b>Create a framework to collect and analyze comprehensive data on reported bias-related incidents</b>, and use data to develop intervention strategies.</p> <p><b>Increase professional development options for staff members</b>, including formal training sessions, customized professional development, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), modeling and coaching around what culturally responsive practices look like in school settings, staff led PDs, discussions, or activities tailored to staff, student, and needs.</p>	<p><b>Lead, host or sponsor a quarterly REDI training</b> or engagement opportunity for staff members.</p>
<b>Priority 2</b>	<p><b>Conduct a comprehensive compensation analysis</b> with a focus on promoting equity across the organization and ensuring competitive salaries and benefits for teachers, staff, and leaders.</p> <p><b>Apply intentional efforts around Leadership and Board composition</b> with a focus on increasing the representation reflective of the Springfield Prep community.</p> <p><b>Provide annual training and workshop sessions to staff regarding equitable, competency-based hiring practices</b>, including but not limited to Staff Hiring Committee members and the Hiring Team.</p> <p><b>Build data systems to monitor strategic recruitment and hiring practices</b> that allow for disaggregation by race and other identity.</p>	<p><b>Invest in marketing with a focus on telling authentic stories</b> about the workplace and instructional culture to appeal to a broad, diverse population in our recruitment efforts.</p> <p><b>Conduct exit surveys and interviews and implement a clear mechanism for analyzing the insights</b>, and apply feedback to efforts to improve retention of effective employees who left for reasons other than geographic relocation.</p>	<p><b>Conduct exit surveys and interviews and implement a clear mechanism for analyzing the insights</b>, and apply feedback to efforts to improve retention of effective employees who left for reasons other than geographic relocation (ongoing).</p>
<b>Priority 3</b>	<p><b>Re-invest our community in supporting students</b> to see themselves as scholars capable of, interested in, and motivated to do challenging, rigorous academic work.</p> <p><b>Establish a Student Government to provide students with opportunities to provide recommendations to staff regarding school culture and student experience</b>, learn advocacy strategies, become engaged in planning for school events and initiatives, and help facilitate conversations around student REDI-related issues.</p> <p><b>Offer opportunities for students to pursue extracurricular interests</b>, such as specials elective courses for grades 6-8 that meet student interest and provide differentiated learning experiences; afterschool clubs and sports programs; and other organizations.</p>	<p><b>Implement a student survey experience survey for grades 4-8</b> to understand academic and extracurricular interests and feelings of belonging in school.</p> <p><b>Define Springfield Prep’s views on the “developing the whole scholar”</b> and create additional structures that allow students to develop the skills and experiences needed to achieve their personal and academic goals.</p> <p><b>Implement a scholarly habits curriculum in grades 6-8</b> focused on enhancing learning strategies, study habits, goal setting, and social engagement.</p> <p><b>Train school culture team members and administrators in trauma informed practices</b>, and embed trauma informed practices in new teacher training and ongoing professional development.</p>	<p><b>Improve vertical alignment for social emotional curriculum</b> aligned to student needs and school trends, including developing social emotional learning competencies in grades K-5 and providing opportunities for students in grades 6-8 to have opportunities to develop global competencies such as critical thinking, creative problem solving, conflict resolution, collaboration, communication, and citizenship.</p>
<b>Priority 4</b>	<p><b>Audit our approach to PAC meetings</b> through a series of focus groups, conversations, best practices research, and data analysis to determine what is effective and what modifications are needed to advance the work and partnership.</p> <p><b>Apply intentional efforts around Leadership and Board composition</b> with a focus on increasing the representation reflective of the Springfield Prep community.</p>	<p><b>Develop a sustainable community event calendar</b> for the school community that identifies community events, cultural heritage months, and external events in the Springfield community.</p>	<p><b>Continue with the implementation of the community event calendar</b> for the school community.</p> <p><b>Assess the interactions and partnership across all three active parent groups.</b></p>