



Sunita Williams Elementary School Improvement Plan 2021 - 2024
Presented to School Committee on June 1, 2021

SWES School Council Members:

John Cho, Parent

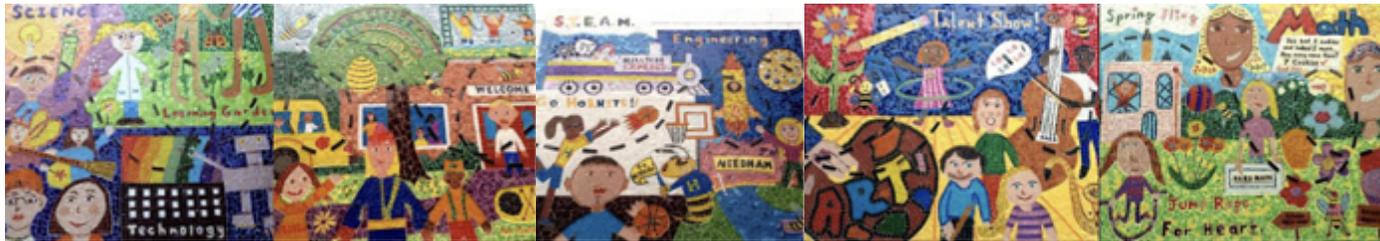
Joanie Daly, Parent

Dayna DiCicco, Teacher

Elizabeth Hitron, Teacher

Stan Hitron, Community Representative

Michael Kascak, Principal



*Equity, diversity and inclusion are three concepts that are driving many of the objectives of our school improvement plan (SIP). We are also connecting our objectives to The Portrait of a Needham Graduate (PONG) wherever applicable. There are also specific logistic issues, primarily the recent pandemic, which impacted this plan. Fortunately, we were able to successfully move fully into our physical campus in the Fall of 2019. The challenges inherent in the pandemic prevented us from completing a full first year in our new building. District wide **Full-Day Kindergarten Programming**, as well as our collaboration with Curry College in launching our new **teacher training residency program** were also greatly impacted while still moving forward. The complete list of our goals and objectives is listed below. That list is followed by a list of strategic priorities that drive the Portrait. The chart details action steps, evidence and outcomes. The goals and strategic priorities are color coded to help readers interpret the chart and understand the connection between our school improvement goals and Needham Public School's Strategic Priorities.*

SWES rules: Work Hard. Be Nice.

Sunita Williams Elementary School Goal #1: Create and improve, through regular review of data and reflective practice, a Continuum of Learning that matches the needs of all learners.

Objective 1.1: Continue to review, evaluate, and when necessary, revise the support given to teaching staff in order to maximize academic instruction and increase student achievement.

Objective 1.2: Staff and students increase their Cultural Proficiency through professional development opportunities and school-wide and grade level projects that effectively address matters of equity, diversity and inclusion in the context of the pluralistic communities in which we live.

Objective 1.3: Explore, and where and when possible, implement creative uses of our new campus, physical plant, and technology that will positively impact student learning and teacher instruction.

Sunita Williams Elementary School Goal #2: Collaborate with our school constituencies, other Needham Schools and other outside institutions to develop and promote student leadership and expanded learning opportunities.

Objective 2.1: Continue to expand the Collaborative Teacher Training Program with Curry College and possibly other universities.

Objective 2.2: Expand leadership roles and community service options for our students and the successful collaboration between SWES and Needham High School students which focuses on social and emotional skills.

Objective 2.3: Continue to support the growing number of students in the district's Specialized Elementary Programs for Students with Autism and Related Developmental Disabilities (ELC or Early Learning Center).

Sunita Williams Elementary School Goal #3: Capitalize on the new technologies built into our new campus while creating and documenting new systems which best utilize the capability for 21st century learning and instruction.

Objective 3.1: Implement and/or adapt safety initiatives on our campus which best address its size, geographical location and modernized building systems.

Portrait of a Needham Graduate strategic priorities:

1. All Students Are Drivers of Their Own Learning

1A) Incorporate opportunities for student choice, independent learning, & personalized pathways

1B) Provide structures & experiences that enable student efficacy, leadership, and voice

1C) Teach students the content & skills necessary for them to grow personally and academically.

2. All Students Experience Integrative Teaching & Learning

2A) Extend interdisciplinary teaching and learning practices Pre-K to 12

2B) Embed Portrait Competencies, Technology, Inclusive Practices, SEL, and Equity into all curricula and instructional practices

2C) Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills through multiple means of expression.

3. All Students Learn & Grow Within Adaptable Environments

3A) Support and design classroom models and environments that foster collaboration & innovation

3B) Provide time, schedules, and spaces that promote learning objectives

3C) Complement instruction with accessible learning beyond the classroom, within the community, and in partnership with families.

4. Infrastructure Supports Needs of All Students

4A) Provide staffing, facilities, and budget resources aligned to district priorities

4B) Implement a recruitment, retention, and development process for staff growth and diversity

4C) Establish a professional learning structure supporting equity and the Portrait vision.

Sunita Williams Elementary School Goal #1: Create and improve through regular review of data and reflective practice, a Continuum of Learning that matches the academic and emotional needs of all learners.

Objective	Strategic Priority	Strategies Employed/ Action Steps	Impact on Students/ Ways to Measure Success	Timeline
<p>Objective 1.1: Continue to review, evaluate, and when necessary, revise the support given to teaching staff in order to maximize academic instruction and increase student achievement.</p> <p>MATH</p>	<p>1A, 1C 2A, 2C 3A, 3C</p>	<p>a) Implement ST Math, A Program For Conceptual Understanding (https://www.stmath.com/) into all grades as part of regular math instruction and put various incentive programs into place to increase participation.</p> <p>b) Utilize Renaissance (STARMath), a computer-based adaptive test that measures student achievement on math skills, in all first-fifth grade classrooms.</p>	<p>a) ST Math starts by teaching the foundational concepts visually, then connects the ideas to the symbols and language. With visual learning, students are better equipped to tackle unfamiliar math problems, recognize patterns, and build conceptual understanding. Without language barriers, the problem is accessible to all students, regardless of skill level or language background./ST Math progress reports and student detailed information show clear, actionable data that provides insights into productivity, usage, and areas of struggle, effectively informing instruction. At SWES for the 2020-21 school year, students are engaged in the program for an average of 40 minutes per week, solving 45 puzzles. As of May 2021, our school has solved over 740,000 puzzles (an average of 1,550 per student) and completed 5,300 objectives.</p> <p>b) STARMath consists of 34 items and takes approximately 20-30 minutes for the student to complete. By continually adjusting the difficulty of an item to what the student has shown he/she can or cannot do, the assessment is tailored to accurately measure each student's level of achievement. To interpret screening results, SWES uses benchmarks and cut scores. These scores help educators identify which students require some form of intervention to accelerate growth and move toward benchmark, and which students are already at or above benchmark. Overall, scores showed continued growth between the two assessment windows.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>- Damien Hazel, Math Coach</i></p>	<p>2021 - 2022</p> <p>2021 - 2022</p>

<p>Objective 1.1: Continue to review, evaluate, and when necessary, revise the support given to teaching staff in order to maximize academic instruction and increase student achievement.</p> <p>ELA</p>	<p>1A, 1C 2A, 2C 3A, 3C</p>	<p>a) School-wide book room: As part of our learning and thinking around racial equity, we have begun to look critically at our school-wide book room selections.</p> <p>b) EarlyBird Early Literacy Screener - Kindergarten classroom teachers, Literacy coaches, EL, ELC, and SPED teachers began piloting and learning about this screener.</p>	<p>a) Teachers are using and selecting newer titles from the book room. They are using these titles for read-aloud, small group instruction, book clubs and Units of Study. Teachers will notice and note which titles garnered rich discussion and/or were popular titles during independent reading. We used funds targeted for new classrooms and title replacements to purchase texts that reflect the races, ethnicities and cultures of our student body, and the larger world. We will continue to look critically at future text selections, and think about opportunities to share selections across grade levels. <i>-Aly Schenker, Literacy Coach</i></p> <p>b) Results will be analyzed after each assessment period with the goal of monitoring student growth and determining instructional implications to increase student achievement. This team will continue to meet and learn more about this screener, especially as the developers complete their final design. Classroom teachers will administer this screener three times next year, with support from Literacy coaches, EL, ELC, and SPED teachers. <i>- Carol-Ann Hurley, Literacy Coach</i></p>	<p>2021 - 2022</p>
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<p>Objective 1.1: Continue to review, evaluate, and when necessary, revise the support given to teaching staff in order to maximize academic instruction and increase student achievement.</p> <p>SCHEDULING</p>	<p>1A, 1C 2A, 2C 3A, 3C</p>	<p>a) Begin to explore ways to adjust and standardize the elementary schedule to better meet student needs while being mindful of the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Schedule Guidance.</p>	<p>a) Elementary leadership team began discussions about possible changes to the elementary schedule to prioritize student needs. SWES admin group started conversations about changes and prioritized the three following goals in mind:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Integrating SEL/Equity into any changes. 2) Maintaining and increasing opportunities for vertical groupings (Clusters, buddies, assemblies, etc) 3) and need for PD for <u>all</u> building staff. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>- Michael Kasck, Principal</i></p>	<p>2021 - 2023</p>
<p>Objective 1.2: Staff and students increase their Cultural Proficiency through professional development opportunities and school-wide and grade level projects that effectively address matters of equity, diversity and inclusion in the context of the pluralistic communities in which we live.</p>	<p>2B 3A 3B 3C 4B 4C</p>	<p>a) Move student support philosophy toward Transformative Social Emotional Learning.</p> <p>b) Compile and update SEL curriculum and resources to create a dynamic list of equity resources for staff.</p> <p>c) Incorporate equity updates into all PD opportunities</p>	<p>a) Plan ways to integrate MTSS into existing and new Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons and Equity work while fully implementing the Racial Literacy Curriculum adopted by NPS this past year.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>-Margaret Petrovich, Counselor and Interim AP</i></p> <p>b) Resources and classroom lessons, involving both SEL and Equity, which often intersect, have been collected and/or generated this past year due to the increased SEL and Equity needs (which have risen significantly during the past year related to the pandemic and issues of racism coming to a forefront) can be found here and are accessible to all staff.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>-Meg Flatley, Counselor</i></p> <p>c) Weekly Equity Drop-in Zoom meetings were established this year as a place to support teachers and staff in their equity work and create a safe space for difficult conversations. We hope to continue the weekly Equity Drop-</p>	<p>2021 - 2022</p> <p>2020 - 2021</p> <p>2020 - 2024</p>

			<p>In meetings, hopefully in person, next year. We also committed to dedicating a portion of each faculty meeting to highlight some aspect of our equity work. We plan to continue to include equity as a part of building based professional development to further understand implicit bias, practice courageous conversations among faculty and staff, and address race based incidents at school.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Margaret Petrovich, Counselor and Interim AP</p>	
<p>Objective 1.3: Explore, and where and when possible, implement creative uses of our new campus, physical plant, and technology that will positively impact student learning and teacher instruction.</p>	<p>1C 2A 2C 3A 3C 4A</p>	<p>a) Introduce Navigation Games and Orienteering as part of an NEF grant to our Sunita Williams students in Physical Education and Wellness classes so that students understand the basic protocols, rules, and procedures on how these types of games and activities work.</p>	<p>a) This grant supports the Portrait of a Needham Graduate by empowering learners to discover and integrate content from multiple disciplines, engage in self-directed learning, and to use technology to support learning while navigating the digital world. The connection between the outdoor environment and orienteering go hand in hand and according to an article in the Child Mind Institute, this is beneficial for all students, especially to balance the increased screen time we all have experienced recently. This program also supports standards one and five of SHAPE America's Grade Level Outcomes.</p>	2021 - 2024
		<p>b) Introduce SWES Staff to Navigation games and Orienteering as part of an NEF grant.</p>	<p>b) Grant was designed to be self-sufficient after this year's initial year of staff training. Staff will learn how they can use these games and activities as part of movement break opportunities but moreover as an opportunity to introduce interdisciplinary learning outside of the building in the various parts of our beautiful campus.</p>	2021- 2024
		<p>c) Introduce the Sunita Williams community to Navigation games and Orienteering through a family fun night.</p>	<p>c) This will foster a home/school connection while also giving families another way for them to be able to seek outdoor, socially distant, physically active, movement opportunities out in the community. - <i>Rob Tatro, Physical Education and Wellness Teacher</i></p>	2021 - 2022
		<p>d) Revisit plans for utilizing</p>	<p>d) Volante Farms donated plants and time to setting up the garden area for our students as they finally had the chance to do the Kindergarten's final unit of study, Our Earth, in person! This unit is designed to give students the opportunity to explore "the natural</p>	2021 - 2022

		<p>the front gardens and back area nature trail, pond and outdoor classroom and incorporating these areas into the school's curriculum through collaboration with the Science Center and neighboring Volante Farms.</p> <p>e) Utilize the Energy Dashboard and Electronic Display screens in our building to maximize teaching and learning for students (and staff!)</p>	<p>world through investigations and research of the earth's properties and systems, including the earth's surface, gardening, recycling, and reuse. Concepts of sustainability, urban renewal, economics, healthy lifestyles, authority, honesty, respect, courage, responsibility, and stewardship frame discussions and projects. The unit and year culminate in a capstone project where children choose a sustainable practice and work towards convincing a local audience to adopt this practice." - <i>Michael Kasck, Principal</i></p> <p>e) The energy dashboard is intended to provide students and teachers access to information about the energy use and water use within the new building. It provides comparative information to teach how this building conserves energy and water. It provides information about the Photovoltaics on the roof, shows how an energy recovery wheel works in the rooftop units, and demonstrates how daylighting helps reduce electrical energy use within the classrooms and other spaces. The system can also display the outside weather conditions and temperatures in the classrooms. This data will soon be accessible by all teachers in their classrooms via classroom computers. - <i>Hank Haff, OPM</i></p> <p>We have begun using the school's display screens in common areas to display images of diverse people to affirm cultural racial identities, promote understanding of differing abilities, and update students' progress on STMath puzzles. - <i>Kara Shea, Tech Specialist and Hardeep Jassal, BCBA</i></p>	<p>2021 - 2024</p> <p>2021 - 2022</p>
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Sunita Williams Elementary School Goal #2: Collaborate with our school constituencies, other Needham Schools and other outside institutions to develop and promote student leadership and expanded learning opportunities.

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<p>Objective 2.1: Continue to expand the Collaborative Teacher Training Program with Curry College and possibly other universities.</p>	<p>2C 3C 4B 4C</p>	<p>a) After a few obstacles and logistical challenges (the pandemic being the major hurdle) the Curry Collaborative Graduate Internship Program is up and finally and running.</p> <p>b) Establish relationships with other colleges or universities.</p>	<p>a) This year we had four interns completing their Masters Degree in Special Education through the Curry Program here at SWES. All four were employed as TAs while doing so. The school received vouchers for other staff in return for providing these candidates the training and instruction needed for their required practicums.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>- Erin Vacaro, Special education Coordinator</i></p> <p>b) The challenges of sustaining the hybrid model during the pandemic created the necessity of looking beyond Curry College for teaching assistants. The two Elementary Education interns recruited from Lasell University’s program were quickly hired as TAs and have been a great addition to our community. We will likely continue this collaboration next year as well.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>- Michael Kascak, Principal</i></p>	<p>2021 - 2022</p>
<p>Objective 2.2: Expand leadership roles and community service options for our students and the successful collaboration between SWES and Needham High School students which focuses on social and emotional skills.</p>	<p>1B 1C 2C 3C 4C</p>	<p>a) Fifth and fourth graders are engaged in multiple leadership roles.</p> <p>b) Reinstate practices that were put on hold due to safety concerns during the pandemic.</p> <p>c) Implementation of an NEF Grant to expand on the</p>	<p>a) Our upperclassmen have supported younger students with literacy practice, participated in the hiring of the new Assistant Principal, and helped care for our front gardens. Our Student Sidewalk Detail (SSD) was retrained to better assist in safe drop-off practices due to our new, larger campus which, given our new location on Central Avenue and added challenges due to pandemic (i.e. lack of carpooling, dedicated grade-level entrances).</p> <p>b) A number of student leadership opportunities were put on hold for safety reasons due to the pandemic, and will need to be restarted or reinstated into an in-person model. These include our composting program, Clusters, and buddy classes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>- Michael Kascak, Principal</i></p> <p>c) This collaboration was really taking off pre-pandemic but was limited to an exchange of a few videos this past year. Our hope is</p>	<p>2021 - 2022</p> <p>2021 - 2022</p>

		successful collaboration between Needham high school students in the Own Your Peace/Piece and SWES students at SWES to include equity.	to resume the in-person meetings and add age-appropriate components of the CCOR (Courageous Conversations on Race) that occur at NHS students affirming racial and cultural identities, and modeling their experiences regarding race as elementary students. - <i>Margaret Petrovich, Counselor and Interim AP</i>	
Objective 2.3: Continue to support the growing number of students in the district's Specialized Elementary Programs for Students with Autism and Related Disabilities (ELC or Early Learning Center)	1C 2B 2C 3A 3B 4C	a) Provide professional development to train staff on best practices for SEL, discipline and de-escalation of dangerous and destructive behaviors,	a) Training in Antecedent Teaching Systems and Practices by our BCBA's (Board Certified Behas resulted in a decrease in office referrals for student behavior.	2021 - 2022
		b) NEF Grant for the Creative Dance and Movement Group, <i>Dance4All</i> , for students.	b) Increase in student self-expression and decrease in negative student behaviors.	2021 - 2202
		c) CARE team collaboration and implementing strategies for teachers struggling with student behavior.	c) Increase in teachers' classroom management skills, less referrals for special education	2021 - 2024
		d) Create a weekly motor group for students in the ELC.	d) Program has resulted in an increase in physical skills and a decrease in negative student behaviors.	2021 - 2022
		e) Work on adapting space to meet needs that resulted from increased ELC population and pandemic restrictions.	e) ESY (Extended School Year) summer programming and a new classroom space dedicated to ELC enabled students to work in a distraction-free environment. - <i>Erin Vacaro, Special education Coordinator</i>	2021 -2022

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<p>Objective 3.1: Implement and/or adapt safety initiatives on our campus which best address its size, geographical location and modernized building systems.</p>	<p>2B 3A 3B 3C 4A</p>	<p>a) Continue and adapt existing safety protocols to match the logistics of our new campus.</p> <p>b) Make arrival and dismissal more efficient for families and students.</p>	<p>a) Fire, ALICE and Shelter-in-place drills were adapted to the new site and successfully practiced. We enhanced instant communication between staff through purchase of new and more appropriate walkie-talkies. More work is needed (and planned for this fall) to get all parties up to mastery level of the new lock down system. Students and staff have been educated in the nuances of the outdoor areas (Hillside Knoll Trail, Sensory Garden, Amphitheatre) particularly around safety issues involving flora and fauna.</p> <p>b) Maps, videos and written protocols created and shared with families will be continually updated as needed. School safety officers and Needham Police Department worked with us to ensure safety during drop-off and pick up given the heavy volume of traffic at our new location. - <i>Michael Kascak, Principal</i></p>	<p>2021 - 2022</p> <p>2020 - 2021</p>