

# Seattle Excellence Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP)

## Lowell Elementary

### Purpose

The Continuous School Improvement Plan provides an overview of the school, student outcome goals and a brief narrative description on how the school plans to collaboratively meet these goals over time. It is intended to offer families and community audiences an overview of improvement work aligned to the strategic plan and written in language that is accessible by a diverse audience.

### Introduction

WHEN WE FOCUS on ensuring racial equity in our educational system, unapologetically address the needs of students of color who are furthest from educational justice, and work to undo the legacies of racism in our educational system by doing the following:

- Allocating resources strategically through a racial equity framework
- Delivering high-quality, standards-aligned instruction across all abilities and a continuum of services for learners
- Creating healthy, supportive, culturally responsive environments from the classroom to central office
- Directly and consistently working in partnership with families and communities who represent students of color who are furthest from educational justice; and
- Making clear commitments and delivering on them

THEN we will eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps and every student will receive a high-quality, world-class education.

## Seattle Public Schools Foundational Beliefs for Supporting Student Learning

In Seattle Public Schools, we understand that a shared vision of practice is essential to fostering the learning communities that each of our students and adults needs to thrive. This shared vision enables educators to work in concert to build their practice with a focus on student learning.

As such, we believe:

- 1) **Teaching is intellectually complex**, difficult and demanding work, and the development of skillful teaching requires deep collaboration and non-defensive self-examination of practice in relation to student results.
- 2) **By collaborating with families in authentic partnerships**, we create a path for students to reach their highest potential, engaging with families as the first and lifelong teachers of students.
- 3) **"Intelligence" is not a fixed, inborn trait**. All children come to school with cultural capital and intelligence, and all have the raw material to learn rigorous academic material at high standards. Therefore, our work is to **build students' academic mindset**
- 4) **By recognizing and cultivating the gifts and strengths of every student**, we can get each student to believe in themselves and deconstruct any of their own internalized stereotypes.
- 5) **Racism in our society exerts a downward force on the experiences and achievement of students of color that must be met with active countermeasures.**

Our commitment to these beliefs is the route to institutionalizing racial equity and fostering a context where each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential, and we make educational equity and justice the cornerstone of our system.

## School Profile

At Lowell Elementary students from all over the world with a diversity of strengths and challenges come together with excellent staff each day to learn and grow academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally.

## Priorities and Measurable Goals

### Elementary Focus Goal: 3rd Grade English Language Arts

#### **Priority Goal:**

For the 2020-21 school year, at least 30% of 3rd grade students of color furthest from educational justice will meet standards or higher on the ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment.

## **Target Goal #1:**

Based on rough data from the end of 2020, we believe that 36% of our African American students are reading on grade level to start 3<sup>rd</sup> grade; 44% are reading on grade level to start 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and 8% are on grade level to start first grade. By the end of the year, African American students in first through third grades will show grade level achievement in high priority foundational reading skills as measured by our reading intervention assessment.

## Safe and Welcoming Environment Goal

### **Priority Goal:**

Our school will focus on prioritizing the feeling of safety and connectedness for students of color furthest from educational justice and specifically, African American boys. We will measure the feelings towards school climate and culture by comparing the percentage of overall positive responses in the School Climate Pulse Surveys from a baseline of 83% in the fall of 2020 to 90% by the spring of 2021.

### **Target Goal:**

By June, 2021, attendance rates for student furthest from educational justice (FFEJ) will increase from 78.6% in March 2020 to at least 90%, indicating effectiveness of safe and welcoming systems, routines and practices.

## High Quality Learning Experiences

**Educate the whole child through high-quality instruction and learning experiences that accelerate growth for students of color who are furthest from educational justice, with an intentional focus on African American males.**

*To achieve educational justice*, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) strives to provide safe learning environments, curriculum that incorporates a student's life experiences and culture, and instruction delivered by high-quality, culturally responsive educators. Unfortunately, many students from certain ethnicities have not historically experienced equitable opportunities for all or part of their educational journey (including African and African American, Asian Pacific Islander and Pacific Islander, LatinX, and Native American students). These students are our priority – with an intentional focus on African American males.

## School-wide Systems and Structures (MTSS)

MTSS offers the potential to create the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social success. In addition, MTSS promotes needed systematic change through intentional design and

redesign of services and supports that quickly identify and match the needs of all students. MTSS is an integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on CCSS, core instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs.

We will improve our work in the area of Culture, Collaboration, Communication by getting better at using data consistently in ways that improve instruction. We will improve our Leadership, Systems, and Structures by sharing the work of examining and improving instructional practices across our school.

## Gap Closing Practices and Special Services

**Seattle Public Schools is committed to eliminating opportunity gaps to ensure access and provide excellence in education for every student.**

Delivering high-quality, standards-aligned instruction across all abilities and a continuum of services for learners is a core element of Seattle Excellence. Our Theory of Action is guided by the principles of “Targeted Universalism.” Our universal goal is every Seattle Public Schools’ student receives a high-quality, world-class education and graduates prepared for college, career, and community. Targeted Universalism holds that targeted and differentiated efforts are required to meet the needs of specific student populations, so every student meets the universal goal.

By focusing on students of color who are furthest from educational justice, especially African American males, we will make the greatest progress toward our collective vision. We believe that an intentional focus on African American males will ultimately benefit every student.

Lowell will provide differentiated efforts to meet the needs of English language learners, advanced learners, and students served in Special Education and improve school systems and structures. English Language Learners will receive their core content instruction in Tier 1 of the MTSS model. We will assess and identify students’ language proficiency and program model annually. Translation and interpretation services will be provided for families.

Students who have been identified as Advanced Learners will receive opportunities for supplemental instruction and material in a subject of interest, independent projects and pacing changes. Differentiation and flexible groupings will be supported in the classroom.

Students furthest from educational justice, such as African American boys and other students of color, will be prioritized within these special populations through the MTSS process and data driven interventions. African American students intersect with all other groups called out in this section; we will work to eliminate disproportionality in Special Education and Advanced learning where it exists in our school.

Special Education students will receive core and specialized instruction in the Least Restrictive Environment, consistent progress monitoring, and have a schedule of services that are delivered on the first day of school.

# Lowell Elementary



Students that may need Special Education services will be referred to and evaluated by our building's MAT team.

## Practices and Strategies

**We will recognize and serve the academic, social, cultural, emotional, and behavioral strengths and needs of students, providing high-quality, culturally responsive instruction, curriculum, and social-emotional learning supports delivered by educators who set high expectations, so students graduate ready for college, career, and community.**

Whole child education goes beyond a focus on academic achievement. When educators focus on educating the whole child, students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. In Seattle Public Schools, this means that we appreciate and serve the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral strengths and needs of students, which we believe comprise the needs of the "whole child."

High-quality instruction is focused on student-centered learning and achievement, intentional about student engagement, and aligned to standards with consistent and appropriate feedback.

At its foundation, culturally responsive education means that students are in an environment where they have the individual safety and comfort to learn within a classroom that has a common culture that is respectful of all backgrounds.

In order to ensure students furthest from educational justice, African American boys and students of color meet their academic goals, Lowell will use the MTSS process, which provides a tiered system of support. Our process includes a time set aside specifically to address the needs of African American students. The Multidisciplinary Action Team will ensure students are receiving appropriate supports in all areas of learning. We also use Culturally Responsive Teaching, which we have explored using Zaretta Hammond's work. We schedule intervention blocks in order to ensure no one misses core instruction and examine students' progress routinely and systematically. Professional development for staff includes monthly Race and Equity training supported by our community partners, The Joseph Project, and trauma informed learning with our community partners, Sound Discipline.

## Safe and Welcoming Environment

**Students thrive in healthy, safe, engaging, supported, and challenging environments in which they can learn to their full potential. Instruction must be high-quality, culturally responsive, focused, and aligned to standards for students to develop as independent learners.**

Student voice should be evident, and students must be seen and celebrated for their authentic selves. Significant increases in academic outcomes for students furthest from educational justice are possible when

# Lowell Elementary



social, cultural, emotional, and behavioral needs of students are met by educators that share an unconditional belief in the potential of every student they serve.

We will increase student voice in school decision-making and positive behavior interventions through the creation of a student leadership team. This team will include representatives chosen by staff who belong to communities furthest from educational justice and who are representative of our school population. The goal of the team will be to increase student voice and provide leadership development to students who benefit from it.

## Inclusive and Authentic Engagement

**Partner with students, families, and communities who are furthest from educational justice by conducting inclusive and authentic engagement.**

We will proactively and consistently work in partnership *with* students, families, and communities to identify needs, determine solutions, and support the implementation of the initiatives that will best meet the needs of students of color who are furthest from educational justice. We will use culturally responsive ways to engage so we build trusting relationships and empower the voices of those who can help us meet these needs.

## Family and Community Goals

### **Priority Goal:**

Families will continue to express a growth in confidence and ownership in Lowell Elementary School through our family survey and through participation on school committees. Our participation on committees will increase from two committees including family members to 7 committees including families and at least 5 of those families being families of color, families served by MKV, or families with a student served by Special Education or ELL.

### **Plans for Family Engagement**

Families furthest from educational justice will participate in decision-making and idea generation through committee work at Lowell. Every committee will include a family connection from an African American family member, a family member learning English, or a family whose child is served by Special Education.

Since the decisions we make to improve our school are primarily generated in committee work, we will seek membership in all committees from communities who have been traditionally underserved at our school. This will give voice to new ideas that are most likely to work with the students we are targeting. We will make personal connections with families and reach out to include them in committee work so that we are not depending on families only to fundraise, but also to help us serve them and their students more effectively through the real and concrete efforts we make to improve.

# Lowell Elementary



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Educate. Engage. Empower.

We will increase our connections with families furthest from educational justice by using professional development opportunities to ensure that all staff greet families who are visiting the building in warm and welcoming ways. This warmth will help us develop the relationships that give families the trust to join our committee work.