

Lawrence School Improvement Plan: 2021-2023

The Lawrence School Improvement Plan is a description of goals that have been identified in service to our school's vision.

Vision:

The Lawrence school is a learning community that values and supports every student and adult so that they can grow to their potential. We actively identify areas to support their growth with an intentional focus on educational equity for all.

Goals for the Next Two Years: (2021-2022 and 2022-2023)

1. Grades K-8: Increase use of data to strengthen instruction and decision making for student learning and supports

Social/Emotional Learning Tools, Data, and Action Steps

-SEL data from the newly acquired Universal Screener first used during the spring of 2021 was shared with staff on the first two staff days in September 2021 with Dr. Matt Dubois, Assistant Director of Guidance, Clinical Services, and Social-Emotional Learning.

-Strategies and SEL Tool box to support staff and students reviewed, explained and shared with staff during the first two faculty meetings in September and October 2021 with staff by Dr. Matt Dubois, Assistant Director of Guidance, Clinical Services, and Social-Emotional Learning.

-Administration by guidance team of newly acquired district SEL Universal Screener: spring 2021, fall 2021, winter 2022. Based on district expectations, the administration of the SEL universal screeners will continue in the 2022-2023 school year with the goal of including students and families in grades kindergarten through second grade. Data is analyzed and action steps identified re: student support needs based.

✓ Completed for Fall 2021

✓ Completed for Spring 2022

Mathematics

-Math specialists for grades K-5 were provided 8 hours of paid time during the summer of 2021 to revisit the goals of the math specialist's role to best identify how to support K-5 staff with the continued use of the newly implement K-5 math curriculum, *Investigations*, the workshop model and use of data to inform Tier 1 (classroom) instruction and intervention support.

✓ The math specialists will host a 90 minute PD staff for K-2 staff and then 3-5 staff to review and support the workshop model using Investigations and the use of data to inform Tier 1 (classroom) instruction on November 1, 2021

✓ Math specialists will meet and review with K-8 math coordinator, literacy specialists, K-8 ELA coordinator, Lawrence educational Team Facilitator and building leaders to review current Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, supports, data to make recommendations and how to best connect intervention work with Tier 1 classroom learning.

✓ First meeting took place on 2/2/2022.

-There will be two more during the 2022 school year with action steps posted here after those meetings.)

-Math for All:

This district wide project will increase collaboration and calibration between mathematics and special educators to improve math instruction and outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities. Teams will identify their beliefs about math instruction and the learning capacities of students with disabilities in order to develop a shared vision, common language, and foundational knowledge of mathematics instruction and the instructional needs of students with disabilities. The Lawrence team is made up of eight general education and special education educators in grades K-2 and the two Lawrence math specialists.

✓ Summer of 2021 meetings for three hours

✓ October, ✓ November, ✓ December, ✓ January, February meetings each for two hours.

Literacy

-Lexia: An online tool being used in all classes K-3, and some classes in grades 4 and 5 to inform Tier 1 Classroom Literacy Instruction

Lexia was piloted in grades K-2 during the spring of 2021. All K-2 classroom teachers voted to continue use of Lexia in June, 2021 due to the robust amount of data that the program generates on every child. As a result, the district supported a school license for the 2021-2022 school year.

With staff endorsement and district support, literacy coach, Jill Demsey, held a summer PD session with two general educators from grades K,1,2 and 3 for paid time for 12 hours to continue to learn how to use Lexia, with a focus on interpreting the data the program generates to better understand student strengths and areas of need and to inform Tier 1 (classroom) instruction. Some classes in grade 4 and 5 are piloting Lexia this year. Grade 6 with pilot "Power Up" in the winter/spring of 2022.

✓ The literacy coaches will host a 90 minute PD session for all K-3 general education, special education EL educators and paraprofessionals in grades K-3 on November 1, 2021 PD day.

✓ Literacy coaches continue to support staff during the school year during common planning time, one faculty meeting time, and 1:1 coaching sessions.

- ✓ Grade 6 will utilize the middle school version named “Power Up” and will have a one hour PD session to learn more about the program with a representative from Power Up and the literacy coach from grades 3-8, Dianne Muendel.
- ✓ All special educators and EL staff will have Lexia accounts to use with identified students and receive support from literacy coaches.

MCAS Data

-MCAS data from spring 2021 shared with all staff in October of 2021 with the goal of reviewing scores in general and of the lowest scoring students in each homeroom in grades 3-5 and in each grade level 6-8 as identified in a spreadsheet created and shared by building leaders. The direction was for teachers in grades 3-8 to review these lists and then make a plan as to how they would focus on relationship building with students who earned the lowest scores and provide extra support in class.

Child Study Team

-Greater use of data in CST meetings: Structure updated by staff during summer of 2021 and shared with staff at faculty meeting on September 28th. CST leaders were provided with 8 hours of paid time during the summer to restructure the Lawrence CST process with a greater emphasis on data collection.

Use of Real Time Data to Inform Special Education Goals

-Greater use of real time literacy and math assessments when discussing special education supports and/or goals for next year for students receiving separate math and/or literacy instruction during pull out structures.
 -Increase administration and use of data and student work when identifying student areas of vulnerability and strength.

Creation and Implementation of Massachusetts Benchmarks and Skills Based Rubrics in Grades 6-8

-Greater use of rubrics in grades 6-8 that explicitly explain benchmarks and skills to be learned with each lesson and unit of study. The middle school has made great strides in this action step. Please see more information under the section on “Grades 6-8: Grading for Equity (Informed by Lawrence Climate and Culture Planning Committee)”

2. Grades K-5: Equitable Classroom Practices (Informed by Lawrence Climate and Culture Planning Committee)

During the spring of the 2020-21 school year, Lawrence School teachers and administrators came together to plan and lead faculty meetings about equity in the classroom, which we consider to be a career-long pursuit full of nuanced thinking, learning and planning. We hosted four meetings, watched videos, reviewed equitable teaching practices and talked about ways to apply this learning in our classrooms. Some of our resources included A Conversation about Educational Equity an article by Zaretta Hammond, This Book is Anti-Racist

by Tiffany Jewell and Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice, an article by Geneva Gay all while navigating the continued Corona Virus Pandemic.

We believe it is important to continue to engage the Lawrence K-5 staff in learning about and growing their tool kit of effective equitable instructional practices that can be used in every classroom, office and space by educators to meet the needs of all students with an intentional focus on our students of color, students in special education and our students who are economically disadvantaged.

“Cultural Proficiency is the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than their own. It entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, developing certain bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching.” (NEA 2008)

With the hire of Jenne Uttaro as the Senior Director of Equity for the Public schools of Brookline, the Lawrence School Climate and Culture Team met with Ms. Uttaro to plan our continued work for the 2021-2022 school year.

- ✓ Whole staff to meet with Jenne Uttaro-Oct. 26: Introduction to Equity and Diversity
- ✓ Staff in grades K-5 will begin a collaborative read of Zoretta Hammond’s Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain.
- ✓ Lawrence PTO to support this work by purchasing copies of the book for all K-5 staff.
- ✓ K-5 staff will read various chapters, participate in discussions and identify action steps for classroom instruction under the guidance of Jenne Uttaro and the Lawrence Climate and Culture planning members.
- We will use 6 faculty meetings to start this collaborative learning and action planning during ✓ November and ✓ December of 2021 and February and March of 2022.

3. Grades 6-8: Grading for Equity (Informed by Lawrence Climate and Culture Planning Committee)

Middle school staff dedicated time reading and discussing the book Grading for Equity by Joe Feldman during the spring of 2021. We applied for an OTL grant to continue this work during the summer of 2021 to develop new grading practices and policies for our middle school that are more equitable. This required collaboration between general education teachers in all four core disciplines at the middle school level and special educators who work across disciplines and grade levels. Some of the most significant grading practices to be considered during the summer professional development sessions were incorporating a) grading on a 4.0 scale, b) basing the grade only on summative assessments of student abilities rather than on homework completion, perceived effort, participation, etc., c.) no deductions for late work, and d.) giving recent performance more weight than earlier performance.

[This article by Joe Feldman](#) provides an overview of some of the principles discussed in the book.

The goal of creating a new grading policy is to ensure that our grading practices are “accurate, bias-resistant, and motivational” and that they “will improve learning, minimize grade inflation, reduce failure rates, and become a lever for creating stronger teacher-students relationships and more caring classrooms”. This matches the district’s equity goals as we are working to reform “grading practices that inadvertently perpetuate the achievement and opportunity gaps among our students.”

Summer of 2021:

✓ MS school staff met for 14 paid hours during the summer to continue their learning, discussing, reflecting and action planning for a grading structure that is equitable, accurate, bias-resistant, and motivating for students.

The group collaborated to agree upon which practices would be implemented during the 2021-2022 school year. Content specific staff will collaborate together to determine how each practice/policy will be handled within the content of that discipline. Finally, each grade level will collaborate to ensure that the grading practices will be consistent among all grade level teachers.

An outline of a new comprehensive grading policy for Lawrence Middle School was shared with building administration and then OTL for approval to move forward during the 2021-2022 school year.

Fall 2021:

✓ One approval is achieved, we will disseminate the grading policy to colleagues at Lawrence during the first few teacher days back to school in the fall.

✓ We will then share the policy with students and families during the first few weeks of school.

We will take time to reflect on the newly implemented strategies, and identify how to fine tune them during the year and for the 2022-2023 school year as these practices take time to grow into shared practices that can be reviewed using effective data to assess their worth

✓ MS staff will spend 3.5 hours on the November 1, 2021 staff PD day to review rubrics, data and new plans to date.

-As of now we plan to use 6 faculty meetings to start this collaborative learning and action planning during

✓ November 2021, ✓ December 2021 and February and March of 2022.

Observations as January 2022:

-Students report to staff and parents that they are less stressed about schoolwork and homework as they have many opportunities to revisit work and continue to grow their learning of identified skills.

-A greater number of students are starting to internalize the need to take charge of their own learning with the new structure between practice and performance work that enable students to see a clear connection between the amount of practice work they complete and the skill mastery they are able to demonstrate on performance work.

-Students report that they have a better sense of why they earned their grades due to clarity of rubrics and feedback on rubrics.

-Many few students are earning Ds/Fs on report cards as seen in quarter 1 and 2 for the 2021-2022 school year.

-Some students and parents have shared concerns about what might happen if the student goes to high school with a more traditional grading practice and how that might impact the student's grades?