



2023-24 FCSW ANNUAL PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We believe that our students have limitless potential. We also acknowledge that the past three years have been unprecedented and deeply challenging. To best adapt to these particular times, and to advance academic success at Freire Schools (chiefly, in the domains of: proficiency, growth, attendance, and postsecondary readiness and success) we will approach our work during 23-24 by prioritizing three mindsets: **peace, joy, and growth.**

Peace: Our Nonviolence Policy & Commitment to Peace (NVP) is at the core of our behavioral expectations, and when students and families receive the Handbook each year, they must acknowledge that they have read, discussed, and agreed to this policy. Our NVP was originally developed by a group of students working with school leadership. As part of our Commitment to Antiracist Action, the Freire Schools network went back to revisit the Code of Conduct and ensure equity, student voice, and fairness for all.

Joy: We need to intentionally cultivate joy throughout the school year. From greeting students by name at the door each day, to scheduling fun activities for both students and staff, to celebrating growth regularly and unabashedly. A visitor should feel joy radiating from our classrooms and should see joyful celebration of student work on our walls.

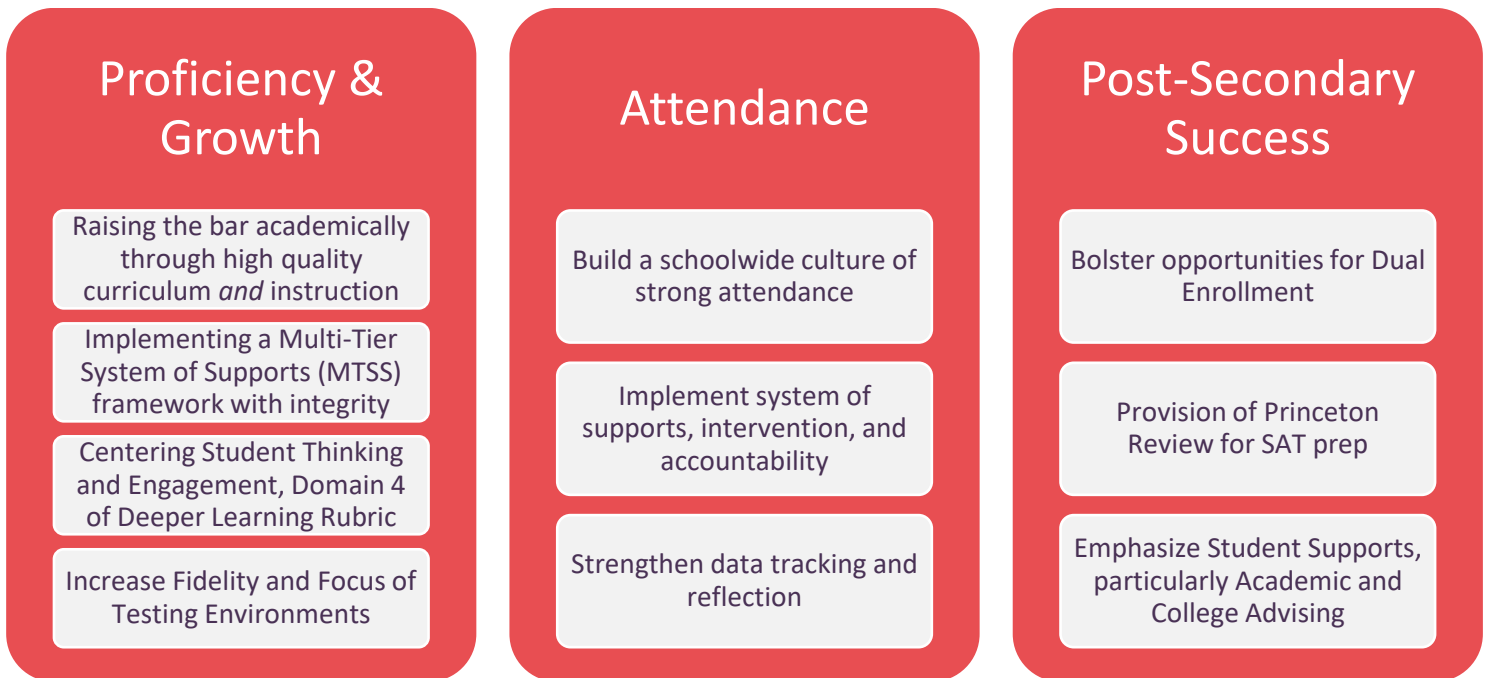
Growth: Growth has always been at the heart of Freire. We will prioritize growth in terms of how we frame our goals for the year. We will celebrate growth all the time. Our staff will talk to students and their families about growth and students will learn to talk about their education in terms of growth, too.

OUTCOMES

We strive to see marked improvement (a positive change of 5% or more) across key indicators: attendance, internal benchmarks, high stakes tests, college acceptance & matriculation, student engagement, and teacher retention. See Appendix for list of specific targets.

KEY STRATEGIES & OWNERSHIP

ACADEMIC SUCCESS



PROFICIENCY & GROWTH

High Quality Curriculum

Owner: Sean

Support: Content Department Leads/Instructional Coaches, Maddie, Emily

Freire Schools believes that materials matter – that students should be exposed to high quality instructional materials (HQIM) that are grade-level appropriate, meaningful, and affirming and that align with college-level standards. We adopted Illustrative Mathematics (IM) in 2019-20 for our core math curriculum, because it meets expectations in all EdReports Gateways, is aligned with the CCSS, and is both student-driven and focused on deeper understanding. In 2021-22, we then adopted the EngageNY English Language Arts curriculum, because it explicitly aligns to the CCSS and challenges students to read deeply in challenging texts, exposes them to diverse voices, is rooted in real world experiences, and aligns with our emphasis on social justice. We adopted Amplify in our middle school science classes in 2021-22, which is aligned to NGSS. In 23-24, we are embarking on a pilot of two NGSS-aligned curricula for our high school courses: Inquiry Hub and OpenSciEd. Both are aligned to NGSS and the new PA STEELS standards, and as part of this pilot, we are grounding our science instruction in curiosity, investigation, and student-driven learning as required by both the DLR and NGSS.

We approach our high-quality instruction with integrity by ensuring that we use guardrails to ensure that we remain standards-aligned and adaptations¹ that allow our teachers to use curriculum in ways that best meet the needs of our students.

High Quality Instruction

Owner: Sean

Support: Maddie, Emily

Strengthening our teaching staff is a top priority for the year(s) ahead; coaching, professional learning communities, and professional development will ensure that we have the most effective teaching staff. Assistant Head of Academics and all instructional coaches will attend “The Art of Coaching” summer PD. Assistant Head of Academics will provide instructional coaches with initial training on the vision and priorities of instructional coaching at Freire; expectations and responsibilities of coaches; how to identify action items and set goals; and how to use Whetstone (our platform for teacher observations)

¹ See Appendix.

for entering observation notes. They will also lead a Deeper Learning Rubric calibration activity with coaches at start of year, in addition to, holding weekly one-on-one meetings to review observation data, discuss trends, determine next steps, and provide support.

Our coaches will meet weekly with their coaching load to debrief observations, provide feedback, practice key skills, and support internalization of curriculum. The Assistant Head of Academics will support content team leads in the design and facilitation of biweekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) aimed at supporting the overall instructional vision for the implementation of high quality curriculum. Content team leads will develop sessions informed by observation trends (coaching co-observations with Assistant Head of Academics) and in support of curriculum internalization, as well as provide space for collaboration, troubleshooting and problem-solving.

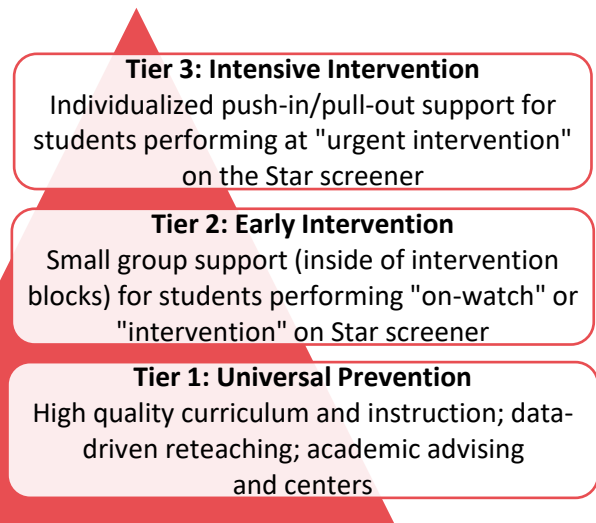
In the face of the national teacher shortage and recognizing the correlation between teacher quality and student achievement, our People Team has relied on a range of strategies: direct message sourcing via LinkedIn, increasing collaboration with program partners (Relay, Wilmington University, Delaware State University, and University of Delaware), increasing our referral bonus, improved marketing, and increasing outreach to alumni. A key element of the strategy is retaining our teachers, especially given how much is invested during the induction and coaching of new, uncertified teachers. Moreover, we are entering the 2023-24 school mindful of the emotional experience of our staff. We want to support staff in developing deeper connections to each other. We are looking for opportunities to promote a joyful working environment. We will recognize accomplishments and celebrate growth.

MTSS:

Owner: Toni

Support: Sean, Maddie, Emily, Lilian

Freire Schools is committed to ensuring that all students receive rigorous academic instruction and the holistic social and emotional supports that they deserve to achieve at the highest levels. We employ a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to continuously shape key programmatic initiatives that drive positive student outcomes. This preventative framework incorporates data across four domains (academics, attendance, social/emotional, and behavior) to problem-solve in the areas of instruction and intervention at three tiers of support. Our approach to MTSS is continuously evolving to meet the growing needs of our community of learners. We have established a culture where team members value data and employ data regularly, and with fidelity when reflecting on student outcomes.



Academic Tiers of Support:

- **Tier I: Universal**
 - Proactive/Preventative Strategies to support **all** students
 - *Evidenced-Based Supports/Intervention:*
 - Implement curriculum use with integrity in 23-24 SY
 - Data-driven reteaching/Flexible small groups
 - Academic Advising
 - Academic Centers
- **Tier II: Selected Small Groups (within an intervention block)**
 - **Classroom and small group** strategies to support at-risk students (identified through screenings for poor academic outcomes; students performing “on-watch” or “intervention” on Star screener – approx. 73% of general education students in Math and 49% in Reading)); Smarter Balanced assessment results will be utilized to identify students in 8th and 9th grades
 - *Evidenced-Based Supports/Intervention:*
 - Intervention blocks for 8th, 9th, and 11th grade reading and math
 - During Intervention blocks in 8th and 9th grade, teachers will utilize Corrective Math materials and Lexia Literacy strategies in order to provide targeted intervention on foundational math and reading skills

- Some² ELA classes will incorporate explicit instruction in the five literacy accelerators: fluency, vocabulary, knowledge-building/comprehension, phonics, phonemic awareness; we will explore various adaptive software options to see what would be the best fit.
- Some³ math classes will incorporate just in time spiraling them to relearn and master fundamental math skills alongside the new grade-level content; we will explore various adaptive software options to see what would be the best fit.
- **Tier III: Targeted/Intensive**
 - **Individualized** strategies for high-risk students (students performing at “urgent intervention” on Star screener – approx. 14% of general education students in Math and 27% in Reading))
 - *Evidenced-Based Supports/Intervention:*
 - Interventionist/MTSS coordinator/specialist to work with high-risk students either via push-in to an intervention class or pull-out⁴

Student Thinking and Engagement

Owner: Sean

Support: Maddie, Emily

We seek to create classrooms where our students drive their learning and where teachers create a community centered on academic leadership from all members—students and teachers. As we grow in this work, we will approach student voice first from an academic lens, using Domain 4 of the DLR as our guide.

Test Fidelity

Owner: Sean & Marley

Support: Maddie, Katie

We will be more intentional in preparing our students for high stakes tests. This will look like: administering Smarter Balanced ICAs and IABs in 8th Grade Math and ELA classes; the Assistant Head of Academics will lead 8th grade teachers in data analysis of benchmarks; and teachers will utilize the data to identify target skills/questions for remediation and then address each of those skills in immediate and subsequent lessons. Additionally, we hired The Princeton Review to provide 60 hours of SAT Preparation to all 11th Grade students during the Math Analysis block. Moreover, we will also include increasing the fidelity and focus of testing environments: making testing days asynchronous for non-testing grades; splitting students into small testing groups in separate classrooms; and improving proctor preparation and accountability through test-specific training and individual check-ins prior to test day. We will increase assessment participation by: proactively communicating with students and parents about the importance of testing, test information, testing schedule, and expectations for testing (email, letter home, newsletter, Data Days, classroom announcements by leadership team); scheduling tests earlier in testing window to allow for make-up testing; and creating a targeted plan to ensure all students complete missed tests during make-up window.

² MTSS coordinators/teams are creating their 23-24 plans which will determine which classrooms have the capacity to support Tier 2 students. Potential examples include co-taught classes, classes with experienced teachers, classes where the MTSS Coordinator or an interventionist can push in, classes where there is extra time built in for this work, etc.

³ Same as above.

⁴ Some schools may not implement Tier 3 in 23-24 SY based on staffing.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance

Owner: Toni

Support: Brandi, Katie, Academic Advisors

Because we believe that attendance is foundational to academic success, our teams cross-collaborate in the area of attendance to: identify the roots of student absenteeism, share meaningful resources, and support students in articulating a plan for success. Attendance Coordinators at each campus oversee tiered supports and essential practices aimed at improving attendance. Attendance updates as early as three absences and attendance-specific report cards to show whether students are on or off track have already proven effective in generating urgency and are resulting in positive attendance outcomes. We've also found that notification of referral to truancy court by email and certified mail at the 20 day threshold is moving the needle on attendance. Moreover, we will provide individual case management by academic advisors and college counselors; complete home visits for students that reach the 15 day threshold; and implement mandatory Academic Centers and/or Saturday School as part of Attendance Improvement Plans.

Tier 3: Intensive Intervention

Supports for individual students with severe attendance concerns (missing 15% or more of instructional time).

Tier 2: Early Intervention

Supports for students who have emerging attendance issues (missed 10-14% of instructional time).

Tier 1: Universal Prevention

Promoting a positive culture of attendance to all students and families.

POST-SECONDARY READINESS

Dual Enrollment

Owner: Sean

Support: Maddie, Toni

We will bolster opportunities for Dual Enrollment by partnering with University of Delaware to offer EntreX and LeadX to 12th grade students, partnering with Stockton University to convert all AP courses to dual-credit eligible courses through their dual enrollment program, and continuing to offer supplemental dual enrollment options through Wilmington University and Del Tech.

Princeton Review

Owner: Sean

Support: Maddie, Emily

We hired The Princeton Review to provide 60 hours of SAT Preparation to all 11th Grade students during the Math Analysis block; and through the Princeton Review, administer weekly practice items and quarterly practice tests leading up to the SAT in March.

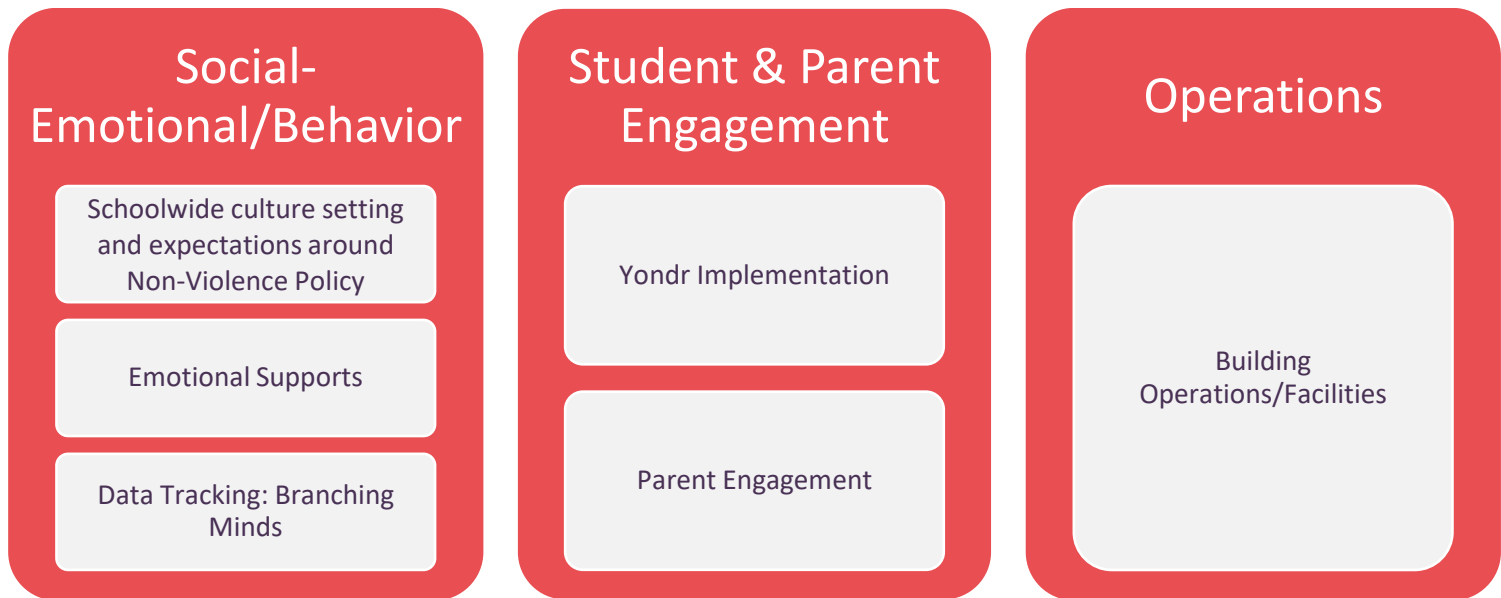
Academic Advising

Owner: Brandi

Support: Katie, Maddie

Our Academic Advisors and College Counselors connect students and families with internal and external resources, supports, and programs to advance student academic success. They hold student meetings with each student by the end of quarter one, and conduct root cause analyses of student-facing challenges impacting academic outcomes. Academic Advisors support students in articulating: (1) how they learn best, and (2) short and long-term academic/career goals, and cross-collaborate with other teams (i.e., Emotional Supports, MTSS), and families to drive academic outcomes. These teams also drive participation at academic centers. Our College Counselors meet with seniors to support the college application process – this includes but is not limited to: essay review, letters of recommendation, and FAFSA and scholarship applications.

KEY STRATEGIES & OWNERSHIP CULTURE



SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIOR

Culture Setting

Owner: Tyron

Support: Ruble, Toni

Schoolwide cultural programming underscores Freire's Non-Violence Policy and general behavioral expectations, and highlights positive reinforcements of appropriate behaviors. In 2022-23 we developed another way to synthesize and reiterate our values and the core expectations of our school community with our family compact, the Commitment to Every Student's Success. All students and families need to sign off on this commitment, and FCSW holds one-on-one meetings with new families to ensure students and parents understand and buy into these core expectations.

Emotional Supports

Owner: Tamara

Support: Tyron, Ruble

An integrated Emotional Supports (ES) program has been a pillar of our school model since our earliest years, in which a licensed professional (e.g. family and marriage counselor, psychologist, social worker) and a team of graduate-level interns provide therapy to students in need (and often their family members) free of charge. We may run support groups as a Tier 2 intervention and our highest-risk students receive Tier 3 individualized therapy via our MTSS framework.

Data Tracking: Branching Minds

Owner: Katie

Support: Toni, Marley, Brandi

Data is integral to evaluating the implementation of our MTSS framework and ensuring that students are receiving the supports and interventions that they need. Our Head of Academic Supports will establish expectations for use of Branching Minds, our MTSS software, in collaboration with our culture team. This team will rollout new systems and train staff members on Branching Minds during Staff PD prior to the start of the 23-24 School Year.

ENGAGEMENT

Yondr Implementation

Owner: Tyron

Support: Maddie, Ruble

Another root cause that we identified of low academic achievement is a low level of student engagement in classrooms. This cuts across all subject areas. In 21-22, across all Freire schools, we noticed a pretty stark difference in student engagement as compared to before the pandemic. Students were physically back in our classrooms, but many were checked out. While there are any number of teacher moves that can be employed to boost engagement (or, conversely, moves can sap it) the common denominator that we observed was smart phones, which are tempting distractions that can often be used very surreptitiously even if they are technically not allowed. Last year, one of our other Freire network high schools piloted a cell-phone free building by using Yondr pouches. The difference in student engagement in the classroom was palpable and academic data backed up this observation, with increases of 7 points in math and 17(!) points in ELA on the State's standardized test. The FCSW Board adopted a cell-phone free policy this June and the school will be implementing Yondr pouches in 23-24. The Yondr slogan is "Be Here Now". This speaks to the spirit of this policy shift -- we want students to connect with one another, with their teachers, and with their academics in a healthy way by focusing on the moment and the people in front of them.

Parent Engagement

Owner: Toni, Marley

Support: Maddie, Brandi, Alexis, Academic Advisors/College Counselors

Parent engagement in schools is a vital cornerstone of a child's educational journey. It promotes a sense of community within the school, where parents feel invested in their child's educational experience, staff feel buoyed by the partnership with parents, and students feel supported and motivated. Parent engagement can impact academic outcomes when parents gain insights into their child's learning needs and teachers gain a deeper understanding of each student's unique strengths and challenges.

During the 23-24 school year, we will support increased parent engagement through a three-part plan. First, we will continue efforts that began in 22-23 to increase communication with parents through biweekly newsletters and biweekly progress reports. We will increase our activity on social media and we will ensure that every family receives a phone call by an advisor, counselor or admin at least once per quarter. Second, we will establish a Freire Parent Association, recruiting parents during Fall conferences and holding monthly meetings by the end of Marking Period 2. Third, in connection with our 21st Century Learning Center, we will work with the Parent Association to offer more school-wide family events at the school.

OPERATIONS

Building Operations/Facilities

Owner: Maddie

Support: Tyron, Ruble, Marley, Olivia, Sean

We are beautifying common spaces in and around our building so that our people can work in an environment that uplifts the spirit. Our Head of School will explicitly communicate this vision for a safe and beautiful learning environment and its connection to academics during Staff PD and throughout the year. Additionally, the Head of School will conduct daily walkthroughs of the building to identify operational needs and set in motion an immediate response – maintaining a presence at key times during the day (arrival, lunch, dismissal) to ensure excellence and provide feedback to staff members regarding school culture and building operations (this will be communicated as “sweating the small stuff”). Moreover, we have plans to onboard and supervise a new custodial contractor; hire landscapers to maintain the walkway and beds in front of the school building; and hire Replica to design and install wall decals in lobby, cafeteria, hallways and stairwells.

Appendix

Curricular Adaptations

Illustrative Mathematics (IM) Adaptations:

- We don't stick to a rigid pacing guide, but we ensure that we are preparing students for upcoming work in future grades by consulting Freire's coherence map and/or major work of the grade (MS)
- We make informed decisions about how and when to adapt structures and procedures to engage or meet the needs of students
- We provide Tier 2 supports to our students within the classroom to ensure that they are able to meet the grade-level standards. These supports include:
 - Just-in-time spiraling - we identify students' gaps from previous grades and provide opportunities for them to relearn and master these skills alongside the new grade-level content

EngageNY / EL Education Adaptations:

- We increase student engagement by introducing new or additional classroom structures or protocols that require students to do the thinking
- We prioritize both on-demand and process-based writing. We ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage in the writing process: brainstorming, drafting, and revising with feedback.
 - In high school, this means we transform all Performance Tasks and some mid or end-unit assessments to become process-based, rather than on-demand.
 - In middle school, this means we intentionally prepare students to write on-demand essays like those they will see on the PSSAs/Smarter Balanced.
- We provide direct instruction to students about literary concepts that build from grade to grade (e.g. rhetorical devices)
- We provide Tier 2 supports to our students within the classroom to ensure that they are able to comprehend grade-level texts. These supports include:
 - Fluency practice
 - "Juicy sentence protocol"
 - Explicit vocabulary and knowledge-building instruction

Specific Targets

Given our current data, we know that we cannot wait until DSSF results are shared each year to evaluate our progress and, therefore, we will set annual goals for the key metrics below.

Metrics	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24 Target
Smarter Balanced Assessment				
ELA	25%	11%	14%	Pending*
Math	0%	5%	2%	Pending*
SAT Assessment				
ELA	30%	23%	13%	18%
Math	11%	4%	4%	9%
Attendance				
Percent of students attending 90% or more of instructional time	76%	32%	45%	50%
Dual Enrollment				
Percent of students participating in dual enrollment	NA	NA	NA	-
On-Track				
Percent of 9th graders on track	Covid	68%	NA	-
Graduation & College	Class of 2020	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Target
Percent of 12th graders graduating	91%	83%	81%	86%
Seamless college enrollment	59%	54%	63%	68%
*Upon availability, we will identify this cohort's 7th grade Smarter Balanced scores and add 5% to that score to arrive at our target. Dual Enrollment and On-Track targets will be calculated upon release of latest data.				