



## Springfield Prep

### Minutes

#### Academic Achievement Committee

---

**Date and Time**

Wednesday May 15, 2024 at 12:00 PM

**Location**

This meeting will take place remotely, via Zoom.

**Committee Members Present**

A. Narvaez (remote), S. Fuller (remote)

**Committee Members Absent**

A. Malone

**Guests Present**

B. Spirer (remote), J. Yiannos (remote)

---

**I. Opening Items****A. Record Attendance and Guests****B. Call the Meeting to Order**

S. Fuller called a meeting of the Academic Achievement Committee of Springfield Prep to order on Wednesday May 15, 2024 at 12:01 PM.

**C. Approve Prior Meeting Minutes**

S. Fuller made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee on 03-20-24.

A. Narvaez seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

### Roll Call

S. Fuller Aye

A. Malone Absent

A. Narvaez Aye

## II. Academic Achievement

### A. May Academic & Culture Dashboard

Jess presented the dashboard.

- She highlighted the attendance rate, which is a full percentage point higher than last year, and chronic absence data, which is significantly lower than last year. She attributed this to a number of changes to the approach the attendance team is using, such as more frequently monitoring students who are close to 10%. This work is really paying off.
- Sally asked if we talk to families, and Jess shared that the family of every student who is absent gets a call that day.
- Out of school discipline is significantly lower than last year's discipline rates, which Bill said was an outlier. We're pleased to see much lower discipline rates this year.
- Jess presented the ANet round 3 data:
  - There are pockets of lower performance, but overall, performance trends are similar to last year. Given this, we are anticipating similar results on MCAS.
  - She reviewed ANet averages over time and noted that there are no major changes.
  - The good news is that our 8th graders this year are performing similarly to last year's 8th graders, which is encouraging since their performance data was low last year.
  - She presented graphs showing projected "cut" scores as a way to understand the likely meet/exceed rate on MCAS. One area of concern is 6th grade ELA because there are many fewer students who are scoring at the benchmark level.
  - Using an "R squared method" we tried to understand the accuracy of these projections. Last year, the math cut score method was accurate about 80% of the time.
  - Sally asked why performance is lower in 6th grade this year. Jess shared that we have many new student begin with us in the 6th grade, and that many have IEPs. So, part of this is that it's a different cohort of students, not that the same students are performing less well.
  - Bill noted that he and Jess have been discussing how the school can meet the needs of students who are on track and doing rigorous work while simultaneously meeting the needs of new students who may be entering behind. He talked about how they have discussed the ways to reduce this issue, either by staffing our middle school differently, by not backfilling after

a certain grade level, or by changing our enrollment and class size model.

There are pros and cons of all of these options.

- Jess reviewed planned assessment changes for next year, outlined in the dashboard.
- She then led an interactive activity with the Step 2 Assessment.
  - Sally played the kindergartener! The activity showed that Step 2 reinforces bad habits (guessing, patterns) versus good habits (decoding), while taking up valuable teaching time. Our view is that we want kids to pay attention to the letters and to have teachers spending valuable time on the right reading habits.
  - So, we plan to essentially create an “addendum” to the Step assessment using decodable books.
  - Bill emphasized that we’ve always taught and assessed decoding skills and are doing this systematically this year with ANet. The point of this is to make sure instructional time is used well.
  - Jess noted that one aspect of teacher satisfaction is assessing the things they are teaching. She hears frustration from teachers who say that Step is assessing skills we are explicitly not teaching.
  - Amneris asked about how the “addendum” impacts other elements of the Step assessment. Jess noted that many other parts of the Step 2 assessment are saying the same. The only part we are changing is to use a decodable text during one section.
- She shared the rationale for adjusting the target in 2nd grade to Step 8, to give students in 2nd grade more time to practice key comprehension skills. Currently, 2nd graders are spending critical time on formulaic written responses because Step 9 requires this, but this is impacting time to develop reading comprehension skills. We feel like this is more developmentally appropriate and a better instructional sequence.
- She also shared our plan to have students only administer Step 9 and 12 and only use 10 and 11 as instructional tools. In the upper grades, there are diminishing returns on the data you get - there are similar expectations and the assessments are very long. Teachers did a time audit on this and we learned that they are taking large amounts of time to assess, despite these diminishing returns. Teachers are piloting this this year and really like it so far. This change doesn’t impact the ultimate bar.

### **III. Closing Items**

#### **A. Next Academic Achievement Committee Meeting**

Given how busy June is and the lack of new academic data or topics to discuss, Bill proposed cancelling this meeting. The committee agreed.

#### **B. Adjourn Meeting**

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 12:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
B. Spirer

---

### **Documents used during the meeting**

- Academic & Culture Dashboard - May 2024.pdf