

LYNN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent of Schools

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As we are just beyond the mid-point of the 2019-20 school year, it seems prudent to provide an update on Discovery Academy. Originally designed to alleviate overcrowding, the Discovery Academy is a vocational/technical program that currently serves 292 8th grade students. The program largely serves would be Thurgood Marshall and Breed students. As was proposed from the outset, students engage a traditional set of core courses which are enhanced by a discovery series involving hands on, project-based experiences with specific and targeted connections to vocational competencies. As is to be expected in any new program, there have been challenges related to settling into the new space and establishing a *culture within a culture*. Nonetheless, there are quantifiable measures of success. Most notably, the enrollments at all three middle schools are down. Further, the success of the eighth grade program thus far can be measured in the percentage of students who decided to apply to the high school program. 92% of the 292 students who currently attend Discovery Academy applied to Lynn Tech. What is more, Discovery Academy has received 200 applications for School year 2020-21 thus far. The application window closes in two weeks. We are proud of this program and look forward to refining it in the years to come.

Beginning school year 18-19, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shifted public schools to an entirely new accountability system in keeping with requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). In this system, there are specific criteria for which failure perform above a threshold would land a school in the “requiring assistance” range of the accountability continuum. As a result of the 2019 accountability, there are three Lynn Public Schools in this range. Below are the schools and the criterion or criteria on which performance was below the threshold.

- ▶ Marshall – Low subgroup performance: Asian Subgroup
- ▶ LCHS – Lowest performing 10% of schools; Low subgroup performance: Economically Disadvantaged , High Needs, English Learner and Former English Learner
- ▶ Washington - Lowest performing 10% of schools; Low subgroup performance: Students with Disabilities

When a school is engaged in work design to improve on the criteria identified, they are defined as being in “turnaround”, which should not be confused with the same term used to define Level 4 schools under the old accountability system. Under the new accountability system, being a turnaround means engaging in a specific set of activities aimed at improvement. At a high level, each school engages the following steps in the creation of a plan with support from DESE:

Stakeholder Engagement

Envision the Future

Analysis of Assets and Challenges

Determine Strategic Objectives & Initiatives Aligned to Turnaround Practices

Identify District Systems of Support

Identify Goals, Benchmarks, and Progress Monitoring

Schools engage a collaborative process of developing a plan specifically designed to address the area of concern and beyond and elevate outcomes. The plans are lengthy and substantive, 60 -70 pages. Accordingly, the most visible path is to give a high-level snapshot of a completed plan. The snapshot will focus on Classical High School as the other schools are in the process of developing their plan.

Lynn Classical completed and submitted its plan to DESE in June of 2019. In it, the team has described the development of an instructional leadership team, a diverse group of teachers and administrators, that now meets bi-weekly to drive efforts around improving instructional practice. This includes but is not limited to the development of a rubric by which teachers can better understand the quality of a particular lesson. Ultimately, there is an effort to ensure that lessons meet the depth of the instructional standard and exemplify academic demand. From a research standpoint, the quality and rigor of instruction is at the core of any improvement initiative. Additionally, there is an effort to increase and expand access to early college, the substance of which has been presented in recent school committee meetings.

Classical also intends to improve culture and climate by increasing mental health supports. This includes, but is not limited to the development and implementation of the BRYT program. BRYT is a mental health support aimed at meeting the needs of students who have extended absences due to mental health challenges or hospitalization and require support transitioning back to school. Also in the plan is the implementation of the Youth Harbors program designed to support unaccompanied homeless minors and addressing the hierarchy of need around shelter and food. Addressing these foundational needs to allow the student to remain engaged and successful in school.

And finally, the plan for Classical requires District systems of support. This comes in the form of supports through the Framework of Support including but not limited to executive professional development for the principal, additional math professional development, and increased staff.

Every plan calls for specific, quantifiable outcomes. It should not be a surprise that there are outcomes related to increased graduation rates, advance coursework completion and achievement rates for all and specific targets for identified subgroups, as well as decreased dropout and chronic absenteeism rates.

The turnaround grant provides funding for third party progress monitoring. The report you received in your packet as well as the document attached to this report offers a snapshot of the forward progress Lynn Classical is making. The CLASS protocol was developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia. The protocol includes 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support, in addition to Student Engagement. When conducting a visit to a classroom, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. Clearly evident in the attached document is the fact that there was improvement in every domain on the last progress monitoring visit. Classical is improving!

Lastly, attached to this document is a plan to evolve the Breed All Stars program with the addition of a therapy dog to their family. Paid for by the generosity of District Attorney Blodgett, the dog will be housed with the coordinator of the All Stars program, Lauren Phelps. The plan is for the dog to be a part of the after school and summer programming with hopes that this body would consider a daytime role at a future date, next spring at the earliest. In the attachment there is specific information about the intensive training and onboarding as well as allergy information on protocols. To say that the team is excited about the addition would be an understatement.

Respectfully Submitted,

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