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TO: Lowell School Committee Members
FROM: Liam Skinner, Superintendent of Schools
DATE: August 21, 2024
RE: *Superintendent Goals Report*

As superintendent I take responsibility for district goals and expect to be held accountable for achieving them. Beyond the summary statements below, Part I of this report provides my assessment of progress on 5 individual goals of the superintendent. Part II gives an assessment of progress on district strategic goals. In each case the assessment applies a rating - **Achieved**, **Substantial Progress**, **Limited Progress**, or **No Progress** - and is accompanied by a supporting narrative and data.

For convenience, the different elements of this report can be accessed as follows:

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Summary: Superintendent’s Individual Goals:

Goal 1: Build public trust and confidence with key stakeholders in the community.

Assessment: **Substantial Progress**

Goal 2: Advance School Improvement Work By Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement

Assessment: **Substantial Progress**

Goal 3: Effective Central Office Structure

Assessment: **Achieved**

Goal 4: Mental Health Support

Assessment: **Achieved**

Goal 5: Establish a Plan to Provide Air Conditioning in Classrooms

Assessment: **Substantial Progress**

Summary: District Strategic Goals:

Strategic Goal #1: Improve academics and student achievement at every school site	Strategic Goal #3: Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student
Inclusive Practices - Substantial Progress	CLSP - Substantial Progress
Autonomy and Support - Achieved	Mental Health and Wellness - Achieved
Universal PreK - Substantial Progress	Capital Improvements - Substantial Progress
PoG - Substantial Progress	Registration and Placement - Achieved
Strategic Goal #2: Improve operational efficiency across the system	Strategic Goal #4 Increase community engagement and empower families as partners
Diversity Recruitment - Achieved	Community Schools - Substantial Progress
Data-Driven Decision-Making - Achieved	Parent Leadership Institute - Achieved
Wage Equity - Achieved	HSST - Substantial Progress
Resource Planning - Achieved	

Part I

Superintendent's Individual Goals

Over the past year, I've worked to accomplish 5 individual goals of the superintendent. These goals were approved by the School Committee in the August 16, 2023 meeting. The first three goals are ones I have already reported out on and so are given just a brief treatment in this report. Goal 1 and Goal 2 were directly related to the commitments in my Entry Plan and I've already reported on them during the school year ([Report of Entry Plan progress](#), 1/17/24 SC meeting; [Report of Entry Plan Findings](#), 5/15/24 SC meeting). Similarly, the School Committee is familiar with the subject of the third goal - restructuring central office - and, again, a brief treatment seems apt. The two remaining goals, one related to mental health and the other related to planning for air conditioning in schools, are given more extensive treatment.

Goal 1: Build public trust and confidence with key stakeholders in the community.

By late fall, I will have met and engaged with key stakeholders (as identified in my Entry Plan) to understand their specific interests, concerns, and needs and to gain valuable insights into their priorities and challenges.

Assessment: **Substantial Progress**

I believe I have developed respectful, constructive relationships with city leaders and the leaders of our various community partners. The Report of Entry Plan Progress, 1/17/24 SC meeting, referred to the enjoyment I've derived from meeting very many local officials and representatives of community agencies.

31 Superintendent meetings with City of Lowell Officials, July - Dec. 2023

includes: City Manager, Chief of Police, Chief of Fire Dept., City Solicitor, Chief Financial Officer, DPW Commissioner, Sustainability Director, Parking Director

60 Superintendent meetings with Community Partners, July - Dec. 2023

includes: Project Learn, CTI, MCC, UML, UTEC, Greater Lowell Community Foundation, United Teachers of Lowell, Lowell School Administrators Association, Lowell Community Health, Lowell Plan, CMAA, Greater Lowell Technical High School, Fortaleza, Boys & Girls Club, Lowell Sun, Vinfen, Middlesex 3 Coalition, Latinx Center for Community Engagement, MassHire

The 1/17/24 report indicated that trust has been established and that lines of effective communication are open. Meetings with individual community partners allowed me to understand and support existing partnerships. They enabled me to appreciate the pivotal support provided to our families through a wide range of services. There are also many products of these collaborative efforts, such as the completion of various capital projects, a series of ‘pathways’ for LPS paraprofessionals to attain degrees and teaching certifications being planned with Middlesex Community College, and a reinvigorated Hispanic Student Success Task Force. Again, a more comprehensive account is given in the 1/17/24 Report of Entry Plan progress.

One area I have flagged for improvement has to do with my engagement with local media outlets. While I have made numerous appearances on radio and TV, and contributions to print media, I have not fully availed of such engagement as opportunities to share elements of LPS’s vision, goals, and achievements, or to create a sense of community involvement and pride. These are improvements I will attend to going forward.

Overall, through my work on this goal, I feel I have established a strong community presence, built a network of collaborative partners, and set in motion ideas for sustaining and strengthening LPS for the future.

Goal 2: Advance School Improvement Work By Fostering a Culture of Continuous Improvement. Throughout the school year, I will foster the instructional leadership skills of principals and assistant principals so that they support teachers in their professional growth, and take meaningful steps to eliminate disparities in student outcomes based on race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Assessment: **Substantial Progress**

The notion of developing a culture of continuous improvement is one I’ve devoted much of my career to. This theme was included in my Entry Plan to ensure that my new duties as superintendent did not detract from my leadership of what matters most: striving for improved student learning, in particular, by supporting teachers' professional growth.

Through school visits and through our monthly Leadership Academy forum, I continued to foster the instructional leadership skills of principals and assistant principals so that they support teachers in their professional growth, and take meaningful steps to eliminate disparities in student outcomes. I was able to exceed my target of 10 school visits per month, completing 157 school visits over the past calendar year. The visits included some with other officials, such as my superintendent coach

and DESE representatives.. The intended focus of my solo visits - to assess instructional leadership goals and other improvement work - was only partially maintained. This is in large part because, while I was able to go to schools regularly, I did not have many opportunities to spend two hours or more on visits, a more realistic block of time for indulging in such work. However, I remained active in this work through regular one-on-one meetings with Ms. Crocker-Roberge, as well as through participation in meetings with teams, such as our District Instructional Leadership Team (DILT).

I remained involved in preparing for Leadership Academy, our monthly professional development forum for school leaders, and as a participant in them. These sessions provided leaders with concrete skills and strategies to promote culturally responsive practices, including rigorous and relevant tasks, student engagement, and sense of belonging. They also allowed school leaders to easily access central office team members for support, coaching, or technical assistance as needed. The work was very well received by leaders, the vast majority of whom rated the sessions highly on feedback forms.

Finally, one further commitment in this area, the ‘production of a comprehensive professional development plan’, was realized this spring. An initial assessment of current professional development planning procedures was completed by midyear and the information gathered was used to engage appropriate groups to launch a comprehensive professional development plan for the 2024-2025 school year. This included recommendations to the School Committee for the integration of dedicated release time for professional development, which was granted in the form of additional Early Release days on the SY 2024-2025 calendar.

<p>Goal 3: Effective Central Office Structure. Address concerns identified by our School Committee and meet the demand for a sensible, efficient organizational model that fits the particular needs of our urban district, its schools, families and students.</p>
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Assessment: **Achieved**

Through discussions, both in open and executive sessions, School Committee members are well apprised of the work on this goal and on the outcome to date. Notwithstanding the potential for future adjustments, the recent approval of a new Central Office organizational chart (July 25, 2024 School Committee meeting) indicates that this goal has been achieved.

Among other features, the Org Chart includes the restoration of the Office of Student Support Services and a rebalancing of responsibilities among Assistant Superintendents.

Early work towards meeting this goal involved considerable deliberation among cabinet members as to the purpose and roles of their office. Incorporating a study by an outside vendor (Public Works LLC) the process engaged key stakeholders, including principals, teachers, parents, and community members, in an assessment of central office functions. Comparisons with peer districts were conducted. Research and best practices were embraced, particularly as represented in the Public Works report. Subsequently, a number of draft plans were shared with the School Committee, deliberated on, and sent back for revision until the production of the version approved July 25, 2024.

Goal 4: Mental Health Support. After a thorough assessment of student and staff needs, and collaborative input from mental health experts and those on the front lines supporting our students and families, develop a specific model of in-school mental health support and interventions we want our students to have access to. Outline a specific plan and resources needed to realize that vision.

Assessment: **Achieved**

This goal was developed in recognition of a mental health crisis that had been burgeoning since long before the Covid pandemic. Issues such as anxiety, depression, stress, and behavioral challenges are prevalent among our students. Factors like social media, family stressors, and societal expectations can contribute to these concerns.

Thanks in large part to the leadership of LPS's Director of Mental Health, Drew Rosenshine, we developed a 5-year work plan for establishing a truly comprehensive mental health support system. It identifies high-quality, research-based assessments and a suite of resources and services (both internal and external) which are implemented in tiers corresponding to severity of student needs. Key components of the plan include:

1. **Prevention and Promotion:** LPS will include programs and activities that focus on preventing mental health issues and promoting overall well-being.
2. **Early Intervention:** LPS will be identifying and addressing mental health concerns in their early stages to prevent them from escalating.
3. **Counseling and Therapy:** LPS will continue to provide school counseling and therapy either in a group or on an individual basis to students in need.
4. **Collaboration:** LPS will collaborate between schools, families, and community mental health agencies. These relationships are crucial and they provide additional resources and support for students and families.

5. **Staff Training:** LPS will provide social workers, teachers, and school staff training on recognizing signs of mental health issues, responding appropriately, and creating a supportive classroom environment.
6. **Crisis Response:** LPS will support building and updating protocols for responding to mental health crises, including suicide prevention and intervention. We will work with our community partners to eliminate gaps in care and provide support to our students and families.
7. **Family Involvement:** LPS involving parents and guardians in the mental health support system is essential. LPS will engage families in the process of care for their students, communicate community resources, and seek their opinions regarding ways in which we can improve our system.
8. **Data Collection and Evaluation:** LPS will regularly collect and analyze data related to students' mental health to identify trends and make data-driven decisions to improve our mental health support systems.
9. **Cultural Competence:** LPS will continually work toward understanding and respecting the cultural and diverse backgrounds of students and families. This is a vital aspect of providing effective mental health support and creating a sense of belonging for our community members.
10. **Policy and Leadership:** The Mental Health Office will continually review and look to establish policies and allocate resources to support a comprehensive mental health system.
11. **Positive School Climate:** LPS will foster a positive and inclusive school climate. This is essential for student well-being.
12. **Mental Health Education:** The Mental Health Office will strive to integrate mental health education into the curriculum in ways that can help reduce stigma and raise awareness about mental health. Doing so, can also provide students with coping strategies and help to build emotional intelligence.

A progress update was presented at the March 6th, 2024 School Committee meeting. It outlined efforts to improve tier I, II, and III mental health and SEL supports for students, increase support to social workers, and improve communication to schools.

Working collaboratively was a key value associated with the work on this goal. It was exemplified by the establishment of monthly professional development and teaming meetings for Social Workers. This group led the administration of a district wide School Mental Health Quality Assessment (SHAPE). From there they began the design of a comprehensive Mental Health system around three pillars: Promotion, Prevention, and Intervention. Promotion includes providing for mental health education and communication about access to mental health. Promotion also entails stimulating positive climates in our schools, as well as cultural competence.

Mental Health Education:

Integrate mental health education into the curriculum in order to reduce stigma and raise awareness about mental health.

- Supporting schools and simultaneously evaluating Tier 1 SEL programming with the possibility of choosing a new evidence based curriculum in future years
- Building trauma care sensitive, building based teams, to integrate trauma informed best practices forward
- Cartwheel, Care Solace, Virtual Webinars for families as well as offerings with McLean's Hospital School consultation team



Prevention incorporates training for staff, involving families, assessments, early intervention and collaboration with community partners.

Family Involvement:

LPS involving parents and guardians in the mental health support system is essential.

- Updated resource guides on the district website and ensure better online access
- Built (internally or with partners) and publicized family facing webinars to provide psycho-education
- Ongoing collaboration with the Attendance Office and families addressing absenteeism through work with families (home visits, parent meetings, empathy interviews)

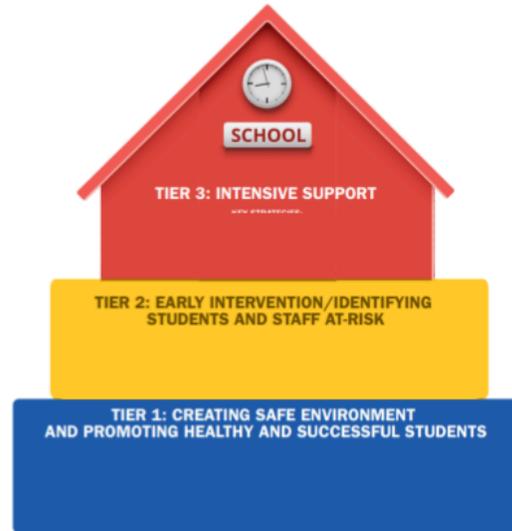
Intervention outlines a three tier model and prepares for crisis response.

LPS Mental Health and Wellness MTSS Vision:

Tier 3: crisis intervention, 1:1 counseling, AIM, referral for intensive outside services, FBA/beh. plans, safety plans

Tier 2: social skills groups, sw check ins, rest. justice circles, home/school comm. logs, mediation conversations, referrals for outside agencies

Tier 1: PBIS, soc.emot. learning, family nights, Catie's Closet, school clubs



By taking a proactive and collaborative approach regarding mental health, we are creating a supportive and nurturing environment that prioritizes the well-being of students and helps them thrive academically and emotionally.

Goal 5: Establish a Plan to Provide Air Conditioning in Classrooms. While realizing the goal of air conditioning in every classroom may take some years, I'm committed to putting together a practical, feasible plan for this provision this year. When students and teachers are not distracted by extreme heat and discomfort, they can focus better on their studies and teaching, leading to improved academic performance.

Assessment: **Substantial Progress**

High temperatures and humidity in our classrooms create conditions that are detrimental to learning. This problem is occurring with ever increasing frequency during the late spring and early fall, and with yet greater intensity and frequency in summer school programs. It is lamentable that air conditioning for schools has not been a high priority long before now.

For progress on this goal, I am grateful for the support of DPW Commissioner Paul St. Cyr and Sustainability Director Katherine Moses. They actively participated in an extended series of meetings with me over the past year to plan a comprehensive response to this problem. We examined multiple pathways to upgrade schools to allow for cooling and considered both short-term and long-term solutions.

In the short-term, individual classroom level cooling units could help take the edge from excessive temperatures. The challenge around such a solution is that existing transformers might not be able to handle the increased load associated with the new equipment. In such cases, evaluation of transformer capacity would be needed prior to installation of equipment.

Long-term solutions will vary, based on whether schools were initially designed with cooling capabilities. Many of the schools across the district were designed with cooling systems integrated in building construction. Many of these cooling systems have subsequently failed. With proper equipment repairs or replacements, these systems could be brought back online. Solutions for these schools would include identifying funding to replace nonfunctional equipment.

Some schools were not originally designed for cooling and solutions can be more challenging in these circumstances. In the long-term, these schools might be good candidates for feasibility assessments for decarbonization technologies that incorporate both non-fossil fuel-based heating, and space cooling capabilities.

Once these underlying conditions were understood, planning began by organizing information related to the circumstances for each school. The following is a sample subset of a more comprehensive database created:

Site		A/C Type	Status	Issues #1	Estimated Cost
Bailey		Full Chiller System	Operable	Controls - Short Cycling	
Bartlett		35% Window Coverage, some splits, Main Office	Operable	Nurse's Unit	\$500K
Butler		Full Chiller System	Non-Operable	Condemned Chiller	\$800K
Cardinal		0%	N/A	No AC Units/Upgrade Electrical	\$300K
Daley		50% Window Coverage	Operable	Add Additional Panels	\$500K
Greenhalge		Full Chiller System	Operable	Controls Upgrade	\$300K

Due to the numerous and varied issues presented, we next focused on pursuing multiple funding strategies to address the deficits in cooling across the school portfolio, including the following grant opportunities:

- ❖ Indoor Ventilation and Air Quality Grant: This \$4.2 million grant from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) includes funding for chillers at Greenhalge, McAuliffe, Murkland, Shaughnessy, and Pyne schools. The projects have been approved by DESE and procurement is underway. Depending on pricing received and available utility incentives, it might also be possible to integrate additional schools into this funding.

- ❖ Renew America's Schools Grant: The District and City have jointly pursued funding to study potential solutions for all facility needs, including cooling needs, in more depth. In June, the team applied for the Renew America's Schools grant from the Department of Energy (DOE), which includes up to \$1 million to conduct ASHRAE Level 2 audits and up to \$14 million to implement measures identified through the audits, including potential cooling upgrades or potential decarbonization activities. Just within the last couple of weeks we've learned that Lowell's application has been approved.

There are likely to be additional funding opportunities in the coming year from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Inflation Reduction Act, and new grant programs being developed by the Commonwealth. Our City of Lowell partners, and in particular Ms. Moses, continue to monitor and pursue all available opportunities to move this goal forward. LPS will continue to work in partnership with the City to provide solutions to our critical need for cooling in schools..

Part II

District Strategic Goals

Following discussion of earlier drafts with the School Committee, and adjustments made at the request of members, a final iteration of the [district's strategic goals](#) was approved at the 10/18/2024 School Committee meeting. In all 15 initiatives were outlined in support of the four goal areas in our Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025. In each case, reports of progress on these initiatives were presented to the School Committee during the past school year. Those reports are identified (and linked) below along with an assessment and brief highlights.

Goal #1: Improve academics and student achievement at every school site.

❖ **Inclusive Classroom Practices:**

- (A) Align the resources and staffing within the Office of Teaching & Learning to support schools that have been identified as in need of assistance by the DESE by strengthening student engagement strategies and building strong Instructional leadership teams
- (B) Improve professional learning for district leaders to ensure all Special Education services continue to align with IDEA through the DESE's new IEP process to further improve the quality of teaching and learning experiences for students.

→ **Assessment: Substantial Progress**

An extensive update on this goal was provided to the [School Committee on 03/20/24](#). Among various other details, included were descriptions of:

- Enhanced Instructional Rounds with focus areas for curriculum implementation and instructional quality
- New District Instructional Leadership Team
- MTSS and Inclusive Classroom Practices PD and support
- Professional development for district leaders aimed at ensuring the seamless alignment of all Special Education services with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This initiative sought to elevate the caliber of teaching and learning experiences for students.

❖ **Differentiated Autonomy and Support:**

- (A) Establish criteria specifying how and when schools move from one tier of autonomy to another.
- (B) Define operational and programmatic autonomies and systems of support for all schools.
- (C) Establish an in-district comprehensive assessment procedure to review curriculum implementation, use of instructional best practices, and use of data to drive improvement and equity efforts for schools designated at the highest level of centralized support.

→ **Assessment: Achieved**

The above referenced report to the [School Committee on 03/20/24](#) included descriptions of:

- A common document clearly outlining autonomies and supports and the criteria for moving from one tier to another; shared with all schools
- A newly revamped school improvement process featuring a three-year plan for each school with multi-year goals and annual performance objectives
- New KPI features, including:
 - Comparisons between current performance and past performance on the same metric
 - Disaggregation on each metric where disaggregated data is available
 - Clearly defined terms setting out explicitly what each metric measures and the source of the data being reported

❖ **Universal PreK:**

Partner with local early childhood education partners to increase opportunities for vertical alignment between schools and early education programs, which includes a definition of Kindergarten readiness and common tool for measuring readiness across city-wide district and community programs.

→ **Assessment: Substantial Progress**

In addition to the report to the [School Committee on 04/17/24](#) the Early Childhood Department finalized a kindergarten readiness statement by the end of the school year. It identifies readiness skills, including developmental, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills important to success in kindergarten and beyond. It also incorporates the visual of Portrait of a Graduate to highlight how early learning is linked to achievement leading to graduation. This work was accomplished in

collaboration with members of Lowell’s Early Childhood Council and focus group sessions with educators and families.

Additionally, to provide Kindergarten teachers and principals with more information on incoming Kindergarten students, the DIAL-4 Screening tool was used to identify children’s strengths and readiness prior to the start of the school year in the areas of motor, concept development, and language. The Early Childhood team expanded to include assessors to support administering the DIAL-4 assessment in the spring and throughout the summer.

Finally, the Early Childhood Department partnered with the Family Leadership Institute to develop a Kindergarten Readiness Summer Communications Campaign, offering families of incoming kindergarten students’ suggestions for ways to support Kindergarten readiness at home over the summer months.

❖ **Portrait of a Graduate:**

Deepen understanding and application of the Portrait of a Graduate initiative by:

- (A) Ensuring that LHS students actively interact with PoG domains in their academic coursework as well as non-academic settings, and at the end of each grade produce an artifact that demonstrates evidence of growth in at least two domains
- (B) Developing and implementing rubrics aligned with the PoG domains
- (C) Providing professional development for all district leaders
- (D) Initiating Portrait of a Graduate in elementary and middle school grade

→ **Assessment: Substantial Progress**

An update on this goal was presented to the [School Committee on 05/01/24](#). Details included:

- Rubrics aligned with PoG domains were in use by Spring 2024
- Agendas of professional development sessions, as well as testimony from feedback surveys, reflect training provided to all district leaders and the introduction of PoG in elementary and middle schools
- A sample of student artifacts was presented by LHS students to the School Committee at the May 1, 2024 meeting.
- Teachers collaborated to create a Google site where students will host and showcase their PoG artifacts as a digital portfolio throughout their four years at

LHS; this year, Freshman focused on creating an artifact that reflected the themes of Network and Spirit.

- Additional work with building out the PoG vision for middle and elementary school grades will continue in the 2024-2025 school year through district working groups.

Goal #2: Improve operational efficiency across the system.

❖ Diversity Recruitment and Hiring:

- (A) Provide historical hiring data and relevant information to hiring managers, so they can make fully informed decisions which impact the diversity of the workforce within their facilities.
- (B) Provide the School Committee with recommendations for updates to hiring policies.
- (C) Increase HR functions within cafeteria hiring, evaluation, training, and hiring.

→ **Assessment: Achieved**

An update on this goal was presented to the [School Committee on 06/12/24](#)

- The launch of TalentEd has allowed for the collection of data on hiring practices and areas to focus on.
- Recommendations for updates to hiring processes have been provided to the School Committee.
- Human Resources Department attended job fairs in partnership with MassHire at Middlesex Community College, the Lowell Senior Center, and a virtual event through Zoom.
- HR hosted our own job fair at the Morey Elementary School on March 23, 2024, where administrative leaders, supporting staff, and the HR department worked collaboratively in interviewing and recruiting potential candidates
- Numerous HR functions were improved throughout the year. They include:
 - Recent advances in cafeteria functions such as the evaluation of cafeteria workers; the hiring and on-boarding of 62 part-time and full-time Food Service employees between October '23 - June '24; the development of an attendance tracker for a mid-year update to help identify and rectify patterns of absenteeism; Food Truck/Cheer Mobile visits to 29 schools across the district; an updated Food Service application to include options for languages spoken; HR staff represented Food Services at multiple Job Fairs and helped attendees

apply via TalentEd on site; HR staff participated in all mandatory Food Service Professional Development trainings, reviewing, and providing clarification around LPS policies and procedures

❖ **Data-Driven Decision-Making:**

- (A) Update Key Performance Indicators to reflect critical benchmarks for learning on standard measures (i.e. number/% of third graders reading at grade level).
- (B) Enhance school and district data dashboards to include the ability to disaggregate student performance metrics by race/ethnicity.
- (C) Embed monthly data review protocols for school and district leaders during district meeting time focusing on the needs and progress of our Hispanic/Latinx students and special populations.

→ **Assessment: Achieved**

An update on this goal was presented to the [*School Committee on 12/06/2023*](#). Details included:

- A new KPI report format, incorporating School Committee feedback and disaggregated data, was first presented to the committee at the end of the first quarter
- 100% of All Administrator meetings included a data review and analysis as reflected by [*meeting agendas*](#).
- All school and district student performance data dashboards in Open Architect have the ability to disaggregate data by race/ethnicity.

❖ **Wage Equity:**

Conduct a comprehensive, externally-supported compensation classification study to support evaluating both the internal and external equity of compensation.

→ **Assessment: Achieved**

An update on this goal was presented to the [*School Committee on 06/12/24*](#)

- [*Recommendations*](#) related to salary increases were adopted during the 6/12/24 School Committee meeting.

- The [results](#) of a completed wage equity study were presented to the School committee.

**Consideration: build on this work in SY2025 by developing a process for School Committee approval where employees can petition for a wage review.

❖ **Enterprise Resource Planning:**

Incorporate automation and self-access options for employees within the human resources department to simplify the onboarding/offboarding process and streamline many of daily processes.

→ **Assessment: Achieved**

An update on this goal was presented to the [School Committee on 06/12/24](#). Details include:

- Newly automated features and self-access options
- Recipients and reviewers can now e-sign several forms for submission. Recruitment data can now be accessed, reports built, and hiring authorities are provided more data through the launch of TalentED.
- Aspects of the religious leave accommodation process and the application for bilingual stipends for school based staff have been automated.. Additionally, related to Food Service, the application process has been automated and updated to include options for languages spoken, allowing more successful communication and employee growth through intentional placement.
- The onboarding process has been migrated from paper hiring packets to digital by adding a continual posting for Food Service on TalentEd. These processes were helpful in hiring and onboarding 62 part-time and full-time Food Service employees.
- PowerSchool's records platform has also improved cost efficiencies as we are able to submit and approve "off-payroll" status forms in a timely manner through the electronic workflow, i.e. 211 off-payroll forms have been filed since December 2023, which eliminated costs on paper copies, as well as time-consuming steps that require making copies, hand-delivering copies to payroll, and filing, which has led to more time to focus on other matters.

Goal #3: Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, everyday

❖ **Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices:**

(A) Conduct a comprehensive analysis of student access to arts and cultural activities in and out-of-school time to inform opportunities for increased partnerships with cultural organizations to provide arts and cultural experiences for the District's diverse student populations.

(B) Implement a series of trainings for educators aligned with the Bias in Curriculum Tool, including an understanding of the tool as well as opportunities for deepening one's knowledge and cultural understanding of themselves and the diverse student populations in Lowell Public Schools.

→ **Assessment: Substantial Progress**

An update on this goal was presented to the [*School Committee on 04/17/24*](#)

- A review of arts and culture activities taking place across schools was initiated in the fall. This work was paused due to staffing changes and will be continued in Fall 2024.
- The Bias in Curriculum Tool series was piloted with over 90 educators in the spring.
- Over 95% of teachers who completed the Bias in Curriculum series indicated agreement (via survey and exit ticket) that they can apply the tool in their practice and that they feel better prepared to meet the needs of their students.
- Teachers who completed the training have the opportunity to be trained to become Bias in Curriculum Tool workshop facilitators for the upcoming school year.

❖ **Mental Health and Wellness:**

Further develop an updated, comprehensive mental health and wellness plan to:

- (A) Improve tier I, II and III mental health and SEL supports for students.
- (B) Increase support to social workers.
- (C) Improve communication to schools.
- (D) Further improve implementation of the DESSA tool.

→ **Assessment: Achieved**

A more detailed report on this initiative is presented on page 6 of this report. Also, an update was presented to the [*School Committee on 03/06/24*](#).

- A Mental Health Quality Assessment (SHAPE) was issued across all schools by

January 2024

- A schedule of monthly Social Worker meetings was developed by November 1st, 2023
- Elementary and Secondary committees reviewed SEL curriculum by March 2024

❖ **Capital Improvements:**

- (A) Maximize available ESSER funds for facility improvements.
- (B) Provide for STEM modular project delivery prior to the start of SY25.
- (C) Provide for expedited emergency cleaning and repair procurement.
- (D) Establish a Plan to Provide Air Conditioning in Classrooms.

→ **Assessment: Substantial Progress**

A goal update was presented to the [School Committee on 04/17/24](#)

- Funds have been successfully expended on STEM Academy modular classrooms, Stadium complex, and acquisition of new space for the Dr. Janice Adie Day, all which will benefit students for decades to come.
- The recently awarded Renew America's Schools grant promises \$15 million which will greatly assist our intention to provide air conditioning in school..
- Modular classrooms at the STEM Academy are on track to be ready for use at the beginning of the school year (Aug. 2024)

❖ **Student Registration and Placement:**

Continue implementation of key changes to the student enrollment process as identified through the 2022 audit which includes establishing an appointment system, call center and health service supports to expedite medical compliance with immunizations; review the middle school assignment patterns to make recommendations for equitable distribution of students.

→ **Assessment: Achieved**

Progress toward this goal was presented in monthly status reports to the School Committee.

- The most recent monthly status report to the School Committee, 6/12/24, reflects

- three years of data demonstrating the decrease in placement time of new students
- A [progress report](#) was also presented to the School Committee, 2/7/24, providing updates on changes and improvements to the FRC for the new school year.
 - Additionally, a google phone system was set up last summer to better capture the hundreds of calls that are received in the Family Resource Center. Based on the google phone report, over the eight business days leading up to the first day of school (8/21-8/31), the FRC answered over 2000 phone calls in multiple languages.
 - This year, the FRC has instituted a professional call center software as part of a continuous improvement process. This professional call system enables callers to request a direct connection with a multilingual speaker, be placed in a queue, or request a call back. Finally, the professional system also includes the capability to monitor calls for quality of customer service in addition to providing improved data analysis tools which measure average length of phone calls, call volume, and average length of time callers wait for their call to be answered.

Goal #4: Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process

❖ **Full-Service Community Schools:**

- (A) Develop a communications plan to increase understanding of the Community Schools strategy and family awareness of how to access wrap-around supports for students.
- (B) Strengthen data monitoring processes around established metrics.
- (C) Develop new and increased out of school time offerings for students and families in order to increase student and family engagement, accelerate learning, and provide SEL support.

→ **Assessment: Substantial Progress**

A goal update was presented to the [School Committee on 04/03/24](#).

An end of year evaluation completed by the UMASS Lowell Center for Program Evaluation, the following strengths and progress of the program were identified:

- The FSCS initiative connects students with the “right resources” and drives student success in additional areas beyond academics.
- A diverse group of students and families are gaining access to a variety of resources and building a sense of community and connection through the FSCS initiative.
- FSCS is meeting the objectives of increasing academic performance, reducing chronic absenteeism, and developing long-term strategies to increase educational outcomes.

- Program managers and administrators all identified community partnerships and student services as the most effective.

Some areas for improvement include:

- The need to build capacity to collect and monitor the necessary data in a streamlined way.
- Finding available physical space to provide programs of interest to students and families.
- Improving payment processes so partners are paid in a timely manner.

❖ **Parent Leadership Institute:**

Expand the District’s multi-generational, family literacy initiative through the development and facilitation of workshops and family learning events on the topics of US/Lowell Education System, college and career readiness, and social emotional learning, and establish a partnership with a Post-Secondary Institution to formalize a Family Leadership pathway for families; increase the number of parents attending and prepared for meaningful parent teacher conferences.

→ **Assessment: Achieved**

An update on the Family Leadership Institute goal was presented to the School Committee in the form of a [motion response](#) on June 12, 2024. This included data on family participation on several key workshops, trainings and learning excursions organized by the Family Leadership Institute. This included:

- Survival English for parents of multilingual learners, with over 450 participants;
 - Family Institute for Student Success (FISS) with over 60 parents in two schools participating in training sessions that build strong, positive partnerships between families and schools.
 - Family college visits were offered this year which enabled more than 40 students and family members from elementary, middle and high school to gain exposure to a four-year college campus, the financial aid process and application requirements.
- Over 95% of parents expressed satisfaction on post-workshop surveys as reported within the FLI evaluation report conducted by the UMASS Lowell Center for Program Evaluation.

❖ **Hispanic Student Success Taskforce:**

Collaborate with community partners and leaders to implement co-developed plans for:

(A) Addressing 9th grade credit completion through strengthened family engagement/family communication.

(B) Implement a college and career focused family leadership strand within the Family Leadership Institute

(C) Conduct a feasibility study for the integration of a dual language magnet program within the district.

→ **Assessment: Substantial Progress**

A goal update was presented to the [School Committee on 05/15/24](#).

- In addition to the status report provided to the School Committee on 5/15/24, progress updates on the three goals areas were shared with the Hispanic Student Success Taskforce Steering Committee as well as with over 70 members of the broader Hispanic/Latino community at the end of the school year community convening.
- Goals were established for continuing to strengthen family engagement and community outreach by way of strategic partnerships with faith-based leaders and by developing family leaders as cultural connectors.
- A feasibility report on a dual language magnet program was completed at the end of June by an external consultant, Center for Applied Linguistics