

# Seattle Excellence Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP)

## Orca K-8

### 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.

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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

In the Orca K-8 community, we believe in educating the whole child with a focus on social justice and environmental science. We strive to create an environment where students understand not only the connections between academic subjects, but also the connections between people.

**In this learning community, we all belong**

## Priorities and Measurable Goals

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

#### **Priority Goal:**

For the 2020-21 school year, at least 42% of 3rd grade students of color furthest from educational justice will meet standards or higher classroom-based ELA assessments.

## Safe and Welcoming Environment Goal

### **Priority Goal:**

In the 2019-2020 school year, 57% of missed instruction incidents involved Black, despite Black students being only 23% of the students overall. For the school year ending in June 2021, no more than 45% of missed instruction will involve Black students. We will track this by study of engagement in the remote classroom, as well as rates of participation in the learning apps associated with their grade levels, i.e.: SeeSaw or Schoology.

## 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.

The MTSS Team meets bi-monthly to analyze and monitor academic, social and emotion data, including peer teacher observations to evaluate and strengthen Tier 1 practices that support all students (while focusing on 3rd grade black boys) as well as to review pre-indicators for students in need of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

In order to know if the interventions are effective, the MTSS team will develop a data system to measure, see, and respond to by aligning supports and progress monitoring data for Tier 2 students every 4-6 weeks to determine if a whole class intervention is needed, discontinue intervention, or initiate Tier 3 supports.

## 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.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Differentiating instruction for a variety of learners’ needs by incorporating visual, tactile, and kinesthetic materials and experiences. Providing instruction in multiple formats such as individual, pairs, small groups and whole class. Planning accommodations for students with disabilities, based on their IEPs, and incorporating those accommodations into lesson plans and everyday instruction. Planning modifications to curriculum goals and classroom instruction for students with disabilities who need it, using the same or similar, age-appropriate materials for assignments, homework, and tests. Having students use assistive technology in classrooms as needed for meaningful participation in instructional activities. Having teachers interact with students in ways that allow for positive peer relationships and personal dignity. Having teachers work with Para-educators who are assigned to individual students to provide appropriate supports. Ensuring there is active family involvement in assessing student needs and designing the IEP/504 Plan.

### **English Language Learners:**

We utilize strategies such as Guided Language Acquisition Design strategies that are aligned with our common core standards in literacy and communication for all grade levels within the school. Also, our students in K-5 receive push-in services to reduce the amount of time spent on student transitions.

### **Core Academic Program:**

We will strengthen the core academic program of the school by participating in regular professional development, meeting in our Professional Learning Communities to align instruction and assessment practices with district requirements and participating in on-going peer observations. Orca is partnering with the Seward Park Audubon Center – Research shows that science lessons are more effective for children in grades K-8 when they include experiences in the field. We will improve educational outcomes for all of our students by partnering with the Seward Park Audubon Center to bring naturalists into the classroom and children out into nature. We will strengthen student directed project-based learning through Middle School Academies. Research shows that middle school students thrive in learning

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environments where they help direct their own learning, and where they can see that the things, they are learning have real world applications. We will use our Film and Theatre Academy and Social Justice Academy to allow our middle school students to choose their own paths as they interact with members of the community who are leaders in their fields, connecting academic disciplines with applied studies that help them to find their place in the world.

### **Extended Day Learning Opportunities:**

Extended-day learning opportunities for students include four hours of reading tutoring a week for struggling reading students in grades 2-3 offered through Team Read and facilitated by staff. Homework support in math is offered daily for 6-8th grade provided by our middle school math teacher. After-school enrichment clubs are held four days per week and include a variety of activities. All students are given the opportunity to learn in an enriched environment. A way in which an enriched environment is provided for all students is by offering after school enrichment programs where all students have access.

### **Eliminating Opportunity Gaps:**

We will address eliminating the achievement gap by implementing ethnic studies curriculum, holding a monthly race forum, honoring our parents and their students with events such as National African-American Parent Involvement Day and making home visits or phone calls when needed. We will also utilize our academic intervention specialists to assist students in math and reading during school hours. We will maximize racial equity by aligning with district wide policy: 0030 - Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity and having our teachers participate in professional development that specifically addresses race, implicit bias and equity in schools. Making instruction relevant to real world events, which is a powerful practice to increase student learning. Research indicates that students have higher achievement when the focus of instruction is meaningful, and students can apply their skills and knowledge to real world events. In the 2019-2020 school year, we will be one of six schools developing and piloting the SPS ethnic studies curriculum. We will ask every teacher to review at least [three] lesson plans per month to see whether they incorporate ethnic studies rubrics. Teachers will make changes to at least one lesson plan per month to incorporate ethnic studies criteria into those plans.

### **Arts Integration:**

Orca brings high-quality arts education experiences to students by empowering classroom teachers to use the arts in their day-to-day teaching. Students are also enrolled in art for teacher's Planning, Conference, and Preparation (PCP) in rotating one-week blocks. In addition to learning through the arts, students are regularly given opportunities to solve real-world problems, to think creatively, and to demonstrate their reasoning. In math class, students are presented with real-world problems to solve, alone or in small groups. Students are taught to demonstrate their thinking by drawing visual representations. Our project-based learning allows students to learn about social studies, science and other subjects through arts-based projects. Orca also partners with We.APP, which brings spoken word and poetry to the school and provides students with an opportunity to use their voices in artistic ways and become agents of change through words. We are part of the Southeast Creative Arts Advantage group, which will help us integrate art into all other core subject areas.

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## **Reading & Writing:**

All students are given the opportunity to progress at their own pace. For example, CCC (Center for Collaborative Learning), students are taught lessons that addresses at least one common core grade-level standard. The lessons have multiple access points so that all students can participate. Following small group instruction, students work independently at their own level, using teacher-provided scaffolding as needed, and working in small, teacher-led strategy groups that address students' needs or strengths.

## 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.

## **Eliminating Opportunity Gaps:**

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## **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 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.

100% of school staff will participate in implicit bias and RULER training, develop a classroom charter, teach expected behaviors, follow agreed upon protocols and procedures of the Orca Promise and identify and acknowledge positive behavior.

Students will:

- exhibit an increased ability to show academic perseverance
- independently persevere
- exhibit an increased ability to stick with longer assignments.
- Become engaged in school (school bonding)
- Act in accord with Orca school goals and values (The Orca Way) by following guidelines and behavior expectations in the Orca Promise
- Contribute to the school and the community

## **RULER:**

Orca will continue to offer professional development to returning staff as well as new staff in RULER (Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating Emotions) strategies, facilitated by our trained School Counselor and RULER team.

## **School Climate:**

Our professional development plan is driven by our School Improvement Plan, which is driven by data that we collect and analyze as a staff from school climate surveys we conduct halfway through the school year. The school climate surveys are specifically tailored for each group in our community. A school climate is provided to students, teachers, staff and parents which focuses on issues or concerns that impact each group specifically.

## **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:**

By May 2021, the percentage of all school visitors and volunteers representing families with students furthest from educational justice will increase from 1% to 10%. This indicates growth in engagement and advocacy for these families. **Family engagement and participation in feedback through SeeSaw and Schoology among families of students of color furthest away from educational justice ...equal to or greater than the average of the student body at large.**

### **Plans for Family Engagement**

During the 2019-2020 school year, we will work to increase family engagement in a number of ways. We will hold events such as curriculum nights, open houses, dinners, cultural celebrations, fundraisers, and parents' night out. We will provide meals and childcare at school events to make it easier for all families to attend. We will regularly update contact information to ensure our communication channels are working. The school handbook will be updated and distributed. Our principal will send home a weekly newsletter. We will explore adding an additional parent teacher conference in the spring. Middle school students will be involved in student led conferences during parent student teacher conferences. Our PTSA Board will again include a Diversity and Outreach Chair, tasked with engaging the board on diversity topics, and actively recruiting families of color to join the PTSA and participate in school events. In past school years, we found that the Diversity and Outreach Chair was not allotted enough time at Board meetings to accomplish the diversity training. In the 2019-2020 school year, we will allot more time, including a several hour-long session at our

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Board retreat. Our PTSA will send out a weekly digest and monthly newsletter to families and update the school's website with school information. We will review our school's demographic data to see how well PTSA and school event participation matches our school's overall demographics. We will adjust our outreach focus based on the results of this review. To bridge the digital divide within our school community, we will connect families to resources including hardware (low cost phones and computers) and workshops where parents learn how to monitor their students' progress and communicate with their students' teachers. We will use parent volunteer room coordinators to help reach out to families telephonically and in person. We will call all new families and make home visits to make sure that families feel known and welcome in our school community.