

APPROVED



Springfield Prep
CHARTER SCHOOL

Springfield Prep

Minutes

Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday December 18, 2024 at 12:00 PM

Location

This is a remote meeting and will take place on Zoom.

Committee Members Present

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

Committee Members Absent

None

Guests Present

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

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Malone called a meeting of the Academic Achievement Committee of Springfield Prep to order on Wednesday Dec 18, 2024 at 12:05 PM.

C. Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

S. Fuller made a motion to approve the minutes from Academic Achievement Committee Meeting on 09-30-24.

A. Narvaez seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

A. Malone Aye
A. Narvaez Aye
S. Fuller Aye

II. Academic Achievement

A. Board and Achievement Committee Candidate for Consideration

- Bill shared information about prospective board members, Garth Janes and LaShawna McCoy. Sally spoke very highly of Garth and the whole committee was enthusiastic about LaShawna's resume.
- Sally or Amneris will meet with LaShawna in the first week of January before the board meeting on January 9, 2025.

B. December Academics & Culture Dashboard

Jess presented the data from the Academic Dashboard.

- The culture metrics were generally solid overall.
- We are fully enrolled and enrollment is stable. Jess noted that we have had an unusually high number of new 8th graders this year (6 total). She shared that having 6 new 8th graders out of a cohort of 54 in the final year of the school is atypical.
- Sally asked why there is more transition and Jess shared the reasons: 2 moved to Connecticut. 1 wanted their child in a 6-12 student in Springfield. 1 went to private school.
- Amneris asked about our obligations to enroll all vacant seats. Jess explained that we're required to fill vacancies prior to Feb. 15 in the current grade.
- Jess noted that we are considering ways to slightly modify our enrollment policy because we see less demand in the 8th grade.
- Sally asked if this is a typical challenge. Jess noted that we are somewhat unique as a K-8 school. She shared that the state law requires us to backfill through the first half of our grades, although many charters do not do that.
- Anne noted that starting 8th grade with just a few months is not ideal and would seem to be an atypical choice. She asked if we are proactively recruiting students in the 8th grade and Jess shared that we would need to recruit and hold an additional lottery.
- Bill shared the budgetary considerations.
- Sally asked for clarification about backfilling.
- Bill and Jess talked about finding a compromise between meeting the parent demand and having more stability in the upper middle school grades.
- Anne asked about whether new students who enroll mid-year are considered in our school's annual accountability data. Jess shared that stand-alone schools that are also their own district, their data will count for MCAS results. Anne suggested that

disgregating data to see some of these differences would be helpful and Jess shared that we are able to do this.

- Jess shared that some of the students who are on the middle school waitlists are students who have been on the waitlists for a number of years.
- Attendance data looks good, with chronic absence down over last year. Out of school suspensions are also down, although we saw an uptick in the last month.
- Jess talked about the STEP tool and how it has effectively ceased operating. This is partly because leveled reading is now disfavored due to science of reading research and partly because they did not adapt their tool in response to their needs (e.g., moving in the direction of decodables in the lower levels of STEP).
- We have been doing research on the STEP tool and have not found any tools that are as comprehensive as STEP. Our teachers are also telling us that STEP is one of the most valuable tools they have in supporting their students. So we are trying to use a modified STEP tool along with mClass to support student reading. She described ways we are keeping STEP the same and ways we are changing our use of the STEP tool. She shared that we are removing some components of STEP that are covered by mClass and making it very clear that STEP levels should not prevent students from access to grade level work.
- Bill shared that we are no longer officially working with STEP but we are still using a modified STEP tool and plan to continue doing so.

C. Report on our Leadership Pipelines Project

Bill introduced this work as a key component of leadership development work and succession planning goals.

Wendy outlined the project and the ways it supports our work.

- This work allowed us to identify challenges the next generation of leaders are facing and the tools we can give leaders to overcome these challenges.
- Part of the work was having senior leaders reflect on the type of skills we needed to develop over time, many of which were subconscious.
- Training is one component, and we designed a cohort model where leaders learn from experienced outside leaders (who are not their managers) alongside peers at a similar level of leadership.
- Another component is getting really tactical about who within the organization has expressed interest in leading and has some of the required skills and experience to lead, and what is the training they would need to move into leadership roles.
- Anne asked about whether people can see a path if they don't expect someone in front of them to be moving. Wendy noted that this is hard because we want to create opportunities for people in an equitable way and there are some who are demonstrating readiness for the roles. Bill talked about how we can message the likelihood of future openings and the need for people to think in advance about training and readiness.

III. Closing Items

A. Next Academic Achievement Committee Meeting

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A. Malone

A. Malone made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

S. Fuller seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

A. Malone Aye

A. Narvaez Aye

S. Fuller Aye

Documents used during the meeting

- LaShawna McCoy resume.pdf
- Academic and Culture Dashboard 12.18.24.pdf
- Report on Leadership Development Work.pdf