

HEAD OF SCHOOL REPORT

Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday, October 25, 2018

This report provides a *high-level* overview of the work that we have engaged in from late summer through early fall. Our work continues to be centered around the five strategic areas: 1) Effective Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment, 2) Outstanding Faculty and Staff, 3) Positive School Culture, 4) Meaningful Community and Family Engagement, and 5) Expanded Learning Opportunities. Student are at the center for our targeted priorities which are improvements in students’ academic performance and expanded learning opportunities. It should be noted that the respective system leaders have contributed to the content of the department updates. Moving our priorities forward is only possible with a team that is collaborative, capable, competent and committed to creating the conditions to actualize our mission. In the December HOS Report we anticipate providing data dashboards from each department.

Effective Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum

For the 2018-2019 academic year, we are off to an excellent and exciting start with a focus on joyful and cognitively demanding learning experiences for all students. A strong new district-level academic team offers comprehensive support to principals and their faculties across **three key domains** in support of achieving ambitious student outcomes.

Key Academic Domains	Because...
I. Effective Instruction	<u>How</u> we teach matters
II. Standards-Aligned, Content-Rich Curriculum	<u>What</u> we teach matters
III. Assessment & Data Collection	<u>What</u> we measure matters

The three key academic domains form the critical foundation that undergirds PHA’s mission-driven Instructional Focus for the 2018-19 school year and is supported by each campus’ unique programming and professional development.

Effective Instruction: How we Teach Matters

2018-2019 Instructional Foci’s. Each student’s work demonstrates increasing growth and proficiency towards high standards through joyful and cognitively demanding learning experiences. We seek to “raise the floor” (increase minimum academic expectations) and “raise the ceiling” (provide engaging and challenging work) by personalizing learning so that all students are engaged, inspired, and successful.

Systematic Introduction of Intervention (“RTI” and “WIN” - What I Need). All students in K-8 are weekly scheduled (or more frequently) for targeted, personalized intervention and/or enrichment in Math and ELA/Reading. Student groupings are data-driven, and programs are research-based with regular progress monitoring.

We have implemented a set of *Key Instructional Practices* across all campuses. All instructional leaders and evaluators from each campus and the district level are participating in 15 hours of intensive calibration training to ensure that there is a shared understanding and implementation of these practices.

Assessment & Data Collection: What we Measure Matters

School Excellence Plan (SEP). Each campus principal has crafted goals within their SEP to attain student outcomes that are benchmarked against specific metrics three times over the course of the year, in November, February, and June. Benchmarks are created to measure growth and progress towards proficiency with a focus on math, reading, and writing across grades K-12. These student goals align with the priorities in Areas B & C of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan.

It is important to highlight our Instructional Focus of simultaneously “raising the floor” and “raising the ceiling”. In practice, we need to *Regularly Monitor and Benchmark Student Growth and Proficiency Levels* to ensure that our expectations are high enough (“raising the floor”) and that students are regularly challenged, even if they have skills or content gaps in certain areas (“raising the ceiling”).

Sample benchmark areas and key assessment tools are shown in the tables below.

PHA Campus	November 2018 Benchmark Areas			
	Math	Reading	Writing	Cognitive Engagement
Early Childhood (K-3)	✓	✓		
Upper Elementary (4-6)	✓	✓	✓	
Middle School (7-8)	✓	✓	✓	✓
High School & Collegiate Institute (9-12)	✓	✓		✓

Key Assessment Tools	Math	Reading	Writing	Cognitive Engagement	Frequency
WRAT (Reading & Math)	✓	✓			1x/year
Dibels		✓			3x/year
Fountas & Pinnell		✓			3x/year
iReady Diagnostic Tool	✓	✓			3x/year

iReady Growth Monitoring	✓	✓			4x/year
ANet Interims	✓	✓	✓		4x/year
Common Writing Rubric			✓		Min. 8x/year
Calibrated Observation Tools				✓	Min. 16x/year
MCAS	✓	✓	✓		1x/year
Pre-AP / AP	✓	✓	✓		1-3x/year
PSAT/SAT	✓	✓	✓		1-2x/year

Standards-Aligned, Content-Rich Curriculum: What we Teach Matters

Since 2016, we’ve made significant progress in the successful, large-scale implementation of high quality, standards-aligned curriculum across subject areas and campuses. Supporting principals and their teaching faculty in the use of research-based, content-rich materials that provide access to grade-level standards for all students is one of the most important levers we have in significantly improving student achievement and long-term academic outcomes. The following table provides an overview of the major curriculum implementation efforts underway during this school year, and those that began last year.

Major Curriculum Implementation	Grades	Implementation Year	Standards Alignment
Eureka Math (EngageNY)	2 nd -3 rd 4 th -6 th	2018-2019 2017-2018	Common Core MA Frameworks
EL - English Language Arts	3 rd -8 th	2018-2019	Common Core MA Frameworks
Code.Org (Computer Science)	2 nd -12 th	2018-2019	MA Digital Literacy & Computer Science
Pre-AP Algebra 1, Pre-AP History, and Pre-AP Biology	9 th	2018-2019	College Board
Pre-AP Biology	9 th	2018-2019	College Board

K-12 Computer Science Department & Engineering Program. We are thrilled to announce that we have launched a K-12 Computer Science Department with 5 full-time teachers (One at Early Childhood Campus, One at Upper Elementary Campus and One at the Middle School Campus and Two at the High School/Collegiate Institute) due to the growing interest and high demand

for Engineering and Computer Science courses. The Computer Science Team meets regularly to provide professional development and support on Computer Science Pedagogy for Teaching Programming. We have purchased and are regularly using two **3D Printers!** One of the printers is housed in the High School/Collegiate Institute, and the other 3D Printer will be moved to the Upper Elementary Campus. High School/Collegiate Institute engineering students developed written and video guides for Upper Elementary school students on how to create a model, setup, and use the 3D printer.

At the High School/Collegiate Institute, we've expanded our course offerings to include engineering design, Arduino Programming & Robotics. Recently, students visited Draper Labs to see the engineering design process in real life, talk to engineers about their work and understand more about what engineers do and how they do it.

Positive School Culture

Peer Mediation. This fall we are excited to be launching a Peer Mediation Program at the *Early Childhood Campus*. Students in the third grade will lead this initiative by serving as peace makers for students in the K-3 grades. 40 3rd graders applied to be peer mediators. Out of the 40 students, 21 students were interviewed by an administrator and 15 students were selected to be trained as mediators who facilitate a peer mediation process to support students with minor reoccurring issues between individuals or groups of students. This restorative practice is an initiative to encourage students to collaboratively solve their own problems with the help of a trained student mediator. Students will be trained over the course of 2 afternoons and on an ongoing basis throughout the school year; the training will include active listening, role playing, communication skills and levels of a conflict.

Middle School. We warmly welcomed Dr. Blake-Canty as our new Middle School Principal this year and Jason Meland (former World Language Coordinator and Lynch Fellow) as the new Assistant Principal. Dr. Blake and Mr. Meland have had a strong start to the year with a wide range of new initiatives aimed at building a positive school culture and significantly improving outcomes for all students. Below is just a snapshot of some of the exciting innovations in the Middle School:

Below are the Middle School's core CARES values that promote the development of key attributes linked to success in college and beyond:

Cooperation - Students' ability to establish new relationships, maintain positive relationships and friendships, avoid social isolation, resolve conflicts, accept differences, be a contributing member of the classroom and school community, and work productively and collaboratively with others.

Assertiveness - Students' ability to take initiative, stand up for their ideas without hurting or negating others, seek help, succeed at a challenging task, and recognize their individual self as separate from the circumstances or conditions they're in.

Responsibility - Students' ability to motivate themselves to act and follow through on expectations; to define a problem, consider the consequences, and choose a positive solution.

Empathy - Students' ability to "see into" (recognize, understand) another's state of mind and emotions and be receptive to new ideas and perspectives; to appreciate and value differences and diversity in others; to have concern for others' welfare, even when it doesn't benefit or may come as a cost to one's self.

Self-Control - Students' ability to recognize and regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to be successful in the moment and remain on a successful trajectory.

Student-Led Conferences. Middle School students will facilitate a meeting about their progress at school with their parent/guardian and their Advisor. This is a wonderful opportunity to develop our students' ability to look at and analyze their own data, take pride in their work, and being an active partner in their own learning.

Student Services

Special Education. Based on our current enrollment, **15%** of students at Prospect Hill Academy are eligible for **special education services** and an additional **2%** receive accommodations under **Section 504**. Our special education numbers have remained stable for the past four years, partly due to effective pre-referral practices and consistent, rigorous application of eligibility criteria under IDEA. While we typically lose 10-12 students with disabilities each year (on average) we bring in roughly the same number of new students with identified disabilities annually.

English Language Learners. Given that we are still in the process of screening our new Kindergarten students, we do not yet have a firm enrollment number for ELs, though anecdotal reports indicate that this year's cohort will be larger than usual. For the past several years, our EL population has hovered at around **11%**, the majority of which is found at the Early Childhood campus.

Academics and Special Education. The special education department has identified a need to build staff capacity in reading interventions. In keeping with the methodology that is being used successfully at the Early Childhood campus, we are providing faculty with the opportunity to participate in the *Orton Gillingham* Intermediate Training, which provides participants with an understanding of IMSE's *Orton-Gillingham* methodology. This methodology is specifically designed for upper elementary or older students who require foundational reading skills and continue to struggle in literacy development.

Human Capital and Talent Management

Recruitment. This summer, the Human Capital department completed a successful recruitment/hiring cycle for the 2018-19 school year, welcoming 25 new faculty members, 10 new campus staff members, and 7 new district and campus leaders to the Prospect Hill community in August. Through New Teacher Institute, these new employees were warmly on-boarded into the school, participating in rigorous PD to support their learning around core PHA practices in instruction, family engagement, cultural proficiency, and more.

New Teacher Orientation (NTO). We are bearing fruit with new and new-to-PHA teachers. During the 3rd week of August, all new or new-to-PHA teachers participated in a weeklong orientation that included workshops on best instructional practices to promote: a) student-centered learning; b) standards-aligned curriculum implementation; and c) content-rich lessons that contextualize learning and build knowledge and skills. Additionally, we are now beginning to observe participants of the NTO using the specific techniques and practices demonstrated during the workshops.

Instructional Coaching. As the school year begins, we are continuing to expand our professional development offerings, specifically with the launch of a K-12 instructional coaching program. Through this program, all teachers will have the opportunity to work with an instructional coach this year, focusing directly on improving their professional practice in instructional areas that have a direct impact on student outcomes. Both school leaders and three full-time instructional coaches have participated in instructional coach training this summer and will receive on-going support in developing their instructional coaching skillset throughout the school year from our *Associate Director of Teacher Development*.

Cultural Proficiency Professional Development: In addition to coaching, we are continuing our PD focus on cultural proficiency with the third yearly installment of our Race Reel/Talk Series. We are expanding the focus of this PD work to include learning around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices that help foster a diverse, connected, and welcoming adult community. To that end, we have formed a DEI Council with representatives from each campus to provide input, feedback, and support in the planning and implementation of K-12 DEI initiatives.

Evaluation Calibration. Finally, as our Teacher Pathways project has launched full scale this school year, we are placing a renewed focus on consistent and aligned evaluation practices. This fall, our entire K-12 teacher evaluation team is participating in a 5-part series of evaluation calibration trainings with *Ribas & Associates*, external consultants who specialize in working with school districts throughout Massachusetts in this capacity.

Affinity Groups. We are also launching a new initiative to create space for Affinity Groups. Affinity Groups are voluntary associations of PHA employees who join based on shared identity markers, characteristics, or life experiences. Affinity Groups play a critical role in articulating, promoting, and supporting the needs and goals of their respective members, and they enhance the development of an inclusive professional environment at PHA where all are valued, included, and empowered to succeed.

Finance, Facilities and Operations

We ended FY18 with a modest deficit less than budgeted. While FY19 finances were budgeted to be similar to FY18's, it now appears that a shortfall in enrollment, driven in part by the 9% caps in Everett and Malden, as well as by declining enrollment from Somerville, will translate into a potentially significant shortfall in tuition revenue. To address this shortfall in tuition revenue, we plan to make budget cuts in non-instructional areas (e.g. facilities improvements). Further, we will request additional Foundation support to maintain the budgeted ratio of revenue and

expenses without impacting the quality of instruction, breadth of academic programming, or variety extended learning opportunities.

The FY18 *audit process* is complete and auditors did not report any findings of concerns/issues.

Early Childhood campus. The basement science, music and art rooms received new windows that let in natural light and significantly brighten up the learning environment. The rooms also received colorful and age-appropriate student furniture, new lighting, ceiling tiles and new teaching surfaces, mostly whiteboards. Separately, two exterior doors that required frequent maintenance and could have compromised security and student safety were replaced with new equipment.

Upper Elementary campus. The Franklin Street facility received the most significant upgrades this summer including a brand-new cafeteria floor that required removing the former floor and rotted foundational materials. The new floor is a bright VCT material installed over a cement sub-surface. That project was completed by St. Benedict's parish at PHA's request and we're grateful to our landlords. The school performed a light renovation of the Upper Elementary Learning center that features a better layout prioritizing student work spaces, natural light in teaching environments, new student furniture, new paint and carpet tiles, and upgraded work spaces and storage for teachers. And finally, a large-size general purpose classroom was converted into the new Computer Science and Engineering classroom with new student furniture conducive to the curriculum being taught. That room will soon feature a mini-maker space with appropriate work surfaces and materials storage for related projects.

Essex Street campus. the Upper School's art room benefited from new art tables and fun-colored stools with backs that students report as being "way more comfortable" than the furniture they replaced. The room also has new lighting, storage, and improved wall space for featuring student work. The nurse's office received a new floor that will be more easily maintained to the standards appropriate for medical purposes. The nurse's office also has new furniture and equipment needed to better serve students from both Essex Street buildings. The boys and girls' bathroom floors were painted with an epoxy paint to help brighten up the space and make it easier to clean. There's more work to do in both spaces but clean bright floors are a good place to start. Behind the scenes, new fire and security/surveillance equipment was installed in both campus buildings. And finally, in the administrative space there were several small office reconfigurations designed to promote collaboration between colleagues working together.

Looking to the Future. The Board's Facilities Committee, along with the System Leaders, are working on preparations for a 50 Essex Street elevator proposal and related interior work to assure access to each floor. At other campuses, we plan to continue to selectively replace student furniture, paint and provide carpet replacement as needed, and replace or install windows for optimal visibility in classrooms and office spaces. Under consideration are larger projects such as faculty room upgrades at the Early Childhood campus, sound dampening panels at the Upper Elementary campus, LED lighting throughout the school, and improved ventilation in specific spaces.

Development and External Relations

Stewardship. This year's top priority in Development is strengthening our stewardship practices. To this end we produced the **PHA Impact Report**, outlining what fundraising dollars were spent on and what impact was achieved.

The Young Professionals Advisory Board (YPAB). YPAB is now chaired by Sarah Wheeler from First Republic Bank and has over 16 members. The first meeting was spent clarifying the role of this board and setting clear expectations that each member is asked to commit to specific contributions of Time, Treasure, and/or Talent.

Annual Event. We've launched the planning for the Spring event for 2019. The speaker(s) will focus on Diversity in STEM. We are still looking for qualified speakers to join the panel. We are also seeking members to form an Event Committee, primarily responsible for securing speakers, guest recruitment, and outreach to corporate sponsors.

Lastly, we are excited to have filled the position of *Corporate and Foundation Grants Manager*, who will partly boost our capacity in securing grant awards and partly cover the maternity leave of Julia Esko, Development and Communications Manager.

Student Recruitment. To boost the number of relevant applications received for the 2019-20 school year, we will strengthen our recruitment activities by increased and more strategic advertising (e.g. Billboard on McGrath Highway/Washington St. intersection in Union Sq. Somerville, four (4) bus shelter posters in Cambridge and Somerville; Targeted Twitter and Facebook ads; various Spanish newspapers and Haitian radio station ads and targeted mailing) and engaging families in grassroots outreach to gain strategic access to pre-schools, after-school programs, and churches as well as access to public housing in Cambridge and Somerville and canvassing in key areas.

Family Engagement. We are excited to have a fully staffed family leadership structure which includes four Campus Family Ambassadors (CFA - stipended family leaders); two Family Advisory Board (FAB) co-chairs at Early Childhood campus and Upper Elementary campus each; and one chair and three function-specific vice-chairs for the combined Middle and High School FAB.

Fall Festival. On October 20 from 11:00am - 2:00pm we will host the third annual **Family Festival** at Early Childhood campus, 15 Webster Ave., Somerville. In years past this event drew close to 600 participants.

Family Education Series. Our **Family Education Series** is off to a solid start with the following scheduled activities:

Date(s)	Activity
October 16	Technology Tech training for families with Jorge Vega, PHA Director of Technology. This is the first of several Tech Talks through the year
April 27 - May 19	<i>Basic Technology Literacy</i> training for families during STEAM Saturdays
October 27 and November 3	<i>Health and Wellness Workshops</i> taught by Cambridge Health Alliance specialists during STEAM Saturdays
January 9, 2019	<i>Strategic Plan: Fall 2018 Update</i> , sharing with families our accomplishments and priorities going forward.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

We are continuing to boost the quality and quantity of expanded learning opportunities our students have access to. We've developed a web page outlining an extensive array of local enrichment opportunities for high school students at: <https://www.phacs.org/apps/pages/high-school-enrichment> A few weeks ago, we hosted Grades 7-12 *Enrichment Fair* with 15 vendors. We're also leveraging our partnership with *Museum of Science* and currently have at minimum one activity planned to involve every grade K-6. Starting October 27, we kick off year two of *STEAM Saturday*. This year we are offering middle school students a CAD based coding class. Over the course of 4 weeks, students will design and get to take home a 3D print of their own making. We are also excitedly in the midst of planning a pilot **PHA Hackathon**: Practice 2-day coding session for PHA, CCSC, and Cambridge Rindge and Latin (the latter not confirmed) Computer Science AP students hosted by Facebook in February.

Junior Journey. Finalizing 2019 **Junior Journeys**: Repeat: Costa Rica and Vermont; new and improved: Puerto Rico and Guatemala (new organizer) and exploring Ghana for 2019-2020

Hamilton - Curriculum & Tickets. PHA has been selected to participate in the Hamilton Education Program. The Gilder Lehrman Institute is proud to partner with the producers of Hamilton and the Miranda family on the Hamilton Education Program. All 10th graders at PHA are taking part in an innovative curriculum that integrates Alexander Hamilton and the Founding Era into their US History classroom studies... *and then they get to see the musical!!* Prior to seeing the show, students will experience a unique, hands-on class project using Gilder Lehrman Institute resources to introduce the people, events, and documents of the founding era. In addition, the students will learn how Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of Hamilton, incorporated primary sources into the songs he wrote for the show and used that knowledge to produce their own performance pieces.