

INNOVATION SCHOOL PLAN

SCHOOL NAME: Discovery Polytech Early College High School

Background on the Innovation School Plan:

Springfield Public Schools is proposing a new group of schools called the Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS). ISSPS builds on effective practices developed and learned during SPS' continuing partnership with SEZP and sustains them under the state's Innovation School law (M.G.L. c.71, §92). As Massachusetts's first proposed Innovation School Zone, ISSPS uses two linked documents to provide a clear and consistent process for voting on shared flexibilities:

1. **The Prospectus** describes the flexibilities that apply across all ISSPS schools. It constitutes the full and exclusive set of approved autonomies and contractual modifications on which educators are voting; no additional autonomies or modifications may be added at the school level in the Innovation School Plan.
2. **The Innovation School Plan** explains how those shared flexibilities will be implemented at the individual school level and has been developed by each school community as part of the Innovation School planning process.

To become an ISSPS school, the school community must vote to approve the full Innovation School Plan, including the Prospectus.¹

Please note that sections highlighted in yellow are editable fields. All other text is fixed to maintain statewide and district alignment.

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1. School Information

School Name

Discovery Polytech Early College High School

¹ The Prospectus is included in the Appendix of the Innovation School Plan.

Principal Name	Dr. Declan O'Connor
Date Submitted	February 6 th 2026
Grades Served	9-12
Number of Students	213
Number of Staff (including Unit A staff who are half-time or more)	28

2. School Mission & Vision

Mission Statement:

At Discovery Polytech Early College High School, we ensure equitable access to the highest-wage, highest-demand employment sectors in our region through a wall-to-wall early college model that engages every student in a degree-bearing college pathway beginning in grade nine. With over ten college majors to choose from, our students accrue up to 60 credits toward their bachelor's or associate degree in industry areas that will ensure economic mobility while reducing the financial burden of higher education.

Vision Statement:

Students at Discovery Polytech Early College High School will develop their college and career identities in the fields of healthcare, technology, advanced manufacturing, and human services by becoming college students and interns in the pathways of their choosing. Students will develop academic and durable skills that ensure equitable access to high wage careers in the Springfield region.

3. Statement of Need and Rationale for Innovation

Innovation is critical in realizing our mission to disrupt long-standing economic barriers for Black and Latinx graduates in the Springfield region. Our innovation needs include the following facets:

Significant reliance on bespoke collaborations developed explicitly to further our mission, including extensive partnerships with institutions of higher education, organizations that curate internships in technology, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare, and partnership with regional, state, and national co-conspirators who can leverage access, research, and funding in service of our students.

Curation of distinct operational and funding models that ensure access to workforce development, degree attainment, and stackable credentials at scale, guaranteeing enrollment, support, sustainability, and personalization for every single student.

These needs serve as the rationale for innovation that continues to secure our ability to:

Ensure an intentional portfolio of high-wage, advancement-ready employment options

Significantly reduce the financial burden associated with higher education, while refusing to compromise access to premier universities in our region

4. Stakeholder Engagement

The Innovation Plan Committee was formed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §92(i) and includes the eligible applicant; the Superintendent or designee; a School Committee member or designee; a parent; a principal employed by the district; and two teachers employed by the district, including one nominated by the local teachers' union. Please list your committee members below.

Role / Representation	Name	Title / Affiliation
School Principal (serving as Chair)	Dr. Declan O'Connor	Executive Principal
Superintendent or Designee	Michael Calvanese	Superintendent Designee
School Committee Member or Designee	Rosa Valentin	School Committee Member
Parent Representative (ideally from FEC or PAC)	Chevis Williams	Parent
Principal from another Springfield Public School	Andrea Metzger	Chestnut Tag Principal
Teacher #1 (nominated by SEA)	Talia Wray	SEA-nominated Teacher
Teacher #2 (member of TLT)	Stanslias Coly	Teacher
	Lauren Jefferson	School Counselor
Additional Members or Staff may be selected by the Chair (non-voting, if the total exceeds 11)	Farrika Turner	Associate Principal

***Chart above completed by Principal**

This balanced structure promotes collaboration, transparency, and teacher voice while maintaining compliance with Innovation School membership limits (maximum 11 voting members). Approval of this Innovation School Plan requires a majority vote of the Innovation Plan Committee, consistent with M.G.L. c.71 §92(j).

Discovery Polytech Early College High School engages families and caregivers as essential partners in students' academic, college, and career success. Family engagement practices are intentionally embedded across the

early college experience, beginning in 9th grade and extending through postsecondary transition and completion. Input from the School Quality Review (SQR) family survey and ongoing feedback opportunities indicate that families feel informed, welcomed, and actively involved in supporting their students' college journeys.

Seminar teachers and support staff communicate with families regarding students' progress in college coursework, academic expectations, and support needs. This includes updates on college grades, attendance, tutoring supports, and intervention plans, ensuring families are informed partners in helping students persist and succeed in rigorous college-level classes.

Families are intentionally engaged in students' selection of college majors and pathways. Through family information sessions, individual advising meetings, and written resources, parents and caregivers are supported in understanding available degree pathways, labor market outcomes, and credit accumulation expectations. This collaborative approach helps families guide students in making informed decisions aligned with their interests, strengths, and long-term goals.

The school also fosters strong family participation in milestone celebrations that reinforce college identity and persistence. Families are invited to and actively participate in events such as pinning ceremonies, which mark students' entry into degree-bearing college coursework and celebrate progress toward postsecondary credentials.

Targeted support is provided to families of seniors through FAFSA completion workshops, one-on-one advising, and follow-up outreach to ensure financial aid applications are completed accurately and on time. Staff work closely with students and families to navigate financial aid requirements and understand postsecondary financing options.

Discovery Polytech Early College High School prioritizes college access and success by assisting students and families with college applications and ensuring that earned college credits are transferable and aligned to degree completion. The school partners closely with postsecondary institutions to establish and maintain articulation agreements that protect students' credits and reduce duplication of coursework.

Family engagement extends beyond high school graduation through structured fifth-year support for graduates. This includes continued advising, connection to campus resources, and monitoring of students' postsecondary progress to promote persistence, credential completion, and successful transitions into careers or further education.

Additionally, for the greater Springfield community of families, we provide equitable access to all Springfield students as a non-selective Early College school.

In addition to family engagement, the school has established formal structures for educator input and shared decision-making. Teachers provide ongoing feedback through the Teacher Leadership Team (TLT), which meets regularly to review student data, instructional practices, early college implementation challenges, and schoolwide priorities. Teacher feedback gathered through the TLT informs adjustments to instructional programming, student supports, and scheduling considerations. The TLT also works together to create the school plan for the following school year and functions as representatives of teachers' voices within their content departments. Information is brought back to educators through TLT members.

Educator voice is further supported through **scheduled meetings with the Superintendent Designee**, who assisted school teams with the possible transition. School administration also included a weekly line item ,with updates. These meetings create a structured feedback loop between teachers, school leadership, and superintendent designee.

5. Community and Partnerships

Partner	Role
Elms College	Early College Partner, Data Science and AI, SLPA; and CECU
UMASS Amherst	Early College Partner, HTM, Public Health
Bay Path University	Early College Partner, Nursing
STCC	Early College Partner, Advanced Manufacturing, Laser Optics
Worcester State University	Early College Partner, General Education
Harvard Medical School	Work-Based Learning, Healthcare
Work-Based Learning Alliance	Work-Based Learning, Advanced Manufacturing, AI
Carnegie Foundation	High School Transformation Partner

6. School Autonomies and Rationale

NOTE: The autonomies described below are exercised consistent with the Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools Prospectus and its Appendices. In the event of any inconsistency, the Prospectus and its Appendices shall govern. Nothing in this section expands educator decision-making authority beyond that expressly authorized in Appendix A and B of the Prospectus.

6A. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

a. Rationale:

Autonomy at the school level in curriculum, instruction, and assessment is essential to ensuring coherence between a school’s instructional vision, its student population, and its improvement priorities. Within this network, schools have historically exercised flexibility in curriculum sequencing, instructional strategies,

assessment practices, and intervention models to ensure responsiveness to real-time student data rather than adherence to rigid, districtwide pacing structures.

The sustained use of these autonomies has contributed to positive student performance, increased instructional coherence, and strengthened schoolwide systems of support. These flexibilities have enabled schools to respond effectively to student data, refine instructional practice, and implement targeted improvement strategies aligned to each school's context.

Preserving this autonomy allows schools to continuously refine instructional practice while remaining accountable to Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, MassCore requirements, and district expectations. A return to a district-prescribed curriculum, instruction, and assessment model would limit schools' ability to make timely instructional adjustments based on student performance and would risk undermining practices that have supported sustained improvement in student achievement. Pursuant to the curriculum autonomy authorized in the Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools Prospectus, this Innovation School will adopt and implement curriculum and instructional materials aligned to its mission, student population, and instructional priorities. Curriculum decisions will be led by school leadership, informed by educator input, and aligned to state frameworks and accountability requirements.

b. School Level Example(s):

Discovery Polytech Early College High School will continue to implement standards-aligned, highly rated curriculum vetted through research-based review processes. Curriculum will be selected based on programmatic fit, student outcomes, and equity metrics rather than district purchasing contracts, ensuring alignment to the rigor and sequencing of college-level coursework. Math and science course progressions will be intentionally designed to mirror prerequisite pathways for technology, science, business, and engineering college majors, supporting student readiness for postsecondary study and career pathways aligned to the school's focus.

c. Modification:

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools are authorized to design and implement grading and assessment practices aligned to their instructional model, student population, and improvement priorities. This flexibility may include standards-based, mastery-based, competency-based, performance-based, or other school-designed approaches, as well as opportunities for reassessment and demonstration of learning over time.

Grading and assessment practices shall align with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, MassCore requirements, graduation policies, and state accountability expectations, and shall be implemented in a manner that ensures clarity, transparency, and consistency for students and families.

This autonomy does not eliminate district or state reporting requirements. Official transcripts, graduation credit accounting, and required state and district reporting shall continue to follow Springfield Public Schools policies and applicable law.

Final authority for grading and assessment practices rests with school leadership pursuant to the Innovation School Plan. Nothing herein shall be construed to grant Teacher Leadership Teams authority over curriculum adoption, grading, or assessment approval.

6B. Schedule Autonomy:

a. Rationale:

School schedule is strategically planned to facilitate the quality of instruction, student performance, and long-term teacher-teacher cooperation. Time flexibility will enable schools to fit some time structures to the instructional priorities, but not to adhere to a standardized district time structure not necessarily based on needs of the school population. Flexibility in scheduling can take place in the form of longer instructional block, embedded intervention time, shared planning time, and systemized chances of collaboration to school improvement objectives. Such time schedules have facilitated the coherence of instruction and good utilization of time which have led to better teaching and learning results. The schools can maintain collaboration in schools by continuing to control the structure of school day and year, enhance instructional consistency and build systems that promote student performance and achievement. Educator working conditions related to schedules and calendars are established through the annual planning process authorized in the Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools Prospectus and this Innovation School Plan.

b. School Level Example(s):

Discovery Polytech Early College High School will maintain a scheduling and calendar structure aligned with early college program requirements and partner university academic calendars. The schedule will incorporate distinct early college support structures, including personalized student schedules that accommodate college coursework. Professional learning days will be intentionally scheduled on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to avoid conflicts with college courses, while designated days of the week will be reserved for instruction on the college campus, ensuring coherence between secondary and postsecondary learning experiences. Discovery will set semester (and quarter) start and end dates in accordance with the college partner schedules to ensure cohesion between high school and college schedules.

c. Modification:

Teacher Leadership Team voting authority with respect to the school calendar is exercised solely as part of the annual approval of Educator Working Conditions pursuant to Appendix A of the Prospectus.

6C. Staffing Autonomy:

a. Rationale:

Staffing independence is also crucial to ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of adults align with the needs and teaching priorities of students. Schools in this network have traditionally been flexible in their leadership, teacher-led instruction, instructional support, and temporary assignments to help them execute their improvement strategies effectively. With staffing independence, the principals can respond proactively to their recruitment, retention, and educator development requirements by matching responsibilities and supports to school requirements. The extension of these staffing flexibilities is based on practices that have enhanced robust instructional delivery and facilitated better student outcomes.

b. School Level Example(s):

Discovery Polytech Early College High School will maintain a staffing model aligned with its college-aligned high school course progression and the instructional and support demands of college-campus-based coursework and college success seminars. Student support staff will serve in integrated roles across the high school and partner college campus to ensure continuity of support and student success. All educators will lead a successful college seminar, reinforcing shared responsibility for student readiness and persistence. Discovery will also allow teachers to be dual employed which allows high school teachers to adjunct college classes for Discovery students during the school day. The school's diverse staffing model comprised of 92% educators and leaders of color intentionally advances the school's foundational commitment to racial equity.

c. Modifications:

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools are authorized to design staffing roles, titles, and organizational structures aligned to their approved Innovation model and student needs, consistent with licensure requirements and applicable law. Staffing decisions, including assignments and role design, are not subject to Teacher Leadership Team voting authority. District-defined staffing roles and governance structures described in the Springfield Public Schools collective bargaining agreement shall apply to Innovation Schools only where expressly incorporated through the Prospectus, Appendix B, or this Innovation School Plan. Nothing herein shall be interpreted to require the creation, maintenance, or elimination of any specific position or role. School-Centered Decision Making structures set forth in the Springfield Public Schools collective bargaining agreement do not apply to this Innovation School except as expressly authorized in the Prospectus.

6D. Professional Development:

a. Rationale:

Professional development autonomy allows schools to craft learning experiences that are closely aligned with the instructional priorities, student data, and identified areas of need. In this network, schools have differentiated professional learning to develop staff capacity in such ways that directly contribute to school improvement goals. This autonomy will make sure that professional development is considered relevant, timely, and aligned with classroom practice. Maintaining these professional learning structures helps sustain further growth in teaching performance and enhances student success, but they must align with district requirements regarding teacher assessment.

b. School Level Example(s):

Professional learning will be intentionally designed to support the unique demands of a wall-to-wall early college high school, where all educators share responsibility for college, internship, and postsecondary success. Professional learning will focus on school-wide college success models the college success seminar and a medical-model approach to addressing chronic absenteeism, along with data analysis practices specific to college persistence and performance. Educators will receive coaching to support students along a continuum of durable skill development and to provide targeted mentoring for students experiencing chronic absenteeism.

c. Modifications:

Professional development activities shall remain aligned with educator evaluation requirements and applicable district reporting obligations. Professional development for educators in Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools shall be designed, scheduled, and implemented at the school level and embedded within the Innovation-authorized annual work year of not less than 1,475 hours. No separate minimum number of professional development days or hours shall apply beyond those hours, except as required by law.

6E. Budget Autonomy:

a. Rationale:

School level budget independence plays a critical role in making sure that financial resources are drawn to meet the instruction requirements of each school, student needs and school improvement strategies. The school population served by schools within the Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools network is different, and schools are run on differing programmatic models; consequently, to effectively implement the school improvement efforts, it is essential to have flexibility in allocating resources in ways that would directly aid identified priorities as opposed to following uniform, centrally-prescribed patterns of resource allocation.

In the past, school-based budget flexibility has provided leaders and school administration with the capacity to react swiftly to the emergent needs of students, to invest in the specific academic and social-emotional scaffolds, and to scale staffing, resources, and service to school-specific enhancement objectives. This flexibility has facilitated consistent approach to instruction strategies, intervening with students on time, and responsible allocation of resources in the interest of better student results. Maintaining budget autonomy enables school leadership to make decisions based on data in relation to the discretionary funds use in a way that will be answerable to district finances, group contracts and the law. The reversion to a fully centralized budgeting system would restrict the capacity of schools to real-time resource assignments, which would probably slow down or hamper enhancement initiatives reliant on coordinated staffing, planning, and teaching aids.

b. School Level Example(s):

Budget development and resource allocation will be intentionally aligned to advancing equitable postsecondary outcomes through the prioritization of early college programming, work-based learning, and college success staffing. The school will plan for significant annual encumbrances related to early college tuition and internship experiences and will actively pursue grants and philanthropic partnerships to sustain and expand college and career investments.

c. Modification:

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools exercise school-based budget autonomy consistent with the fiscal principles described in the Prospectus. Schools may allocate resources flexibly in support of their approved priorities and improvement strategies, provided they operate within district budget parameters and applicable law. Nothing herein authorizes deficit spending or expenditure inconsistent with Springfield Public Schools fiscal controls.

6F. Policy Autonomy:

a. Rationale:

Policy autonomy within Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools supports the effective implementation of school-based improvement strategies by allowing limited flexibility in how district policies and procedures are implemented, while remaining fully compliant with applicable federal and state laws and Springfield Public Schools requirements. Schools operate in varied instructional, operational, and community contexts; preserving this flexibility enables school leadership to apply policies in ways that are responsive to school-specific needs without altering or superseding the underlying policy framework.

Historically, the ability to implement approved alternative practices consistent with Innovation status has helped schools maintain alignment between district expectations and school-level operations, reduce unnecessary procedural barriers, and support timely decision-making. This flexibility has strengthened

operational effectiveness while preserving accountability, ensuring that policies are applied in a manner that supports instructional quality, student safety, and effective organizational practices.

Maintaining limited policy autonomy within the boundaries established by the Prospectus allows schools to implement approved Innovation Plans with clarity and consistency, while remaining aligned with Springfield Public Schools policies, collective bargaining agreements, and legal requirements. A rigid, one-size-fits-all application of district procedures in all circumstances could constrain schools' ability to implement approved improvement strategies, particularly where Prospectus-authorized alternative approaches better support student outcomes and school operations.

b. School Level Example(s):

We will implement school-based procedures for instructional programming, student supports, family engagement, and internal operations (e.g., restorative practice processes, intervention protocols, internal communication structures, and scheduling procedures) that align with the intent of Springfield Public Schools policies, while allowing for school-specific application and implementation consistent with the Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools Prospectus

c. Modification:

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and follow Springfield Public Schools policies and procedures except where an approved Innovation School Plan, authorized pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §92 and approved by the School Committee, expressly establishes an alternative approach consistent with law.

7. Measurable Annual Goals (State-Required)

Goal Category (Required)	School-Defined Target	Metric / Evidence of Progress
Student Attendance (i)	6% or less incident rate by June 30	Chronic Absentee Rate
Student Safety & Discipline (ii)	6% or less incident rate by June 30	Incident Rate
Promotion, Graduation & Dropout Rates (iii)	0% dropout rate	Dropout Rate
Student Achievement on MCAS (iv)	50% Meeting/Exceeding in ELA	MCAS Percent Meeting/Exceeding
Progress in Areas of Academic Underperformance (v)	50% or more As & Bs in Mathematics courses	% A/B Grades for Math Courses
Subgroup Performance Progress (vi)	Increase ELA MCAS Score for SWD by Average of 10 Points	MCAS ELA Score for SWD

Reduction of Achievement Gaps (vii)	Reduce the Chronic Absence Rate for SWD by 10%	CA Rate for SWD Compared to Non-SWD
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8. Ongoing Planning and Review

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools operate a structured, school-based annual planning cycle designed to support continuous improvement, educator voice, and alignment between instructional priorities, operational decisions, and student needs. This annual process integrates the development of school priorities, measurable goals, educator working conditions, and implementation strategies and serves as the primary mechanism for organizing the school's work for the upcoming year.

Educator Working Conditions are established annually through this planning process and may include, but are not limited to, matters related to the organization of the school day and year; daily start and end times; duty-free lunch and student-free preparation time; class coverage and supervision; scheduling of school-wide meetings; rotation of duties; class size considerations; health and safety practices; and other school-based operational conditions that directly affect educators' work.

The annual planning process is led by the Principal in collaboration with the Teacher Leadership Team (TLT). As authorized through this Innovation School Plan pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §92, Teacher Leadership Teams exercise defined voting authority with respect to Educator Working Conditions as a whole, as presented for annual approval, and do not exercise independent authority over individual contractual elements. Teacher Leadership Teams do not exercise independent authority over individual contractual provisions, compensation, staffing assignments, or evaluation.

Final authority and accountability for school operations, including approval and implementation of educator working conditions, calendar, staffing decisions, instructional programming, and compliance with district, state, and federal requirements, remain with school leadership and Springfield Public Schools.

9. Modifications to the Collective Bargaining Agreement

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools operate under the Springfield Public Schools collective bargaining agreement except where expressly modified through the Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools Prospectus and incorporated into this Innovation School Plan pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §92. This Innovation School Plan does not propose any collective bargaining modifications beyond those authorized in the Prospectus. The Prospectus is attached to this document.

Voting Procedure Overview

The following procedures outline the official process for voting on the Innovation Plan. All members are expected to follow these steps to ensure a fair, transparent, and secure voting process.

Distribution of Materials

Members will receive a copy of their school's Innovation Plan and the Prospectus prior to the scheduled voting day to allow adequate time for review.

Scheduled Voting

Each school location will have an assigned voting day and time.

On the day of the vote, a Central Office staff member will be present at the voting site with a verified list of eligible voters.

Voting Day Procedures

Check-In

Upon arrival, voters must check in with the Central Office staff member, who will verify identity and mark off the voter's name on the eligibility list.

Ballot Issuance

After verification, the voter will receive an official ballot.

Casting the Vote

Voters will complete their ballot and place it in the designated ballot box.

Check-Out

After voting, individuals must check out with the onsite staff to complete the voting process.

Vote Count

After all ballots have been cast, staff members will publicly count the votes and announce the final outcome.

Absentee Ballots

Members who are unable to attend their scheduled voting time may request an absentee ballot.

Absentee Ballot Requirements

Requests **must** be submitted no later than **48 hours** before the scheduled voting time.

Requests must be emailed to rooneyn@springfieldpublicschools.com.

Absentee Voting Process

Absentee ballots will be sent to the school office clerk prior to voting day. The clerk will receive the list of eligible voters.

The voter must:

Check in with the clerk, who will verify identity and mark the voter off the eligibility list.

Receive and complete the absentee ballot.

Seal the completed ballot in the provided envelope and return it to the clerk.

The clerk will secure absentee ballots until voting day. The Central Office staff member will pick up all ballots and the check-in list from the clerk.

On voting day, absentee ballots will be added to the ballot box and counted along with all other ballots.

INNOVATION SCHOOL PROSPECTUS GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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Prospectus Format and Submission Requirements

As specified by state law, there are two major stages of the approval of an Innovation School. A **prospectus** must be approved by a three-person screening committee, and then a fully detailed **innovation plan** must be developed and approved by the innovation plan committee and then approved by teachers (in the case of conversions) and the local school committee. For more detailed information on the Innovation School approval process please see <http://www.mass.gov/edu/innovation-schools.html> .

This document outlines guidance for the **prospectus**.

Format and Submission Requirements	The prospectus is usually 10-30 pages of text, excluding required attachments. <i>Submit to district Superintendent:</i> • One (1) bound or stapled original copy, • One (1) unbound copy suitable for photocopying, and • An electronic copy of the prospectus.
Where to Mail and/or Drop-off Prospectuses	Superintendent's Office Springfield Public Schools 1550 Main Street Springfield, MA 01103 <i>Please Note: All documents submitted become a part of the public record.</i>

INNOVATION SCHOOL INFORMATION FORM

Proposed Innovation Zone Name:	Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS)
Proposed Innovation Schools for year 1:	Chestnut Talented and Gifted, 355 Plainfield St, Springfield, MA 01104 John J. Duggan Academy, 1015 Wilbraham Rd, Springfield, MA 01109 Van Sickle Academy, 1170 Carew St, Springfield, MA 01104 The entirety of programs within The High School of Commerce, including the following: Springfield Honors Academy, 415 State St, Springfield, MA 01105 Traditional Commerce, 415 State St, Springfield, MA 01105 Aspire Academy, 415 State St, Springfield, MA 01105 Discovery Polytech Early College High School, 1350 Main St #1600, Springfield, MA 01103 Rise High School, 1170 Carew St, Springfield, MA 01104
New school/Conversion/Academy within a school:	All Schools are conversion schools. Discovery Polytech, Aspire Academy, Springfield Honors Academy, Traditional Commerce, and Rise are currently programs within the High School of Commerce, and therefore, are all conversion programs (academies) within an existing school.
Lead applicant Name:	Andrea Metzger, Principal, Chestnut Tag; April Robinson, Principal, John J. Duggan Academy;- Declan O'Connor, Principal, Discovery Polytech Early

	College High School; Robert Francesca, Principal, Van Sickle Academy; Dena Cooper, Principal, Springfield Honors Academy; Amanda Gauthier, Principal, High School of Commerce; Tiffany Carr, Principal, Aspire Academy; Anna Breen, Principal, Rise Academy
Lead applicant Phone Number(s) :	A.M. 413-222-4930 or 413-7502333; M.C. 413-439-5458 or 413-787-7410; D.O (413) 787-6701 or 413-519-5616; R.F. (413) 750-2887 or 413-221-6149; D.C. (413) 787-6707 or 617-592-5107; A.G (413) 787-7220 Or 413-885-5355; T. C (413) 787-7220 or 413-495-2459; A.B. (413) 750-2887 or 339-440-0751
Lead applicant Fax Number(s) :	413-750-2333
Lead applicant Email Address:	metzgera@springfieldpublicschools.com robinsona@springfieldpublicschools.com oconnord@springfieldpublicschools.com francescar@springfieldpublicschools.com cooperd@springfieldpublicschools.com gauthiera@springfieldpublicschools.com carrt@springfieldpublicschools.com breena@springfieldpublicschools.com

Proposed Innovation Zone opening school year: 2026-2027

Proposed duration of innovation plan (up to five years): 5 years

INNOVATION PROSPECTUS SCREENING COMMITTEE APPROVAL FORM

Proposed Innovation Zone Name:	Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS)
Proposed City/Town Location:	1550 Main Street Springfield MA 01103

Typed Name of Superintendent or designee:	Dr. Sonia Dinnall
Signature:	
Vote to Approve or Reject (circle one):	Approve Reject
Date:	

Typed Name of School Committee Chair or designee (appointed by the body):	Ms. Denise Hurst
Signature:	
Vote to Approve or Reject (circle one):	Approve Reject
Date:	

Typed Name of Union President or designee:	Mr. Riley Hernandez
Signature:	
Vote to Approve or Reject (circle one):	Approve Reject
Date:	

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this Innovation Prospectus is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and has been approved by at least 2 of the 3 Screening Committee members.

Signature of Superintendent or Designee _____

Date_____

INNOVATION SCHOOL PROSPECTUS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership (SEZP) has demonstrated success in transforming once underperforming schools into thriving educational institutions. By taking advantage of critical autonomies in curriculum, budgeting, school scheduling, staffing, professional development, and policy flexibility, schools previously ranked among the lowest-performing campuses in the state have significantly improved, with performance surpassing state intervention thresholds. These achievements demonstrate the potential of autonomy-driven school models in fostering sustainable growth and academic excellence.

Because of these achievements and the readiness of Springfield Public Schools (SPS), it is time to move toward a sustaining, entirely locally driven future for the schools that have made such great progress. The proposed Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools will end the partnership with the state and create a fully local solution that maintains the autonomies that fueled these schools' progress. This shift balances accountability with local control, ensuring long-term alignment with the community's educational goals.

School-level freedom in decision-making around curriculum, budget, staffing, and scheduling has been instrumental in driving academic improvement. Transitioning to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS) preserves these core flexibilities while creating space for continued innovation that is responsive to local needs. As a result, we anticipate the following key benefits:

1. Enhanced Local Governance While Preserving School-Based Autonomy

Innovation school status places ISSPS schools under clear oversight and accountability to Springfield Public Schools and the Springfield School Committee, strengthening local ownership without diminishing the school-level autonomy that has been central to these schools' success. This structure empowers leaders, educators, and families closest to the community to make timely, informed decisions that best serve students.

2. Stronger Alignment with District Priorities While Retaining Operational Independence

As Innovation Schools within SPS, ISSPS schools are positioned to leverage district-wide resources, supports, and systems, while maintaining the operational independence necessary to meet their students' unique needs. This hybrid model

encourages collaboration across schools and allows effective practices to align with—and inform—broader district goals.

3. Sustainability of Academic Gains and Knowledge-Sharing Across the District

Innovation school status helps ensure that the academic progress achieved in recent years is not only sustained but has the potential to inform and benefit other schools across Springfield. Importantly, this occurs without compromising school-level decision-making, allowing successful strategies to spread while preserving what makes each school effective.

The proposed shift to ISSPS reflects the Springfield community's commitment to sustaining high standards of education through local initiative and independence from state partnership. It ensures that the hard-earned progress of these schools continues to inspire a broader culture of innovation, equity, and academic excellence across the district.

II. STRATEGIC CHANGE

A. Purpose and Continuity of ISSPS

The purpose of Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS) is to preserve effective school-level practices within a fully local, district-governed structure by operating as an Innovation School Zone, as authorized under M.G.L. c.71, §92. ISSPS does not represent a departure from the improvement strategies developed during the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership (SEZP). Rather, it formalizes and sustains those proven practices through a zone- or system-level framework, ensuring continuity, clarity, and long-term viability under Springfield Public Schools oversight.

B. Statutory Framework and Scope of Flexibilities

Rooted in the Innovation School Zone statutory framework set forth in M.G.L. c.71, §92, schools within ISSPS will remain subject to Springfield Public Schools district policies and applicable collective bargaining agreements, except where specific modifications identified in this Prospectus are approved through the approval of the Innovation School Plans. The Prospectus defines the zone- or system-level flexibilities applicable across all ISSPS schools, including potential adjustments to staffing structures, scheduling, compensation for additional roles, and other working conditions. Each school's Innovation School Plan will incorporate by reference the terms of this Prospectus and will describe how these approved systemwide flexibilities are implemented at the school level. In short, ISSPS establishes the systemwide framework, while individual Innovation School Plans evidence school-specific implementation.

C. School Approval and Voting Structure

As required under M.G.L. c.71, §92, each school community must formally approve participation in the ISSPS Innovation School Zone. However, no local education agency in Massachusetts has yet proposed an Innovation School Zone, and therefore no established template exists for how schools should vote on flexibilities that extend across multiple schools. In the absence of such a template, ISSPS has elected to use this Prospectus to define the shared flexibilities applicable to all schools within the zone. The Prospectus will be incorporated by reference into each school's Innovation School Plan. Accordingly, for a school to join ISSPS and operate with Innovation School status, the school community must vote to approve an Innovation School Plan incorporating by reference the terms of this Prospectus.

This approval structure ensures that system-level flexibilities and school-level implementation are jointly authorized, reflecting both district oversight and school-community consent.

D. Relationship to Annual School Improvement Plan

Each ISSPS school will continue to approve an annual School Improvement Plan. Consistent with SEZP-era practice, the School Improvement Plan is approved by the Teacher Leadership Team and serves as the primary vehicle for annual goal-setting, implementation, and reflection at the school level. This process is described in greater detail below.

E. Differentiation Between System-Level and School-Level Authority

As illustrated in the chart below, ISSPS clearly differentiates between decisions and flexibilities established at the zone or ISSPS system level and those determined at the individual school level.

ISSPS Systems-Level (which is captured in the Prospectus)

Purpose & Statutory Authority

- Establishes ISSPS as an Innovation School Zone, as authorized under M.G.L. c.71, §92.
- Preserves and formalizes effective SEZP-era practices within a fully local, district-governed structure.
- Ensures continuity, clarity, and long-term viability under Springfield Public Schools oversight.

District Governance & Accountability

- Confirms that ISSPS schools operate as part of Springfield Public Schools.
- Establishes accountability to SPS and the Springfield School Committee.

Zone-Level Flexibilities (Framework)

- Defines the systemwide flexibilities available to all ISSPS schools, including potential adjustments to: - Staffing models - Scheduling structures - Compensation for additional roles - Other working conditions
- These flexibilities are articulated once, at the zone level, in this Prospectus.

Statutory & Labor Framework

- Confirms specific exceptions to district policies and collective bargaining agreements.

Approval & Entry into ISSPS

- Requires formal approval by each school community, consistent with statute.
- Entry into ISSPS requires a vote to approve the zone-level flexibilities described in this Prospectus.

Consistency Across Schools

- Establishes a single, common, systemwide framework applicable across all ISSPS schools.
- Prevents individualized or school-by-school flexibility packages.

ISSPS School-Level (which is captured in the School Innovation Plan)

School-Specific Design & Improvement

- Describes how the school implements the ISSPS zone framework to meet student needs.
- Articulates the school's instructional model, programmatic focus, and improvement priorities.

School-Level Accountability

- Establishes school-specific goals, benchmarks, and strategies through the School Innovation Plan, with progress monitoring and recalibration in annual School Improvement Plan.

Implementation of Zone-Level Flexibilities

- Specifies how approved system-level flexibilities are applied in practice at the school level.
- Does not introduce new or individualized flexibilities beyond those established at the zone level.

School-Specific Implementation

- The school's School Innovation Plan serves as the document for showing schools are applying flexibilities.

School-Community Consent

- Requires approval of the School Innovation Plan by the school community and School Committee.

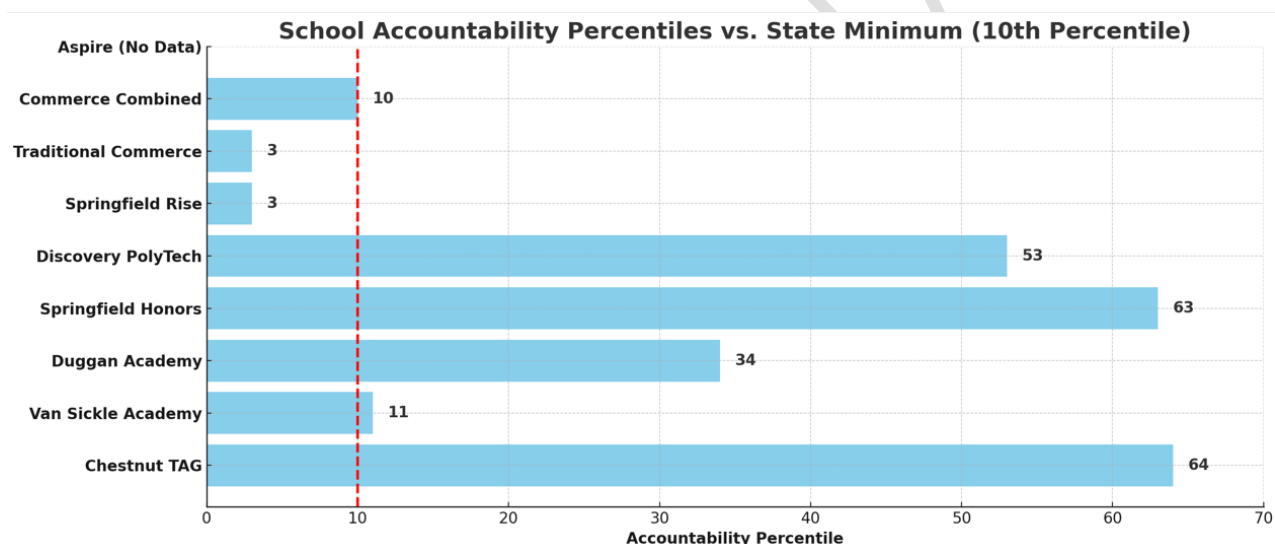
Ongoing School-Level Practice

- Allows schools to exercise meaningful autonomy within the shared ISSPS framework.
- Maintains school-based decision-making while aligning with district expectations.

III. PUBLIC STATEMENT

ISSPS schools are formerly state-designated underperforming schools that have dramatically improved student outcomes and faculty satisfaction through the strategic use of vital autonomy in curriculum, budget, staffing, and scheduling. Now that they are no longer classified as underperforming, these schools are ready to chart a sustaining, entirely locally driven path forward.

The proposed ISSPS will ensure that the autonomies that fueled these schools' progress are maintained, now that the schools have exited underperforming status. This shift balances accountability with local control, ensuring stronger long-term alignment with the community's educational goals. This move ensures continued autonomy while strengthening local oversight, aligning progress with community priorities, and fostering long-term sustainability. By preserving the successful strategies that have transformed its schools, ISSPS will empower schools to build on their achievements, enhance student outcomes, and inspire innovation across the district for the benefit of all Springfield students.



It should be noted that two of the eight schools exiting SEZP - Springfield Honors Academy and Discovery Polytech - currently share state accountability data with the High School of Commerce. As a result, Commerce's reported overall accountability percentile of 10 reflects the combined performance of these programs, including Springfield Honors Academy (estimated at the 63rd percentile) and Discovery Polytech (calculated at the 54th percentile). When data are disaggregated, Traditional Commerce and Rise likely each fall to the 3rd percentile.

These disaggregated results have important implications for the transition to ISSPS. Indeed, Traditional Commerce and Rise will both continue through the ISSPS process. However, due to low enrollment (a projected 30 students in 2026-27), Rise will close at the end of the 2026-27 school year. Traditional Commerce serves a student population in which more than 50 percent of students are identified as requiring special education services. This concentration of high-need learners underscores the need for new,

intensive, and differentiated supports at the Commerce campus as part of the transition.

IV. MISSION, VISION, STATEMENT OF NEED, AND PROPOSED PARTNERSHIPS

A. Mission Statement

The Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS) are reimagining education by tailoring resources to meet the diverse academic and social needs of our students, within a culture of continuous school improvement. We partner closely with families and community members, recognizing that their involvement is essential to student success. We attract, support, and retain exceptional educators who reflect the diversity of our community and who are empowered to innovate in service of their students. We are committed to purposeful teaching, empowered learners, culturally responsive instruction, and joyful, meaningful learning experiences. Above all, we affirm and support students as whole people, ensuring that they feel welcomed, valued, and able to live fully in their identities; so that every graduate is prepared to thrive in college, career, leadership, and life.

Core Values

- **Equity with Autonomy:** We advance educational equity while ensuring schools have the autonomy to innovate in service of their students' unique needs.
- **Affirmation and Belonging:** We ensure that students, families, and staff feel affirmed, welcomed, and empowered to live fully in their identities.
- **Culturally & Historically Responsive Practice:** We value our students' diverse experiences and center their voices by using resources and teaching practices that strengthen identity and foster critical perspectives on the world.
- **Asset-Based Mindset:** We focus on opportunities to improve outcomes by learning from and building on the strengths of our students, families, staff, and community partners.
- **Collaboration & Empathy:** We prioritize people by listening before we speak, practicing empathy, hearing before we decide, choosing collaboration, and showing kindness.

B. Vision Statement

In deep collaboration with Springfield Public Schools, we envision a system of schools that is continuously improving, equitable, and innovative; where autonomy and accountability work together to ensure every student is empowered to envision and achieve success. Our schools will be places of belonging, affirmation, and growth, preparing students to thrive academically, socially, and personally in a complex and diverse world.

C. Statement of Need

Our schools - while in SEZP - have shown that true improvement is possible. By taking advantage of critical autonomies in curriculum, budgeting, school scheduling, staffing, professional development, and policy flexibility, as well as increasing teacher voice and teacher retention through the creation of teacher leadership teams, schools previously ranked among the lowest-performing campuses in the state have significantly improved, with performance surpassing state intervention thresholds. These achievements demonstrate the potential of autonomy-driven school models in fostering sustainable growth and academic excellence.

With these schools no longer classified as underperforming, transitioning to a locally governed *Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools* is vital. This shift preserves effective autonomies while restoring local accountability through Springfield Public Schools and the Springfield School Committee. ISSPS is essential to sustain progress, align with community goals, and inspire continued excellence across the district.

V. HOW WILL AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY BE USED TO IMPROVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT?

This Prospectus establishes the systemwide flexibilities available to all schools within Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS) and is consistent with the Innovation School Zone provisions of M.G.L. c.71, §92. The Innovation School Plan describes how these flexibilities are applied to advance school-based decision-making and annual priorities. A school formally joins ISSPS - and secures Innovation School status - by voting to approve both the systemwide flexibilities set forth in this Prospectus and the school-level implementation of those flexibilities through its School Innovation Plan which incorporates by reference the terms of this Prospectus.

ISSPS schools will use autonomy strategically to sustain improvement and advance student achievement. Building on proven SEZP practices, schools will align curriculum, instruction, staffing, scheduling, professional learning, and resource use with student needs and clearly defined improvement priorities.

Pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, §92, Innovation Schools operate as part of Springfield Public Schools and remain subject to district policies and collective bargaining agreements, except where specific school-level modifications are expressly approved through this innovation school zone process. Any collective bargaining modifications are limited to those explicitly set forth in Appendix A and Appendix B. No other modifications are authorized or implied.

A. FLEXIBILITIES FROM COLLECTIVE-BARGAINING AGREEMENT

The Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS) are authorized to operate with defined flexibilities from the Springfield Public Schools-Springfield Education Association (SPS-SEA) collective-bargaining agreement, consistent with the Innovation Schools statute and modeled after the practices established during the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership (SEZP).

In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the terms of this Innovation School Prospectus and the terms of any controlling collective-bargaining agreement, the terms of this Prospectus shall prevail to the extent of such conflict or inconsistency.

1. Compensation

Schools within ISSPS shall continue to operate under the career ladder - and utilize stipend and extra-pay provisions - modeled after the relevant SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement language. These practices reflect approaches that have strengthened instructional delivery, supported educator retention, and contributed to improved student outcomes. The specific application of staffing structures and compensation for additional roles is governed by the Prospectus and implemented consistently across ISSPS schools. A further description related to this area follows in Appendix A and Appendix B of this document.

As a result, the career ladder roles, structures, and requirements set forth in Article 26 and related appendices of the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement shall not apply to schools within ISSPS. Likewise, the extra-pay and stipend provisions of the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement shall not apply to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools.

2. School-Level Teacher Leadership Teams

Schools within ISSPS shall continue to operate using the leadership and decision-making structures of the Teacher Leadership Team, including oversight of working conditions, modeled after the relevant SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement language. A further description related to this area follows in Appendix A and Appendix B of this document.

As a result, the School-Centered Decision-Making provisions set forth in Article 6 of the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement - including requirements related to team composition, elections, stipends, voting thresholds, and procedures - shall not apply to ISSPS schools.

3. Grievance Procedure

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools shall continue to operate under the grievance procedures and timelines modeled after the relevant SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement language. A further description related to this area follows in Appendix A and Appendix B of this document.

As a result, the grievance provisions of the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement shall not apply to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools.

4. Work Hours

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools shall continue to operate with school years of no less than 1,475 hours for educators, consistent with the work year established during the SEZP era and modeled after the relevant SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement language. A further description related to this area follows in Appendix A and Appendix B of this document. Schools, as approved by the Teacher Leadership Team, may increase the school year beyond 1,475 hours, with educators compensated at the rate specified in Appendix A and Appendix B of this document.

As a result, all provisions of work hours in the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement shall not apply to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools.

5. Preparatory Time

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools shall continue to operate with student-free preparatory time and applicable workday and work-year structures modeled after the relevant SEA-SEZP contract language. A further description related to this area follows in Appendix A and Appendix B of this document.

As a result, all provisions of preparatory time in the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement shall not apply to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools.

6. Professional Development

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools shall continue to operate with a model of professional development for educators - where professional development is designed, scheduled, and implemented at the school level - consistent with the model developed during the SEZP era and modeled after the relevant SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement language. A further description related to this area follows in Appendix A and Appendix B of this document.

As a result, all provisions relating to professional development in the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement shall not apply to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools.

7. Staffing

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools shall continue to operate with staffing models and role configurations that differ from district norms - particularly for School-Based Services roles, librarians, and counselors - consistent with the model developed during the SEZP era and modeled after the relevant SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement language. A further description related to this area follows in Appendix A and Appendix B of this document.

As a result, all provisions related to staffing in the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement shall not apply to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools.

8. Lesson Planning

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools shall continue to operate with a model of Lesson Planning for educators, where Lesson-planning practices are designed to strengthen instructional coherence, promote professional collaboration, and support high-quality classroom instruction. These practices shall not impose requirements that exceed those historically required under Article 25 of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement, nor shall lesson plans be used as a compliance or monitoring mechanism.

As a result, all provisions of lesson planning in the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement shall not apply to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools.

B. AUTONOMIES FROM DISTRICT POLICIES

The Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS) are authorized to operate with defined autonomies from Springfield Public Schools district policies, as outlined in this section and consistent with the Innovation Schools statute and practices established during the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership (SEZP).

In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the terms of this Innovation School Prospectus and any Springfield School Committee policy, or Springfield Public Schools protocol, the terms of this Prospectus shall prevail to the extent of such conflict or inconsistency.

1. School Improvement Plan

On an annual basis, all ISSPS schools will also follow a common, zone-wide School Improvement Plan process, closely aligned with the process used during the SEZP period. This approach promotes consistency, transparency, and accountability across schools, while preserving educator voice – a key driver of success during the SEZP era. Consistent with the authority described in Appendix A, the TLT provides input and exercises voting authority solely with respect to defined Educator Working Conditions, including the school calendar, in the School Improvement Plan.

As a result, all district policies related to any additional school improvement planning processes shall not apply to ISSPS schools.

2. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Autonomy in curriculum, instruction, and assessment is essential to achieving coherence among a school's instructional vision, student needs, and improvement priorities. Within ISSPS, this autonomy enables school leadership teams to make informed instructional decisions grounded in real-time student data, professional expertise, and continuous improvement goals, rather than relying solely on uniform districtwide pacing or prescriptive instructional models.

This flexibility allows schools to thoughtfully sequence curriculum, refine instructional strategies, and use assessment practices responsively to meet the needs of diverse learners. Educator collaboration and professional input play a central role in effective implementation, as teachers are more likely to commit to and successfully execute instructional approaches developed through structured, school-based planning processes. Instructional leadership and accountability remain clearly defined at both the school and district levels.

Maintaining autonomy in curriculum, instruction, and assessment supports sustained improvement while ensuring alignment with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, MassCore requirements, and Springfield Public Schools expectations. A return to a fully prescribed districtwide instructional and assessment framework would limit schools' ability to respond quickly to student needs and risk undermining instructional practices that have contributed to long-term gains in student achievement. Districtwide instructional initiatives or guidance intended to standardize instructional planning practices, including lesson planning, shall not apply to ISSPS

schools except where expressly adopted through an approved Innovation School Plan consistent with this Prospectus.

As a result, all district policies related to curriculum, instruction and assessment shall not apply to ISSPS schools.

3. Student Assessment and Grading

ISSPS schools implement school-based assessment and grading practices aligned with each school's instructional model and improvement priorities. School-level practices related to grading, reassessment opportunities, and educator-level grading procedures are determined by the school, consistent with this Prospectus and the approved School Innovation Plan.

District and state requirements related to official transcripts, graduation credit accounting, and external reporting continue to be governed by Springfield Public Schools policies and applicable law.

4. Schedule and Calendar

Autonomy over school schedules and calendars allows ISSPS schools to design time structures responsive to the needs of students, staff, and communities. This flexibility enables schools to organize the instructional day and school year in ways that maximize instructional time, support targeted interventions, and promote a balanced student experience.

Schedule and calendar autonomy supports the strategic use of extended instructional blocks, common planning time, and structured collaboration aligned with instructional priorities. These structures strengthen instructional coherence, embed professional learning within the workday, and allow schools to respond effectively to student data and emerging needs. Educator input informs these decisions through established planning processes, while final responsibility remains with school leadership.

During the SEZP period, flexible scheduling models supported improved use of time, instructional alignment, and professional collaboration. Building on this experience, ISSPS schools will continue to leverage schedule and calendar flexibility while remaining accountable to district expectations and student outcomes.

As a result, all district policies related to schedule and calendar shall not apply to ISSPS schools.

5. Staffing

Staffing autonomy allows ISSPS schools to align adult roles, responsibilities, and deployment with each school's instructional model, schedule, and student needs. This flexibility supports high-quality instruction, targeted interventions, effective use of time, and coordinated student support systems.

Within ISSPS, staffing flexibility enables school leadership to recruit, assign, and organize staff roles that support instructional coherence, services for diverse learners, social-emotional development, extended learning opportunities, and engagement with families and the community. These decisions are made within a consistent, zone-wide framework and aligned with approved school priorities. Staffing autonomy also allows for differentiated roles and compensation for additional responsibilities, including stipends where appropriate, to support teacher leadership, address hard-to-staff needs, and advance improvement priorities.

As a result, all district policies related to staffing shall not apply to ISSPS schools.

6. Professional Development

Autonomy in professional development enables ISSPS schools to design learning experiences that are timely, relevant, and aligned with instructional priorities and student needs. Professional development is embedded within the school improvement process and supports effective implementation of instructional practices.

Professional learning opportunities build educator capacity, strengthen instructional coherence, and support progress toward school and district goals. By aligning professional development with curriculum, instructional strategies, and student data, ISSPS schools foster shared responsibility for improvement while maintaining accountability to district expectations.

As a result, all district policies related to professional development shall not apply to ISSPS schools.

7. Policies

ISSPS schools operate as part of Springfield Public Schools and comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, as well as Springfield Public Schools policies and procedures except those identified as being subject to defined autonomies specified herein. Schools adhere to district policies related to student discipline, bullying prevention, Title IX compliance, civil rights protections, and school safety, which establish baseline protections applicable across all SPS schools.

After the initial School Innovation Plan, if a school proposes a subsequent school-level change to district policy - in operational areas such as grading practices, scheduling, professional development, and instructional approaches - that change must be approved by the TLT, reviewed and approved by ISSPS leadership [The Executive Director of the ISSPS] and Superintendent, and finally, approved by the Springfield School Committee. If approved, this change in policy will be integrated into the School Innovation Plan.

ISSPS schools provide Springfield Public Schools with copies of any school-based student conduct policies prior to the start of each school year and coordinate with district leadership regarding matters that may result in suspension or expulsion, consistent with district procedures and applicable law.

8. Budget

ISSPS schools operate as fiscally sustainable schools within Springfield Public Schools and in accordance with the budget principles outlined in this Prospectus and the district's annual budgeting process.

Consistent with the Innovation Schools statute, schools may retain unused funds and apply those funds in subsequent years to support approved priorities and improvement strategies. Schools may also establish a nonprofit organization to support the school's mission, including fundraising activities, provided such activities comply with applicable law and district requirements. Springfield Public Schools will continue to provide ISSPS schools with a list of optional services that schools may choose to purchase for school supports annually.

VI. CAPACITY OF APPLICANT GROUP

The Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS) Prospectus was developed collaboratively by a team of principal representatives from all eight participating schools: April Robinson, Andrea Metzger, Declan O'Connor, Amanda Gauthier, Robert Franchesca, Anna Breen, Dena Cooper, and Tiffany Carr. The development of the Prospectus incorporated input from educators and was informed by the existing memorandum of understanding between the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership (SEZP) and Springfield Public Schools (SPS).

Collectively, these school leaders bring extensive experience leading highly autonomous schools, designing innovative schedules, managing school-based budgets, and implementing continuous improvement processes that elevate educator voice and student achievement. Each principal has served as, or led, a school operating under the SEZP model—an approach characterized by extended learning time, school-level budgeting authority, and collaborative school-wide planning through Teacher Leadership Teams. This shared experience reflects a deep

understanding of both the opportunities and responsibilities associated with autonomous schools.

Together, the applicant group represents decades of leadership experience within systems of innovation and empowerment in Springfield. Several participating schools have demonstrated strong academic gains, positive school culture, and state or national recognition. Through sustained collaboration, this leadership team has developed a unified ISSPS framework that preserves the most effective practices of SEZP while ensuring alignment with district systems and long-term sustainability.

This collective capacity demonstrates the readiness of the applicant group to steward Innovation Schools responsibly, uphold key autonomies, and advance collaboration and continuous improvement in service of student achievement across Springfield Public Schools.

VII. EXTERNAL PARTNERS

No external partner will be responsible for developing, operating, or managing the Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools. While individual schools may engage community organizations, employers, or higher education institutions as programmatic partners, ISSPS will be entirely locally governed and operated by Springfield Public Schools.

VIII. ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING OVERVIEW

Collectively, the eight schools proposed for conversion to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools are anticipated to serve approximately 2210 students and employ approximately 395 full-time equivalent staff in the 2026-27 school year. While each school's enrollment and staffing needs differ based on program model and student population, the projected figures are as follows:

- Commerce High School - approximately 280 students; 79 FTE staff
- Rise Academy - approximately 30 students; 10 FTE staff
- Springfield Honors Academy - approximately 220 students; 30 FTE staff
- Discovery High School: Polytech - approximately 215 students; 29 FTE staff
- Aspire Academy - approximately 70 students; 14 FTE staff
- Van Sickle Academy - approximately 255 students; 41 staff
- Chestnut Accelerated Middle School - approximately 290 students; 59 FTE staff
- Duggan Academy - approximately 850 students; 133 FTE staff

IX. OPERATIONS AS PART OF AND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SPS

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS) operate as schools within Springfield Public Schools (SPS) and are subject to district oversight, accountability, and applicable SPS policies and procedures, except where flexibilities are expressly authorized pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, §92. This section describes the operational relationship between SPS and ISSPS and is intended to provide clarity regarding governance, coordination, and shared responsibilities. It is descriptive in nature and does not supersede applicable law or the authority of approved Innovation Plans.

A. Governance, Accountability, and Oversight

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools remain accountable to SPS and the Springfield School Committee for student performance, fiscal responsibility, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The Superintendent retains statutory authority over district operations, while Innovation Schools exercise approved autonomies consistent with their Innovation Plans.

Each Innovation School participates in district accountability processes, including goal setting, reporting, and review, in alignment with SPS expectations and timelines. Continued participation in ISSPS is contingent upon meeting performance goals and adhering to the requirements of approved Innovation Plans.

B. Leadership Structure and Supervision

The Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools shall appoint the Executive Director of Innovation Schools (EDIS), who shall be accountable to the Superintendent or designee. The EDIS provides coordination, support, and oversight to Innovation Schools and serves as the primary liaison between ISSPS and district leadership.

Principals of Innovation Schools are selected through processes led by ISSPS leadership, subject to appointment and salary approval by the Superintendent. Principals are evaluated by the EDIS or designee, consistent with district expectations, and remain accountable for instructional leadership, school operations, and implementation of the approved Innovation Plan.

C. Enrollment, Recruitment, and Student Assignment

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools participate fully in SPS enrollment, recruitment, and assignment processes on an equivalent basis as other SPS schools. Innovation Schools are included in district recruitment materials, communications, and enrollment systems.

Enrollment projections and target enrollments are developed collaboratively between SPS and ISSPS as part of the district's annual planning process. Any material changes

to district enrollment, assignment, or recruitment policies that may impact Innovation Schools shall be communicated and coordinated with ISSPS leadership.

D. Programmatic and Operational Coordination

Innovation Schools coordinate with SPS in the delivery of core operational services, including but not limited to transportation, facilities, technology, food services, and purchasing. SPS provides these services in a manner consistent with services provided to other district schools unless an alternative arrangement is approved through an Innovation Plan.

Innovation Schools may operate extended school days, or school years as authorized through their Innovation Plans. ISSPS and SPS collaborate annually to align school schedules with transportation planning, facilities access, and district operational timelines.

Innovation Schools students are eligible to participate in districtwide academic, extracurricular, and interscholastic activities, subject to coordination and any applicable costs.

E. Budgeting and Financial Operations

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools operate within the Springfield Public Schools budgeting framework and are subject to district fiscal policies, oversight, and School Committee approval. Budgets are developed annually and aligned to each school's approved Innovation Plan, staffing model, instructional priorities, and improvement goals.

Consistent with historical practice under the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership, ISSPS is designed so that the substantial majority of funds allocated for Innovation Schools are deployed directly at the school level to support instruction, staffing, student services, and school-based priorities. As a planning expectation, ISSPS intends that no less than approximately eighty percent (80%) of Innovation School operating funds will be budgeted directly to schools, with remaining funds supporting shared services, district-provided functions, and system-level coordination. This design supports school-level autonomy by maximizing direct investment in school-based staffing, programming, and student supports. Springfield Public Schools will continue to provide ISSPS schools with a list of optional services that schools may choose to purchase for school supports annually.

Final budget allocations remain subject to annual district budgeting processes, enrollment-based funding levels, legal requirements, and School Committee approval. Nothing herein shall be construed to create a fixed funding formula, entitlement, or contractual guarantee.

Consistent with the Innovation Schools statute, Innovation Schools may retain and carry forward unexpended funds for use in subsequent fiscal years in support of approved school priorities, subject to district financial controls and reporting requirements.

F. Policy Alignment and Legal Compliance

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. ISSPS schools follow SPS policies and procedures as approved by the School Committee except those identified as being subject to defined autonomies specified herein.

Innovation Schools adhere to district policies related to student discipline, bullying prevention, civil rights protections, Title IX compliance, and school safety. In other operational areas—such as instructional practices, grading, scheduling, and professional development—schools may implement school-based approaches where flexibility has been explicitly approved through an Innovation Plan.

G. Information Sharing and Reporting

Innovation Schools utilize district data systems for attendance, discipline, and required reporting and provide SPS with information necessary to support oversight, accountability, and compliance. ISSPS staff are granted appropriate access to district systems, subject to district protocols.

Innovation Schools are not required to implement districtwide assessments beyond those required by law but may opt to participate in district assessment systems where beneficial to instructional planning and coherence.

X. TIMETABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT

The development, review, and approval of ISSPS schools shall follow the process and timelines established in M.G.L. c.71, §92 and related Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidance for conversion schools.

Following approval of this Prospectus by the Screening Committee, each proposed Innovation School will convene an Innovation Planning Committee consistent with statutory requirements. The committee will be responsible for developing a school-specific Innovation Plan, including proposed autonomies, governance structures, and measurable annual goals. Upon a majority vote of the Innovation Planning Committee, the Innovation Plan will be advanced for educator review and approval in accordance with statute.

Each Innovation Plan will be developed through a transparent and collaborative process that includes substantive engagement with educators, families, and other stakeholders. Each committee shall include the eligible applicant; the Superintendent

or designee; a School Committee member or designee; a parent; a principal employed by the district; and two teachers employed by the district, including one nominated by the local teachers' union. As conversion schools, final Innovation Plans will be subject to approval by a two-thirds vote of eligible educators, followed by approval of the Springfield School Committee after a public hearing. Annual priorities, educator working conditions, and school calendars will be reviewed and approved through the processes established in this Prospectus and the approved Innovation Plans, consistent with past practice and district timelines.

Springfield Public Schools and the Executive Director of Innovation Schools will establish and communicate specific timelines, milestones, and engagement processes to schools and stakeholders to ensure clarity, statutory compliance, and timely implementation.

The Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools Prospectus establishes the framework and parameters for school-level Innovation Plans, which will be developed and approved through the statutory Innovation School process. Each school-specific Innovation Plan will be aligned to this Prospectus and will address required elements established by M.G.L. c.71, §92 and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidance, including the school's mission and vision, statement of need, stakeholder engagement processes, use of autonomy and flexibility to improve school performance and student achievement, staffing and scheduling structures, professional development, budget, and measurable annual goals.

XI. MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS

ISSPS will establish overarching goals that align with district priorities and apply to all schools within *ISSPS*. These goals, shared by both *ISSPS* and individual innovation schools, will focus on the following areas:

1. **Student Attendance:** Improving attendance rates.
2. **Student Safety and Discipline:** Ensuring a safe and orderly environment.
3. **Student Promotion, Graduation, and Dropout Rates:** Enhancing promotion and graduation rates while reducing dropout rates.
4. **Student Achievement on MCAS:** Improving performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).
5. **Addressing Academic Underperformance:** Making progress in areas where students struggle academically.
6. **Supporting Subgroups:** Advancing the performance of the following specific student groups:
Including Low-income students (as defined by Chapter 70), Limited English-proficient students, and Students receiving special education services.

7. **Reducing Achievement Gaps:** Closing disparities in performance among different student groups.

Additionally, individual innovation schools will identify and include school-specific goals in their Innovation Plans. Examples of such goals could include increasing parent involvement or enhancing the school climate. These specific goals will be incorporated into each school's final Innovation Plan.

The measurable annual goals outlined in the plans will serve as the foundation for evaluating and deciding whether to renew or modify the Innovation Plan at the end of its authorization period.

ORIGINAL

Appendix A: Educator Working Conditions and Professional Practice Flexibilities

This Appendix identifies the educator working conditions and professional practice flexibilities authorized for ISSPS Zone schools which are drawn from preserved provisions of the relevant SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028). Language modeled after the relevant SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028) language and intended for use by ISSPS appears at the end of this Prospectus as Appendix C. Except as expressly authorized herein and in Appendix B, the SPS – SEA collective bargaining agreement applies.

A. Educator Working Conditions and Teacher Leadership Teams (TLTs)

Teacher Leadership Teams (TLTs) will serve as a formal school-based structure for educator voice, collaboration, and shared responsibility for defined educator working conditions for schools within ISSPS. Consistent with the Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools Prospectus, TLTs shall exercise voting authority only with respect to the educator working conditions expressly identified below. No authority is granted by implication.

The scope of TLT voting authority is limited to:

- Setting of school priorities for the coming school year
- Allocation of discretionary school-based funds, including wraparound services, after-school programs, and school supplies
- Professional development activities applicable to the school as a body
- School calendar
- Hours of school operations, including daily start and end times and schedules, with duty-free lunch and regular student-free preparatory time preserved
- Class coverage and substitute coverage procedures
- Scheduling of school-wide parent/educator meetings
- Work before and/or after the regular school year, consistent with approved calendars and compensation provisions
- Notices and announcements
- School health and safety issues
- Staff dress code
- Rotation of duties
- Family-educator communication practices, including required platforms

TLTs do not exercise authority over compensation, stipends, career ladder roles, evaluation, discipline, grievance procedures, curriculum adoption, grading policies, or district and state reporting requirements. Final authority for these matters rests with school and district leadership pursuant to the Innovation Prospectus and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

In the event that agreement cannot be reached at the school level, final approval of Educator Working Conditions shall rest with the Superintendent or designee, consistent with the approved Innovation Plan and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

B. Annual Work Year and Compensation Alignment

The Innovation-authorized salary structure for Unit A educators is premised on a minimum annual work year of no less than 1,475 hours, as established under Article 25(2) of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028).

Any educator work required beyond 1,475 hours in a school year shall be compensated at the applicable additional rate in accordance with Article 25 of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028).

C. Educator Working Conditions (Preserved Baseline)

Consistent with M.G.L. c.71 §92, the following educator working-condition protections established under Article 25 of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028) are preserved for all Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools as baseline conditions.

Educators in Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools shall work a defined annual work year measured in total hours rather than SPS calendar days. The annual work year, inclusive of instructional time, professional development, meetings, and other required duties, shall be no greater than the baseline annual hours established under Article 25 of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028), as may be adjusted only through the Innovation-authorized Educator Working Conditions approval process.

Any work required beyond the approved annual work year shall be compensated at an additional rate as specified in the applicable Innovation School Plan.

D. Preparatory Time and Workday Protections

Student-free preparatory time and applicable workday and work-year structures for Unit A educators shall be provided at a level no less than that required under Article 25 of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028).

E. Lesson-Planning Expectation

Lesson-planning expectations shall be aligned to instructional need and professional practice and shall not impose requirements that exceed those historically required under Article 25 of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028).

Lesson plans are intended to support instruction and professional reflection and shall not be used as a compliance or monitoring mechanism.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of school leadership over curriculum, instruction, supervision, or evaluation, except as expressly stated herein.

F. Curriculum, Instruction, and Instructional Materials

Pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §92, Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools are authorized to adopt curriculum, instructional materials, pacing expectations, and instructional frameworks at the school level in alignment with each school's mission, instructional model, student population, and improvement priorities.

- District-adopted curricula, instructional materials, and pacing guides shall not automatically apply to ISSPS schools.
- Final authority for curriculum adoption, instructional materials, and instructional expectations rests with the principal or designee.
- Educators and TLTs may provide feedback on curriculum implementation and instructional effectiveness through established planning and collaboration structures, but do not exercise authority over curriculum adoption or approval.

Lesson planning expectations – including format, frequency, submission, and review – are considered instructional practice expectations and fall under the instructional leadership authority of the principal, consistent with Article 25, and are not subject to TLT voting.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to waive compliance with:

- the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks,
- MassCore requirements,
- special education and civil rights obligations,
- state assessment requirements, or
- other applicable state or federal law.

G. Professional Development (Work-Year Embedded)

Professional development for educators in Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools shall be designed, scheduled, and implemented at the school level and embedded within the Innovation-authorized annual work year, consistent with **Article 25** of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028).

- No separate minimum number of professional development days or hours shall apply beyond the approved work year, except as required by law.
- Professional development shall align with instructional priorities, educator evaluation requirements, licensure and recertification obligations, and applicable district and state reporting requirements.

H. Evaluation and Supervision

Educator evaluation within Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools shall align with applicable state regulations and the Springfield Effective Educator Development System (SEEDS).

Innovation Schools may implement adjustments to evaluation processes and procedures, including alternative evaluation models, provided such systems meet state requirements and are approved through the School Innovation Plan process.

Schools may exercise flexibility in the types of instructional evidence used to inform educator evaluation, including lesson plans, assessments, student work, and other instructional artifacts aligned to the school's instructional model.

Educators shall be provided with copies of all written observations and evaluations. Evaluation, supervision, and final ratings rest solely with school leadership. Nothing herein shall be construed to grant Teacher Leadership Teams authority over educator evaluation, supervision, or performance ratings.

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APPENDIX B: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT ALIGNMENT AND PRESERVED PROVISIONS

This Appendix identifies provisions of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028) whose essential terms are being expressly preserved for Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools as autonomies and flexibilities of the type authorized pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §92(b)(iv). Language modeled after these SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028) provisions and intended for use by ISSPS appears at the end of this Prospectus as Appendix C. Except where expressly modified herein, the Springfield Public Schools (SPS) - SEA collective-bargaining agreement shall apply.

A. Teacher Leadership Teams and Educator Working Conditions

The essential terms of the following provisions of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028) are preserved for Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools and are implemented as follows:

Articles 22-24 (Teacher Leadership Teams; Continuous Improvement Planning; Teacher Leadership Teams and Educator Working Conditions) are implemented through Appendix C of this Prospectus.

Article 25 - Working Conditions is implemented through Appendix A of this Prospectus.

Teacher Leadership Team (TLT) authority is limited exclusively to the Educator Working Conditions enumerated in Appendix A. Nothing herein shall be construed to expand TLT authority beyond those expressly identified areas.

B. Compensation and Salary Provisions

The language from the following compensation-related provisions of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028) will be preserved for Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools, with ISSPS serving as managerial authority:

- Article 60 - Professional Compensation System
- Article 61 - Career Ladder
- Article 62 - Extended School Year
- Article 63 - Stipends and Additional Pay for Leadership and Other Roles
- Article 64 - School-Wide Awards
- Article 65 - Other Compensation

The essential terms of the compensation, career ladder, stipend, and extra-pay provisions preserved in this Appendix are derived exclusively from the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028). The compensation-related provisions of the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement, including but not limited to Article 26 and related stipend appendices, shall not apply to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools.

The compensation provisions authorized through this Prospectus and the approved Innovation Plans shall remain in effect throughout the duration of the Innovation Plans. These provisions authorize the structure and application of compensation.

Salary amounts shall not be frozen at the 2027-2028 levels. Routine salary increases reflected in any applicable successor salary schedule established through the district's existing collective-bargaining process may be implemented consistent with district practice without amendment to the Innovation Plans, provided the authorized compensation structure remains unchanged. Amendments are required only for changes to the authorized compensation structure or methodology. Nothing herein shall be construed to require adoption of the Springfield Public Schools salary schedule or step structure.

Nothing herein shall be construed to require adoption of the Springfield Public Schools salary schedule or step structure.

C. Dispute Resolution and Grievance Procedures

The essential terms of the following provision of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028) is preserved in full for Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools:

- Article 19 - Dispute Resolution / Grievance and Arbitration Procedures

This provision governs grievance procedures, grievance steps, timelines, and arbitration processes applicable to Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools. All other disciplinary standards, investigation procedures, and due-process protections not expressly preserved herein shall default to the Springfield Public Schools-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement or applicable law. Nothing herein is intended to alter or supersede statutory dismissal and suspension authority under M.G.L. c.71 §§42 or 42D.

D. Staffing Models and Role Definitions

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools may implement staffing models and role configurations that differ from district norms. Nothing in the Springfield Public Schools collective bargaining agreement relating to role definitions or governance structures—including School-Based Decision Making (SCDM), Instructional Leadership Specialist (ILS) roles, counselor caseload models, or librarian role definitions—shall apply.

Nothing herein shall be interpreted to require the creation, maintenance, or elimination of any specific position or role.

Appendix C: ISSPS Language Modeled After the Essential Terms of Preserved Articles from the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement (2025-2028)

Dispute Resolution

Purpose and Intent

It is the intent of the parties to this Agreement to use their best efforts to encourage the informal and prompt settlement of grievances which may arise between the Association or a member or members of the bargaining unit and the Employer. In recognition of this intent, the parties agree that they shall use the organization and procedures set forth in this Article for the resolution, strictly pursuant to the terms of this Agreement, of all disputes involving alleged violations of specific provisions of this Agreement. In order to settle grievances at the lowest possible administrative level, the organization and procedures for processing grievances shall be as follows.

The term "grievance" shall be construed to mean an express violation of a written provision of this Agreement, or a violation of the Rules and Regulations of the Springfield School Committee, when appropriate to educators employed in the Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS). Any event which occurred or failed to occur prior to the effective date of this Agreement shall not be subject to the grievance and arbitration provisions.

Steps of the Grievance Process

Step 1: Informal Discussion with Immediate Administrative Supervisor

An aggrieved educator and an Association representative (if the educator so desires) shall first discuss the grievance informally with the educator's immediate administrative supervisor and/or building principal with the objective of resolving the matter informally. Such informal discussion shall be held within five (5) school days of the educator's request.

Step 2: Informal Discussion with ISSPS Leadership

If the informal discussion does not resolve the grievance, the grievance shall be brought to the next established ISSPS-SEA labor-management meeting structure, which meets at least monthly, for discussion and an attempt at informal resolution.

Step 3: Principal or Administrative Supervisor

If the informal discussion with ISSPS leadership does not resolve the grievance, it be submitted in writing to the building principal or administrative supervisor within 21

days of the alleged violation and shall identify with specificity the provision(s) of the Agreement alleged to have been violated

The aggrieved educator, accompanied by an Association representative, shall meet and discuss the dispute with their principal or administrative supervisor within five (5) school days of the administrator receiving the grievance in writing. The administrator shall communicate their decision to the educator within five (5) school days after hearing the complaint.

It is the intent of the parties to the Agreement to use their best efforts to encourage the informal and prompt settlement of grievances which may arise between the Association or a member or members of the bargaining unit and the Employer. In recognition of this intent, the parties agree that they shall use the organization and procedure set forth in this Article for the resolution, strictly pursuant to the terms of this Agreement, of all disputes involving alleged violations of specific provisions of this Agreement. In order to settle grievances at the lowest possible administrative level, the organization and procedure for processing grievances shall be as follows:

Step 4: ISSPS Leadership Review

If the decision of the administrator is not satisfactory, or if a decision is not rendered within the time specified, the Association may appeal the grievance in writing within five (5) school days to ISSPS leadership or its designee. ISSPS leadership shall arrange a meeting within five (5) school days of receipt of the appeal and shall issue a written decision within five (5) school days following the meeting.

Step 5: Mediation

If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved at Step 4, the Association and SEZP must pursue mediation. In the event that both parties wish to forgo or to end mediation, the matter will be moved directly to a Step Six grievance. If a matter is brought to mediation, the mediation of the grievance may be initiated in accordance with the following provisions.

A. Within 10 school days of receipt of the decision at step 4, the Association may demand mediation of the dispute. Within thirty (30) days of the demand for mediation the Association and the ISSPS shall meet for the purpose of mediation. The Association and the ISSPS agree to maintain a list of mutually agreed upon mediators to be assigned grievances on a rotating basis. The Association and the ISSPS agree to review their list annually, or more often if requested by either organization, and adjust the list as mutually agreed upon by the Association and the ISSPS.

B. The mediator selected shall be assigned to mediate on the same day a minimum of four grievances unless otherwise agreed by the Association and the ISSPS.. If one of the above mediators is unable to schedule a mediation conference within Twenty (20) days from the receipt of the appeal, it will be referred to the next mediator in line. The

fees and expenses of the mediators shall be shared equally by the Association and the ISSPS.

C. Mediation is an informal, off-the-record process in which the Association and the ISSPS are free to disclose to the mediator the essence of the dispute without detriment to their legal position. Confidential information disclosed to a mediator in the course of the mediation shall not be divulged by the mediator. All records, reports, or other documents received by the mediator while serving in that capacity shall be confidential. The mediator shall not be compelled to divulge such records or to testify in regard to the mediation in any adversarial proceeding or judicial forum. The Association and the ISSPS shall maintain the confidentiality of the mediation and shall not rely on or introduce as evidence in any arbitral, judicial, or other proceeding:

- a. Views expressed or suggestions made by either organization with respect to a possible settlement of the dispute;
- b. Admissions made by either organization in the course of the mediation proceeding;
- c. Proposals made or views expressed by the mediator; or
- d. The fact that either organization had or had not indicated willingness to accept a proposal for settlement made by the mediator.

D. The mediator does not have the authority to impose a settlement on the Association and the ISSPS but will attempt to help them reach a satisfactory resolution of their dispute.

E. Mediation shall conclude in one of the following ways:

- a. By the execution of a settlement agreement by the Association and the ISSPS; or
- b. By a written declaration of the mediator, either the Association and the ISSPS, or both the Association and the ISSPS to the effect that the mediation proceedings are concluded.

Step 6: Arbitration

If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved at Step 5, the grievance may be referred for arbitration. Notices of intention to request arbitration must be in writing addressed to ISSPS Leadership.

Within seven (7) days after such written notice of submission to arbitration, ISSPS Leadership and the Association will agree upon a mutually acceptable arbitrator and will obtain a commitment from said arbitrator to serve. If the parties are unable to agree upon an arbitrator or to obtain such a commitment within the specific period, then the Association may submit the grievance to the American Arbitration Association for arbitration in accordance with its administrative procedures, practices, and rules. Submission to the American Arbitration Association must be made not later than thirty days following the ISSPS Leadership's written decision.

The arbitrator shall issue their award not later than thirty (30) days from the date of the close of the hearings or, if oral hearing has been waived, then from the date of transmitting the final statements and proofs to the arbitrator. The arbitrator's award shall be in writing and shall set forth the arbitrator's opinion and conclusion on the issues submitted.

The arbitrator shall have no power or authority to make any award which requires the commission of any act prohibited by law or which is inconsistent with the provisions of this Agreement.

The decision of the arbitrator shall be binding upon ISSPS, the Association, and the aggrieved educator. Fees and expenses of the arbitrator shall be shared equally by ISSPS and the Association.

ISSPS agrees that it will apply to all substantially similar situations the decision of any arbitrator sustaining a grievance, and the Association agrees that it will not bring or continue, and that it will not represent any employee in any grievance which is substantially similar to the grievance denied by the decision of an arbitrator.

Miscellaneous Provisions

All appeals within Steps 1 through 6 must be taken within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of a decision unless otherwise specified. Failure to process a grievance within the allotted time shall result in waiver of the grievance.

Time limits specified in these procedures may be extended by mutual written agreement.

The Association shall have the right to initiate and process grievances at any appropriate step when, in its judgment, the grievance is general in nature.

Any aggrieved person may be represented at all steps by the Association or by another educator of their choosing, provided that no officer, agent, or representative of any other educator organization may serve in that role.

When an educator elects not to be represented by the Association, the Association shall retain the right to be present at all steps and to state its views.

No individual who does not represent the Association may act as a representative of another educator on more than one occasion.

Working Conditions

Article 25 is intentionally preserved as operative language because it establishes working conditions that differ from SPS defaults. The substance aligns with the Innovation Prospectus and Innovation School Plans; the remaining work is re-anchoring authority from prior SEZP/TLT governance articles to the approved

Innovation School Plan and associated Educator Working Conditions. In the event of a district-wide initiative or guidance that would impose requirements inconsistent with this Article, ISSPS schools shall implement such initiative in a manner consistent with the Innovation Prospectus, the approved Innovation School Plan, and these Educator Working Conditions

A. Work Year

1. The educator work year shall be determined as part of each school's approved Educator Working Conditions under the Innovation School Plan and will be made public, if at all possible, prior to the Springfield Public Schools transfer process. Springfield Public Schools educators will receive notification that work year schedules are available to view. Once the required work year is set in the Educator Working Conditions, it may not be changed without following the school's approved process for modifying Educator Working Conditions during the school year, as set forth in the Innovation School Plan.

2. The base educator work year shall be 1,475 hours. Additional required hours may be added through the school's approved Educator Working Conditions, consistent with the Innovation School Plan. Total educator hours during the normal school day for the year shall not exceed 1,771 hours, including functions outside the normal school day such as parent meetings, after-school functions, and similar activities.

3. Educators designated at the Expert level shall work a required additional ten (10) days per school year above the hours prescribed in the school's Educator Working Conditions. Base compensation for Expert educators reflects this additional time worked.

4. The student instructional year shall be a minimum of 180 days. Schools in turnaround status shall provide a minimum of 1,360 student hours at the middle school level and 1,250 hours at the high school level. Once a school exits turnaround status, student instructional hours shall be determined through the school's Educator Working Conditions process under the Innovation School Plan, provided student hours meet or exceed DESE minimum requirements.

B. Workday

1. Educators and other professional staff shall devote the time required, consistent with each school's Educator Working Conditions, to achieve and maintain high quality education in Empowerment Zone schools. For example, unless formally excused, educators and other professional staff shall participate in all regular school functions during or outside of the normal school day, including faculty meetings, parent conferences, department meetings, curriculum meetings, graduations, and other similar activities as specifically delineated in the Educator Working Conditions.

2. Prep Periods: Educators will have – at minimum – one self-directed 40-minute preparation period per day. This self-directed time can be used to plan, grade, collaborate with colleagues, etc. In extenuating circumstances, educators may be asked to perform some duties during this time. On that day the educator must have an equivalent non-instructional period. Whenever possible, educators should be given priority access to their own teaching space during preparation periods. If an educator cannot have access to their own teaching space during preparation periods, every effort will be made to provide a functional working space.
3. In service of a unique program (e.g. an adjunct professor teaching early college), an educator may not have – at minimum – one self-directed 40-minute preparation period per day. This aspect of the educator schedule will be clearly noted in the respective job posting. Additionally, educators in these positions will be notified of any changes to their schedule, prior to the transfer window.
4. Every effort will be made to ensure that the 40 minutes of preparation time is not adjacent to any other scheduled activity (e.g., STAT meetings, grade-level team meetings) that is less than 15 minutes in duration, in order to preserve the integrity and utility of the preparation period.
5. All schools are expected to provide educators with professional development, collaboration activities, and/or PLC meetings, with an anticipated schedule of meetings to be provided to educators by the first week of school. Educators will be notified of any changes in writing in the school year.
6. In extenuating situations, educators may be asked to perform duties or cover classes during their preparatory period. In this case, assignments will be shared as equitably as possible by the faculty. Where this coverage results in the reduction or loss of an educator's prep period for the day, the educator shall be compensated for the preparatory period, at the rate in Appendix C.
7. The workday will be determined as part of each school's Educator Working Conditions and will be made public, if at all possible, prior to the Springfield Public Schools transfer process. Springfield Public Schools educators will receive notification that workday schedules are available to view.

C. Academic Calendar

ISSPS shall establish a baseline school calendar each year based on the district calendar developed by Springfield Public Schools. Schools may propose modifications to the baseline calendar through their Educator Working Conditions to meet unique programmatic needs. ISSPS shall approve school-level calendars as part of the Educator Working Conditions approval process. Approved calendars shall be published and shared with staff prior to the transfer window.

School and professional development sessions shall not be held on state or federal holidays, except that supplementary academic programs may occur on such days.

D. Teacher Assignments

Prior to the transfer process, principals will outline to faculty major schedule changes that are under consideration for the following year. By way of example, major schedule changes may include change in the length and/or number of periods or schedule rotation.

Educators may express, in writing, to the principal their preferences of grade level, subject, department assignment. Programming preferences will be given consideration in preparing the organizational chart for the following year. In order to preserve the proper educational climate, each school's principal shall make every attempt to notify educators of the following matters concerning their programs for next school year by June 1st. When changes are necessary the educator must be notified at the earliest reasonable time. In these cases, changes should reflect the most minimal impact on the proposed schedule communicated to the educator before the end of the previous school year via email with the following information:

- subjects to be taught
- grades of the subjects to be taught
- any academically talented, accelerated, honors, seminars, or special groupings which an educator may be required to teach
- number of periods
- room assignments
- any other pertinent information

E. Educator Displacement

Consistent with the authority delegated by the Springfield School Committee, the ISSPS has the right to reassign educators and other staff who have been displaced from their positions. After discussion with the affected educator or staff member, the educator or staff member may be assigned to any open position for which he or she is qualified. If the educator or staff member is not assigned to a mutually agreeable position, either through the transfer process or off-cycle transfer, the ISSPS, with consultation from the Springfield superintendent, will assign the educator or staff member to a position for which he/she is qualified. Such an assignment may include instructional support, substitute teaching, or administrative tasks.

A displaced educator will be compensated at the level appropriate for the school where the educator is assigned.

F. Duty-Free Lunch

1. Each educator shall receive an uninterrupted thirty (30)-minute duty-free lunch period. Except in emergency situations, educators may leave the building during lunch with advance notice and proper sign-out.

2. Educators who voluntarily provide lunch coverage during emergencies shall be compensated at the rate in Appendix C.

G. Continuity of the Teaching Process

Administration and educators shall strive to limit non-emergency classroom interruptions that are non-evaluative or supervisory in nature.

H. Professional Development

1. Professional development programs generally will be determined at the school level. There will be occasions, however, when the ISSPS may require specific professional development.
2. Staff employed in the ISSPS schools will have access to Springfield Public Schools and/or ISSPS professional development; the employee must receive prior approval from his/her principal to attend the professional development session
3. If a school proposes professional development not occurring contiguous to the regular school year, the SEA will be notified, and that proposal will be scrutinized by ISSPS leadership, including but not limited to, an interview with school leadership as to the necessity of such timing. If there exists a necessity for such professional development, be approved by ISSPS leadership.
4. This decision must be made prior to the transfer process and written into the Educator Working Conditions. Non-contiguous PD shall be paid at the employee's per diem rate.

I. Grading

An educator's mark shall not be changed arbitrarily or without valid reason. No marks shall be changed unless the educator is notified first and has been given the reason for the change.

J. Dress Code

All employees covered under this collective bargaining agreement must:

- Dress in a neat and clean manner appropriate to their role and responsibilities.
- Use good judgment in attire that is respectful of students, families, and colleagues.

School spirit days may be designated by the administration in collaboration with staff.

B. Lesson Plans

1. The goal of lesson plans should be to assist the educator in preparation for effective lessons and to support educator development towards a school's instructional vision, particularly for early career educators. It is understood

and agreed upon that lesson plans are artifacts of planning and do not always reflect its implementation.

2. No lesson plan shall require minute by minute schedules.
3. Lesson plan collection and feedback systems will be differentiated to meet the developmental needs of educators and to inform future lesson planning. If feedback is requested by the educator, feedback must be meaningful, actionable and in writing.

C. Substitute Educators

Every school shall establish a clear plan for substitutes and class coverage in the Faculty Handbook provided to all educators before the start of the year, a plan which could include - if available - substitutes to cover classes. Assignments for class coverage in emergency situations will be shared as equitably as possible by the faculty.

M. Student Educators, Interns, and AmeriCorps Volunteers

Placement of all student educators, interns, and AmeriCorps Volunteers by whatever title they may be known, is processed through the Human Resources Department.

1. Acceptance of student educators, interns and AmeriCorps Volunteers shall be voluntary.
2. Educators (all Unit A members) should communicate to their immediate supervisor of their willingness to accept a student educator/intern for a specified period of time and in a definite assignment area.
3. The student educator's duties shall be determined cooperatively by the supervising educator, the principal, and the representative from the student educator's college in accordance with DESE regulations.

N. Conditions of Instruction

The parties agree that an educator's primary function is to teach, therefore:

1. Every effort will be made to limit class interruptions.
2. Except in emergency situations as determined by the principal or their designee or to provide counseling or approved special instructions, pupils shall not be taken from the class.
3. Except in emergency situations, educators shall not be required to assume any office duties in the event of absence of office personnel.

4. Educators may be required to assist with toileting, diapering, or toilet training only in rare instances, based on individualized student needs and when no other appropriate support is available.

O. Positive School Culture

School climate refers to how students, staff, and families experience the school environment—shaped by relationships, staff practices, and organizational structures. A positive climate fosters physical and emotional safety, meaningful connection, and high expectations through supportive, respectful, and caring interactions across the school community.

The parties agree that a positive school climate can impact both educator morale and retention and student performance. Therefore, the parties agree to implement a joint labor/management process when either party believes that there is a need to intervene in a school due to a lapse in positive climate. In each situation, the parties will agree on a data collection process, when necessary, which may include a climate survey.

P. Student Discipline

ISSPS and the SEA affirm a shared commitment to implementing restorative practices as the core approach to student discipline, relationship-building, and school climate. To that end, ISSPS will provide annual, high-quality training in restorative practices to educators and administrators that is focused on implementation and ongoing support.

Professional Compensation System

The parties agree that compensation for educators employed in ISSPS schools shall be governed by a Professional Compensation System designed to recognize professional growth, leadership, and responsibility.

The Professional Compensation System shall include base compensation, career ladder compensation, stipends, extended year compensation, and other additional pay as set forth in this Agreement.

Educators shall be compensated in accordance with the Professional Compensation System applicable to their role, responsibilities, and assignment.

The Professional Compensation System is intended to support instructional excellence, educator retention, and continuous improvement, and shall be administered by ISSPS consistent with the terms of this Agreement.

Career Ladder

The professional compensation system compensates employees based on individual effectiveness, professional growth, and student academic growth.

The ISSPS compensation system includes an educator career ladder containing five tiers - Provisional, Developing, Career, Advanced, and Master - that compensates educators commensurate with their development and impact on students. It is envisioned that student

outcomes will improve by creating a professional compensation system that will attract new high-potential educators and retain our best performers and leaders.

Provisional educators are typically first-year educators entering teaching directly from college.

Developing educators are early career educators, often with one to two years of experience. There are two standard levels within the Developing tier.

Career educators have been recognized as effective educators. Career educators serve as role models to less-experienced educators and proactively drive their own professional growth.

Career Ladder

Career Level	2025-2026 [1st Year of Innovation Plan]	2026-2027 [2nd Year of Innovation Plan]	2027-2028 [3rd Year of Innovation Plan]
Provisional	\$ 59,404.86	\$ 61,484.03	\$ 63,328.55
Developing I	\$ 61,460.37	\$ 63,611.48	\$ 65,519.83
Developing II	\$ 64,611.95	\$ 66,873.36	\$ 68,879.56
Career I	\$ 66,731.63	\$ 69,067.23	\$ 71,139.25
Career II	\$ 70,277.54	\$ 72,737.25	\$ 74,919.37
Career III	\$ 76,097.34	\$ 78,760.75	\$ 81,123.57
Career IV	\$ 79,427.97	\$ 82,207.95	\$ 84,674.19
Career V 1st Year	\$ 82,678.91	\$ 85,572.67	\$ 88,139.85
Career V 2nd Year	\$ 85,842.90	\$ 88,847.40	\$ 91,512.82
Career V 3rd Year	\$ 88,434.54	\$ 91,529.75	\$ 94,275.64
Career V 4th Year	\$ 91,425.69	\$ 94,625.59	\$ 97,464.36
Career V 5th Year	\$ 93,588.84	\$ 96,864.45	\$ 99,770.38

C. Annual Increases for Educators on Legacy Tiers

Educators who are deemed Legacy educators will have their salary increased by 3.5% in 2025-2026, 3.5% in 2026-2027, and 3% in 2027-2028. Legacy educators now include Expert and Advanced educators, as well as those who were previously deemed Legacy educators.

D. Pay for SLPs and Psychologists

The parties agree that Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) and psychologists shall have a pay scale that is ten percent (10%) higher than the comparable SPS-SEA pay scale for such positions.

E. Educators Transferring from the District to the ISSPS

An educator on the Springfield Public Schools salary schedule who transfers (voluntarily or involuntarily) to the ISSPS shall be placed on the ISSPS salary schedule's Career Level position equivalent to the SPS salary Step position within the same school year. If the transfer is to be realized in the next school year, the placement on the ISSPS salary schedule shall be one position higher than the SPS position the transferee is currently on.

Example 1:

Educator is on Step 7 of the SPS CBA salary schedule in the SY 2022-23

The educator was authorized to transfer to the ISSPS during the same school year

The educator shall be placed on Career IV on the ISSPS schedule

Example 2:

Educator is on Step 7 of the SPS CBA salary schedule in the SY 2022-23

The educator is to be transferred for the following school year (SY 2023-24)

The educator shall be transitioned to Career V, 1st Year, on the ISSPS schedule

Educators voluntarily transitioning into the ISSPS shall be provided with a letter of commitment from ISSPS stating their ISSPS salary prior to accepting the new position.

The educator shall sign acknowledging review and acceptance of the stated salary.

F. Advancement on the Career Ladder

A Provisional educator shall advance to Developing I, and a Developing I educator shall advance to Developing II annually, provided that the educator does not receive an end-of-year evaluation rating of "Unsatisfactory."

A Developing II educator shall advance to Career I, and all Career-level educators shall advance one level annually, provided that an end-of-year evaluation rating of "Proficient" or "Exemplary" is received, with "Proficient" or better ratings on all four evaluation standards defined by the Commonwealth.

An educator with an overall end-of-year rating of "Proficient" who has achieved less than "Proficient" ratings on all four standards may still advance to the next level with the recommendation of the building principal and the approval of ISSPS.

An educator who does not receive the requisite evaluation rating may appeal for a review of the evaluation to the Evaluation Committee.

If no end-of-year formative or summative evaluation is completed for an educator, the educator shall advance to the next level.

An educator with an "Exemplary" rating may advance on the salary scale more rapidly than described above with the recommendation of the school principal, subject to the approval of ISSPS. Any such advancement shall be limited to two levels above what the performance plan would otherwise provide. The Association shall be notified of all such advancement decisions.

A Developing II educator with fewer than three (3) years of service in the Springfield Public Schools who receives an annual overall evaluation of "Needs Improvement" and who is retained may, at the discretion of the Principal, receive a salary increase of up to \$1,000.

Provisional, Developing, and Career educators shall not have their salary reduced based on their performance evaluation.

Based on past experience and performance, a newly hired educator may enter the Springfield Public Schools above the Provisional level based on a principal's recommendation and ISSPS approval.

G. Evaluation Committee

An Evaluation Committee shall be established consisting of:

Two members of the Springfield Education Association selected by the Union President;

Two representatives of the Springfield Public Schools selected by ISSPS; and

One representative from a third-party institution (such as a university) mutually selected by both groups.

An educator may appeal to the Evaluation Committee for a secondary review if the educator does not receive the requisite rating for career or salary advancement. The Committee shall examine the appeal and, within two (2) weeks, make a recommendation as to whether a secondary review is warranted. ISSPS shall select the secondary evaluator for any case recommended for secondary review. If the secondary review results in the minimum (or better) rating required for advancement, the educator shall immediately advance.

Extended School Year

- A. Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, educators working at a school with a mandatory school-wide extended schedule beyond the base SEZP school year shall receive an extended school year mandatory salary differential.
- B. This mandatory salary differential for mandatory hours shall be included in base pay or otherwise considered as part of the educator's annualized salary.
- C. Annually, the parties will execute a Memorandum of Understanding, amending the collective bargaining agreement, memorializing the mandatory extended school year and Mandatory Salary Differential for each school.

Stipends and Additional Pay for Leadership and Other Roles

All stipend positions shall be publicly posted within schools, with clearly defined qualifications, duties, and responsibilities. If the following positions carry a stipend and are offered to Unit A bargaining unit members, then the Unit A bargaining unit members shall have the opportunity to apply for any posted stipend position.

Whenever feasible, the following stipends have been formalized within the ISSPS contract:

Role	Minimum Amount of Stipend	
Coordinator Role (or equivalent role responsibility at the school level)	Up to 249 Enrollment	\$750
	250+ Enrollment	\$1,500
Educator Leader Role (or equivalent role responsibility at the school level)	Up to 249	\$500
	250+	\$1,000
Garden Champion	Any	\$500
Vacation Academy Stipend Role	Any	\$1200
Treasurer Role	High School	\$ 1800
	Middle School	\$650
Class Advisor Role	Any	\$ 750
Yearbook Advisor Role	Any	\$ 750
National Honor Society	Any	\$350

- A. If accepted for a stipend, employees will receive notice by email of their acceptance prior to commencement of the activity for which they have been hired.
- B. Annually, on a school-by-school basis the parties will execute a Memorandum of Understanding, amending the collective bargaining agreement, memorializing the leadership and other position roles and duties, and stipend amounts for that particular school year. Such positions, duties, and stipend amounts are hereby incorporated by reference into the collective bargaining agreement.
- C. Stipend roles for educators will be one year in duration.

School-Wide Awards

Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, school-wide awards may be implemented by the ISSPS in consultation with the Springfield Education Association, educators, and principals across the district. The ISSPS may provide school-wide awards to schools that meet performance targets based on the prior year, subject to available funding and feasibility.

The criteria for these awards shall be based on school-wide measures, with emphasis on student performance. This would include both general measures (e.g., state testing, SGP) and measures specific to school grade spans (e.g., at the high-school level, increases in graduation rates and reduction in drop-out rates).

Educators at a selected school which receives an award will participate in determining the use and distribution of the awards which could include additional compensation for all educators and/or other staff or school improvement initiatives. The ISSPS has final approval over school-wide award structure and criteria.

Other Compensation

If the school Principal determines that the payment of additional compensation (in the form of stipends or honoraria) to a bargaining unit member is necessary to better serve the needs of the students and the ISSPS supports such action, the ISSPS shall notify the

Association and may authorize the additional payment following the notification. Circumstances that may make such compensation appropriate include but are not limited to rewarding educators for: exceptional performance; assumption of additional duties; assignment to a hard to fill position; work in a particularly challenging assignment; and retaining educators in the employment of the Springfield Public Schools. The ISSPS retains final discretion over the implementation of any additional compensation.

Rates for Additional Pay

A. MCAS Portfolio and Alts Pay

Any compensation for Special Education educators who must complete MCAS Alts will be determined at the school level. Likewise, any compensation for high school educators who complete MCAS alts and /or portfolios will be determined at the school level. However, at a minimum these educators shall receive \$200 per portfolio or Alt and receive 1 full release day for every 4 portfolios or alts or fraction thereof.

B. Longevity

- After 15 continuous years in the district: \$2,000
- After 20 continuous years in the district: \$3,000
- After 25 continuous years in the district: \$4,000
- After 30 continuous years in the district: \$4,200
- Current employees who are considered "Survivors" on the negotiated lists shall be compensated an annual longevity differential of \$6,000.

C. Rates for additional work

1. Summer PD- \$36.61 / hour
2. Teacher Development Time - \$22.50 / hour
3. Coverage - \$35.00 / occurrence

Preservation of Teacher Leadership Team Authority and Educator Working Conditions

The provisions governing Teacher Leadership Teams (TLTs), Annual Continuous Improvement Plans, and Educator Working Conditions are intentionally presented in framework form within this Prospectus. These provisions are modeled on Articles 22, 23, and 24 of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement and are intended to preserve the scope, role, authority, and educator voice established under those Articles as schools transition to the Innovation School framework pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §92.

While the legal mechanism through which authority is exercised shifts from a zone-level collective bargaining structure to the Innovation School authorization process, the substantive functions of Teacher Leadership Teams – including shared decision-making, educator participation, and the development and approval of Educator Working Conditions – are preserved.

Detailed procedures, timelines, and implementation mechanics not expressly restated in this Prospectus shall be carried out through each school's approved Innovation School Plan and annual Educator Working Conditions, consistent with this Prospectus and M.G.L. c.71 §92. Nothing in this Prospectus is intended to diminish educator participation, shared decision-making, or the substantive authority of Teacher Leadership Teams as exercised through the Innovation School process.

MODELS AND STRUCTURES FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP TEAMS (TLTs)

Innovation Schools of Springfield Public Schools (ISSPS) operate under a shared decision-making framework designed to elevate educator voice while maintaining clear accountability for school outcomes. Each ISSPS school shall maintain a Teacher Leadership Team (TLT) as the primary structure for educator participation in school-level decision-making.

The provisions of this Article are modeled on Article 22 of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement and preserve the core structures, election processes, and functions of Teacher Leadership Teams, with approval and oversight aligned to the ISSPS governance structure consistent with this Prospectus and M.G.L. c.71 §92.

A. Joint Agreement on the Format of TLTs

The parties have agreed to:

1. Two default formats for Teacher Leadership Teams at existing schools;
2. A modification process to the default formats for Teacher Leadership Teams at existing schools;
3. A process for developing a Teacher Leadership Team format at newly created schools; and
4. A process for a Teacher Leadership Team format at transitioning schools.

B. Teacher Leadership Team General Guidelines

The following provisions apply to all Teacher Leadership Teams (TLTs):

1. The SEA and ISSPS shall jointly support, on an annual basis, systems and guidance to ensure educators understand the role and function of Teacher Leadership Teams.
2. The Teacher Leadership Team shall meet at least monthly with the principal.
3. The term of elected TLT members shall be two years, with staggered elections to

ensure continuity.

4. Procedures shall exist to fill vacancies or replace representatives who change assignments or are unable to fulfill TLT responsibilities.

5. SEA leadership/staff and educators in the school may attend meetings of the Teacher Leadership Team.

6. Schools shall provide stipends to Teacher Leadership Team members, with amounts communicated prior to the start of the student school year.

C. Teacher Leadership Team Elections

1. New members shall be elected annually between August and October 1 at a full faculty meeting, with at least two weeks' notice.

2. Elections shall be conducted by SEA representatives, with only bargaining-unit members voting by secret ballot.

3. Schools shall submit a TLT Selection and Faculty Engagement Form to ISSPS following elections.

4. ISSPS shall provide SEA leadership an opportunity for review and shall retain final authority to approve TLT structures and modifications.

D. Teacher Leadership Team Default Models

(Default Model 1 and Default Model 2 preserved in full, aligned to ISSPS.)

E. Teacher Leadership Teams with Modifications

Schools may modify TLT structures based on documented student and staff needs, subject to majority TLT and principal approval, SEA notice, and ISSPS approval.

F. Teacher Leadership Teams for New Schools

Leaders of new schools may propose modified TLT structures with SEA notice prior to ISSPS approval.

G. Teacher Leadership Teams for Transitioning Schools

Transitioning schools may modify TLT structures with SEA notice prior to ISSPS approval.

H. Teacher Leadership Teams for Reintegrating Schools

ISSPS shall not define the role of the TLT following reintegration into SPS.

ANNUAL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND TEACHER LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Each ISSPS school shall develop an annual Continuous Improvement Plan as the primary operational planning document for the school year. This Article is modeled on Article 23 of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement.

A. Introduction

The Teacher Leadership Team shall serve as the vehicle for shared decision-making. Educator engagement shall be substantive and collaborative. TLTs shall have ten (10) minutes at the start of meetings, without the principal present, to discuss matters relevant to the TLT.

B. Components of Annual Continuous Improvement Plans

Each Teacher Leadership Team shall review class sizes by February 1 and provide recommendations to the principal.

Each plan shall include:

1. Educator Working Conditions (including the school calendar);
2. Defined priorities and goals grounded in data; and
3. Strategic actions aligned to those priorities.

C. Process for Developing Educator Working Conditions

The Teacher Leadership Team shall participate in the development and approval of Educator Working Conditions. If consensus cannot be reached, ISSPS shall make the final determination.

D. Defining Priorities, Goals, and Strategic Actions

School administration shall engage faculty, the TLT, and ISSPS in developing priorities and actions prior to approval.

E. Changes During the School Year

ISSPS retains final authority over any modifications to Continuous Improvement Plans.

F. Teacher Engagement

TLT members shall communicate with their representative groups and be provided time during the workday when needed.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP TEAMS AND EDUCATOR WORKING CONDITIONS

This Article is modeled on Article 24 of the SEZP-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement.

A. Purpose and Authority

Educator Working Conditions shall be developed annually, approved by ISSPS, and shared publicly on the Springfield Public Schools website prior to the transfer window, to the extent practicable. ISSPS retains final authority over implementation and disputes.

B. Scope of Educator Working Conditions

Educator Working Conditions shall include, but not be limited to:

- School priorities;
- Allocation of discretionary funds, including wraparound services, after-school programs, and school supplies;
- Curriculum decisions;
- Professional development activities;
- School calendar;
- Hours of school operations, including duty-free lunch and student-free preparation time;
- Scheduling of school-wide parent/educator meetings;
- Work before and/or after the regular school year;
- Notices and announcements;
- School health and safety issues;
- Rotation of duties;
- Bulletin boards;
- Family-educator communication practices.

C. Budget Transparency

ISSPS shall post school-level budget information annually by June 30.

D. Templates and Guidance

Educator Working Conditions shall be recorded using ISSPS templates developed in consultation with SEA.

E. Communication

Final Educator Working Conditions shall be forwarded to the Association President and made available to schools.

F. Changes Prior to Approval

ISSPS shall communicate required changes to SEA and the TLT.

G. Final Authority

ISSPS retains final authority over Educator Working Conditions.

ORIGINAL