



**Continuous School Improvement Plan (C-SIP)**  
**Nova High School**  
**2016 - 2018**  
**Principal: Dr. Mark Perry**

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## **School Overview**

### **Introduction**

The Continuous School Improvement Plan, CSIP, is a document that contains our building and District's plan of action for the current school year. More specifically, it identifies the areas our school plans to focus on in the coming school year, the performance goals we want our students to achieve, and how we are going to collaboratively meet these goals. All of our school's goals and efforts have been synthesized into one easy-to-read document that covers all of the different areas on which schools are required to report.

The Nova High School BLT reviewed and approved the 2016-17 CSIP on November 22, 2016.

### **Mission and Vision**

#### **Mission:**

Nova is an inquiry-based learning community committed to the success of all students. Our mission is to provide a vigorous, engaging, culturally relevant, and student centered academic program that is accessible to all students. Nova's teaching and learning approach provides competency, inquiry, project and problem-based instruction where students apply their learning through application, performance, and portfolio based assessment. Nova's advisory system provides a teacher/advisor for every student at a ratio of 24:1. Students share decision making and learn individual and social responsibility in a personalized and safe environment where differences are honored. Nova operates with a growth mindset where we build into our curriculum our committee and coordinating systems academic, social, and emotional development.

We believe learning looks different for each person and thus should be a flexible and malleable personalized process driven by the learner with support and guidance from caring mentors and other learners. At Nova, students and staff are both learners and teachers. We work to find balance between personalization, academics, and community responsibility. The goal is for all students, with a specific and concentrated focus on students of color and historically disenfranchised, low-income, students with disabilities, and socially impacted students, to achieve success academically, socially, and emotionally. We will continue to stress the importance of looking at issues, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation to move the question from "do these issues matter" to "yes, they matter"; this may seem like a small semantic issue, but it is the foundational key to tackling, decreasing, and eliminating the achievement gap for any student negatively impacted by institutional racism and other contributing institutional oppressions

#### **Vision:**

Nova's vision is shaped by our commitment to social justice, access and equity, the arts, and environmental sustainability. Every student and staff member can thrive in an environment that supports safety and access

for all members of the Nova community to develop self and social responsibility. Find Your Passion and Make a Difference!

## Terminology

Throughout this document a number of acronyms and terms are used that may seem unclear. The following lexicon may be helpful:

**ALO (or HC -highly capable): Advanced Learning Opportunities.** Building based program that serves students with a designation of advanced learners.

**BLT: Building Leadership Team.** A school's advisory, decision-making group that has specialist, grade level, administration and parent representation. The BLT meets monthly and approves the school budget and CSIP. It also, determines an additional year-long leadership team focus. This year our focus concerns communication between the school and families as well as building climate.

**Career Ladder Teachers.** Teachers that serve to support their colleagues within a leadership capacity. They help design and lead professional development opportunities at the school.

**ELL: English Language Learners.** Students who have been identified as needing additional support learning English.

**IEP: Individualized Education Plan.** An IEP is a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in keeping with certain requirements of law and regulations.

**MTSS: Multi-Tiered System of Support.** Building directed supports for students identified as needing additional learning opportunities beyond basic classroom instruction to meet standards.

**PD: Professional Development.** Instruction and learning activities for teachers to improve or broaden instructional practice.

**PLC: Professional Learning Community.** A team of educators that collaborate for instruction determining essential standards, creating and administering ongoing assessments of student understanding, reviewing data, and providing supports and extensions for students needing them.

**RULER- Recognizing Understanding Labeling Expressing Regulating:** a social-emotional literacy curriculum developed by Yale University's Center for Emotional Intelligence. Early Learning spearheaded the adoption of this curriculum, which is now in use at 50 Seattle Public Schools elementary and middle schools.

**SMART Goal.** Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely

**SIT: Student Intervention Team.** A team of parents, teachers, specialists and our psychologist that meet to consider whether an identified student may require extra support or be considered for evaluation to determine special education qualification.

**STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics**

## School-Wide Programs/Multi-Tiered System of Support

**Our school has conducted a needs assessment to determine goals to help targeted students meet grade level standards.**

Nova is continuing to work to grow and sustain our non-graded, competency-based inquiry, project, and problem-based model of instruction combined with performance assessment where students must apply their learning at levels equaling or exceeding the course competencies. Student learning concerns during 2016-17 and heading into the next 3 years have an overall focus on attendance and engagement and further development of a rigorous, challenging, and relevant curriculum that motivates this current generation of students.

Within this overall context, we have a more specific focus on deepening our work with students with disabilities. Nova has grown from 12% to 26% students with IEPs who need special education services. Within our model, all students attend classes together. This necessitates strong collaboration between general education and special education teachers and co-teaching many of our classes.

Our "student learning problem" this year is focused on building tenacity and resilience. Our last two years of student surveys rate Nova high in regards to safety, belonging and identity, healthy community, positive and supportive learning environment, creativity, and critical thinking compared to other high schools. Nova students reported responses in regards to grit, perseverance, and completion of work that were at district average. Overall, they report they feel supported and challenged by teachers and staff and enjoy their classes, yet they also report they don't always finish their work.

This problem is fully evidenced by teachers, through student surveys, and in lack of completion of work. A competency-based, non-graded system is challenging for students since they cannot sit through a class and "earn" a C or D grade, but must complete work at a

B (or competency) level or above. Many students could still earn their credit if they attended a grade-based school, but the bar is set higher at Nova.

### **We will use research-based strategies that help targeted students.**

Nova starts school at 8:45 and ends the day at 4:00 pm. We operate a block schedule where every class meets for 85 minutes M/W or T/Th and alternate Fridays (5 class sessions every two weeks). All classes are open to all students. In a competency-based structure, there is no ceiling to student learning; pathways to earn honors credit are available to every student. All of our competencies fall into 4 categories: skills, content, conceptual/critical thinking, and community. Our teachers consistently differentiate for all learners in their classes so that every student is challenged to engage and deepen their thinking and their work. All of our curriculum is developed by our teachers based on our curricular philosophy and is rooted in state and national standards.

Nova has an advisory system where every student has a teacher advisor. The student-teacher ratio averages 24:1 and the advisory is multi-graded. As an ALE (Alternative Learning Experience) and CAS (Creative Approach School) high school, we have developed a database where every student has a written student learning plan that is updated monthly based on teacher reports on student progress in every class. The advisory group serves as the core area where students build a strong relationship with their teacher advisor. It serves as a mechanism within the school where all students can receive a personalized education. We also see high school as a 3-5 year journey where students learn to drive their high school learning and grow at the pace that best works for each student. Nova's 85% extended graduation rate is 3 points higher than the overall SPS average.

According to multiple research studies chronicled through the American Education Research Association, Nova's focus on competency-based teaching and learning, project and problem-based teaching and learning, assessment through application of learning, and the balance between social/emotional, trauma-informed, and personalization is on the cutting edge of education reform and transformation.

All of our work at Nova is aligned with the SPS district level strategic plan

### **Our school offers professional development that is high quality and ongoing.**

Nova has continuous and systematic professional development around our teaching philosophy and practice. We also review our curriculum semi-annually. Our curricular focus is guided by the question: What is Worthwhile to Know and Experience? Last year our focus was on formative assessment and we are continuing to refine and develop our various methods to assess student progress throughout the semester. This year we also have a staff professional development focus on trauma and mental health issues. Through the ACES research, we have recognized that a significant percentage of our population (between 50% and 65%) bring with them into the school building two or more ACES impacts. These adverse impacts fall most heavily on our students of color and low-socioeconomic students, LGBTQ students, students with disabilities, and students with complex trauma. We have already used our TRI days for focused PD on mental health and trauma issues. As a direct result of our teaching practices and our advisory structure, our teachers are much closer to students and aware of their various impacts and traumas. Our goal is to empower each student to be aware of their own needs, direct them to specific counseling and other services, and to situate them within Nova as a learning community where they can self-confidently direct their own futures. As we fully invest in this work, we see the difference directly in attendance, engagement, and competency-credits earned by students

### **Our school will increase parent/family engagement.**

Nova has a model where we have family conferences at least once a year with all of our families and those meetings are a great place to reach out to families and share information about engaging with their students' education and with the school. We also invite families to participate in fall and winter conferences and in our community engagement day where we bring families and community organizations to school during the day to offer workshops, sit on panels and share their expertise. In addition, we have several evening events that showcase student work, performances and creations. This year we have focused on making sure these events also offer connections to community resources which include public health, behavior health and career and college information and opportunities. In the last year we have created a stronger collaboration between parents, students, teachers and administration through the PTSA. We have been able to incorporate the PTSA into our school committee system as well as get student, teacher and administration representation on the PTSA. Through this collaboration we have created monthly workshops and events for our families that are representative of workshops and events that students would participate in through our fall and winter conferences. Workshops focus on social justice issues which include adultism and student voice, institutional racism, gender 101, and having difficult conversations. Events have focused on building community and sharing information with families, which include orientation to Nova and the importance of 9th grade, potluck and sharing college information, soup and stories, crafting and working in the garden. Through this collaboration we decided to participate in the family engagement grant opportunity through SPS and in partnership with John Hopkins University. We sent a team, which included a parent representative, to participate in the training and plan our continued improvement of family engagement. Our plan focuses on improving communication with families, engaging more families in community events, specifically engaging families of color in community events and continuing to include resources for families at school events. We will be collecting surveys from students of color to determine how to engage students and families of color more effectively and working with staff to create culturally responsive professional development based on the survey results. From parent feedback we have determined that our communication is confusing because of too many websites and lists. We are working with the PTSA through our growing collaboration and our family engagement grant to address this issue and streamline communication

### **Our staff is involved in decision-making.**

At Nova we have built staff time into our 8:45-4:00 pm day by allotting time on Tuesday and Thursday afternoon for staff development, curricular meetings, and staff meetings. Staff participate in all of the discussions focused on school improvement and professional development. Our staff is currently involved in a process to re-vision Nova, looking both at next year's 9th grade students who must now earn 24 credits, but also looking ahead as far as the students who will graduate in 2030. We know that the questions and issues that are important today and the needs of a 2030 graduate are going to evolve and we believe we need to understand the challenges and adapt as we grow over the next 15 years. Our decision making matrix is centered on student voice, staff voice, family voice, and full democratic participation in the Nova community

### **We will assist our students to meet standard.**

As noted above, Nova has an ALE/CAS database where we track every student's progress and update their status monthly. With our advisory system we are able to identify and intervene quickly with any students who are not showing adequate progress.

### **MTSS**

Nova is a trauma informed school with a growth mindset toward academics, discipline, social emotional development, democratic participation and community engagement. Nova is also an ALE school which means every student has an individual learning plan and must demonstrate progress in each of these domains. Our universal model of supports includes the following:

- A teacher advisor who creates a learning plan with personal and academic goals and modifies the plan as needed throughout the year, a weekly meeting with that teacher in a group advisory, at least one monthly individual meeting with their teacher advisor, and at least one yearly family meeting with their teacher advisor and facilitated by the student.
- Teachers provide a monthly status report on all classes, teacher advisors share this information about class status and increase interventions and supports if needed, and students have a graduation worksheet that charts their progress toward graduation as they finish credits. Additionally, students with IEPs have at least two support adults, students have choice over their schedule, what committees to participate in, how they will meet their service requirements and how they will demonstrate competencies.
- The student's teacher advisor is their advocate and social emotional educator when conflicts with other students or staff members occur and if any school norms or district rules are broken. Our discipline policy is based on transformative and redemptive justice principles and embraces a needs assessment and growth mindset when enacted; mediation is always available to resolve conflict between any of our students and members our community and the greater community.
- Nova students have access to basic needs support like clothing, food, school supplies etc. in our building and we connect students to necessary resources in and out of the building for mental health supports, medical necessities, gender health, drug and alcohol evaluations and counseling.

As noted previously, academics are non-graded and competency based and driven by what is meaningful and worthwhile to know and do, students can create a 3 to 5 year plan to finish high school based on the amount of time it takes each student to demonstrate competency in all graduation requirements, students can create independent contracts and demonstrate competencies through independent inquiry projects and field experiences, students have the option to request extra time on tests and assignments, extra support from teachers, alternative ways of completing assignments that still demonstrate competency. When thinking about if a student is making progress we consider the following domains of growth:

- Are they making progress academically (going to class – turning in work – earning credit)?
- Are they making progress in guiding their own educations (going to their advisory group –meeting with their teacher advisor - knowing where they are academically)?
- Are they making progress in participating in our democracy (i.e. signed up for a committee, going to committee, discussing school issues in advisory group)?
- Are they making progress in participating in our community (not causing harm, positive contributions, supporting others, making progress to complete their school and community service requirements)?

If a student is not making progress, before moving to additional supports we consider:

- Are the universal supports being provided fully?
- Is the student accessing those supports?
- What are the barriers to accessing those supports?
- How can we remove those barriers?
- What kind of accountability can the teacher advisor, student and family add to increase the student's willingness to access those supports?

When we determine that additional supports are needed we have a two pronged approach depending on if the student needs more accountability or more support. For the former we create an ALE intervention plan; for the later we refer to a SIT team meeting. Additional supports include increasing the frequency of teacher advisor and individual and/or family meeting(s), an increase in communication between teachers, student, and family and teacher advisor, increasing clarity of expectations and healthy boundaries, support to improve organizational systems (such as a tracker, regular quick planner checks with their teacher advisor and/or family, phone supports for remembering meetings/appointments and assignments, teacher advisor helping the student talk to teachers and getting back on track with academics, peer/staff tutoring, assisting in breaking down large assignments into doable tasks, drug and alcohol evaluation, deeper assessment of needs and connection to resources, which may include deeper or more directed mental health or academic supports, SIT team meetings, and students required to complete community service hours for skipping

committees/advisory group meetings.) If a student is still not making progress, we engage in a highly individualized pathway where a larger team of supporters meets regularly with the student to determine if Nova can work better for this student. The additional supports include increasing any of the aforementioned supports or highly specific supports related to these students' immediate needs, creating a wrap team which could include counselors and community advocates, peers, other teachers and coordinators, administrators, and other supports as needed

**Retain high quality, highly effective, and highly qualified staff.**

For the second consecutive year, we have the same staff that we had last year. We have a core staff that has been together for 14-15 years. During this time, we have worked hard to find and develop staff that understands our teaching and learning system and is committed to student voice and building relationships with students. We have a highly educated and experienced staff with multiple staff with doctoral degrees; all of the rest of our staff have at least a Masters in Teaching or a Masters in Education and additional content area graduate degrees. We believe that all of our teachers must be grounded in a deep understanding of their content area, their content pedagogy, and general pedagogy. We also put a high priority on interdisciplinary courses. All of our staff are highly qualified in their teaching areas.

**How do we support the transitions of new students and families into our school?**

Incoming 9th grade students attend 3-1/2 days of workshops and advisory activities when they arrive at Nova before signing up for classes. They meet their teacher advisor, meet with the advisory group, meet one-on-one with their teacher advisor, and sign up for classes. During their first semester at Nova they attend the Freshfolks class (9th grade seminar) which focuses on what they need to know and learn to be successful at Nova – from learning our competency-based system, to understanding how to participate fully in seminars, work collaboratively with other students, manage their time, make good personal and school decisions, and learn basic high school skills in reading, writing, presentations, and critical thought and action utilizing rigorous, engaging, relevant curriculum

## Multi-Tiered System of Supports Budget

The following table describes how funds are allocated to support and improve student learning.

Academic Year	Funding Type	Funding Source	Amount	How Funds will improve student learning
2017-2018	Combined	Basic Education	1,957,574	Instruction for all students aligned to state standards.
2017-2018	Combined	Supplemental Funding	2,500	Additional support for students
2017-2018	Combined	Free & Reduced Lunch (FRL)	41,659	Funding to support MTSS supports at all schools.
2017-2018	Specific Use	SPED	832,989	Teachers and IAs, IEP writing and extra time, services, and resources as specified in student IEP

# Building Based Goals

We have chosen to focus on the following area(s) over the 2017-18 school year

## Gap Closing Goal(s)

Problem of Student Learning	What will success look like? (SMART Goal <sup>1</sup> to target level of performance desired)	Assigned to:	Target Date for Completion:
<p>Problem of student learning: Tenacity and Resilience. Students struggle to start what they finish in an ungraded system based in competency and performance assessment. Student surveys report high levels of support received from teachers, a safe school environment, and personal self-efficacy, yet not enough students are fully completing work to earn full competency-based credits in courses as identified in end of course credit audit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><i>Connected to your Problem of Student Learning, what is your gap-closing goal for a subset of students?</i> Nova is continuing our annual check of 9th grade competency credit earned. We have begun a DBT group and increased our community behavioral health partnerships. Our teachers have set their personal goals based on resilience and have set their professional goals to include teaching persistence and tenacity within their courses. Our student/staff People of Color committee meets twice a week. They have expanded their focus to include supporting the emotional healing of students of color by creating a monthly “healing space” where outside people are brought in to do presentations and artistic endeavors that show people of color in artistic and professional professions.</p> </li> <li> <p><i>What student achievement indicators will you monitor over the year to inform your progress toward meeting your student achievement goals (ex. formative assessments, screeners, observation data, survey data)?</i> The primary indicator is the number and amount of competency-based credits all 9th grade students (with a specific focus on students of color) earned first and second semesters of their first year at</p> </li> </ul>	<p>The Principal and Assistant Principal and all certified teachers and instructional assistants.</p>	<p>January 31, 2016 and June, 2017.</p>

<b>Problem of Student Learning</b>	<b>What will success look like? (SMART Goal<sup>1</sup> to target level of performance desired)</b>	<b>Assigned to:</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>
	Nova. There is an historic correlation between competency-based credits earned in the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade year and academic success. The goal is for students of color to earn the same or more competency-based credits than white students.		

### Cluster of Teachers/ Grade Level Goal(s)

<b>Problem of Student Learning</b>	<b>What will success look like? (SMART Goal<sup>1</sup> to target level of performance desired)</b>	<b>Assigned to:</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>
Tenacity/Resilience. Production of student work and amount of credit earned in Humanities classes (specifically for 9th grade students; additionally, for all students). Evidence: Attendance and full competency credit earned data from Humanities classes and evidence of completed or non-completed student work. Additional data: Interviews with Humanities teachers as part of an action/inquiry project focused on supporting the Humanities department and analysis of competency credits earned in 2015-16.	<p>Success will look like the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common essential course competencies in all Humanities classes.</li> <li>• Increase in use of formative assessments in humanities classes and continued professional development in formative assessment.</li> <li>• Students will earn more competency-based credits in 2016-17 than in 2015-16.</li> <li>• Students will showcase their work during an Exhibition Night in January, 2017.</li> </ul>	Principal and Assistant Principal and Humanities Teachers.	June, 2017.

## Whole School Goal

Problem of Student Learning	What will success look like? (SMART Goal <sup>1</sup> to target level of performance desired)	Assigned to:	Target Date for Completion:
<p>According to school-based data collection, nearly 65% of Nova students are impacted by two or more ACEs identifiers. There is a need to deepen support for trauma-based interventions to support students.</p>	<p>Success will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalizing our MTSS plan throughout our school.</li> <li>• Building partnerships with NAVOS, ACRS, King County, and Children's Hospital to provide in-school counseling and mental health services.</li> <li>• Work with community partners to establish a school/community health center in Nova to serve LGBTQ students and families.</li> </ul> <p>Provide focused consent training to all students in advisory groups.</p>	<p>The Principal and Assistant Principal and all certified teachers and instructional assistants.</p>	<p>December, 2016, March, 2017, and June, 2017.</p>

## School Culture Goal

Problem of Student Learning	What will success look like? (SMART Goal <sup>1</sup> to target level of performance desired)	Assigned to:	Target Date for Completion:
<p>Full inclusion and success for students with disabilities in all classes. 26% of Nova students qualify for special education services.</p>	<p>Success will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full access and inclusion in general education classes for students with IEPs.</li> <li>• Co-taught classes with general education and special education teachers.</li> <li>• Increase in use of formative assessments in all classes and continued professional development in formative assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Special education students earning equivalent competency-based credits as general education students.</p>	<p>Principal and Assistant Principal, special education teachers and IAs, and general education teachers.</p>	<p>January 31, 2017 and June, 2017.</p>