

University Park Campus School: End-of-Year Reflections & Next Steps, 2014-2015

Each year, Instructional Leadership Teams reflect on their yearly progress, as measured by adult actions and performance indicators, and recommend future actions.

Goal 1: Middle school proficiency in math will increase for all students. The median SGP for the cohort of seventh grade moving to eighth grade will increase from 33 to 50 in the Spring 2014 math PARCC administration.

What worked well?

University Park continued its commitment to Numeracy Across the Curriculum throughout the 2014-2015 school year. In the two days before the beginning of the school teachers heard from their peers about various ways that numeracy was being incorporated into subjects other than mathematics. Teachers then spent time working with other members of their department looking through curriculum maps and finding places to integrate more numeracy. These lessons in numeracy were designed to be authentic and fit easily into the pre-existing curriculum. At various times throughout the year, teachers would share out how they were incorporating numeracy into their classes to the rest of their department. University Park math teachers made themselves readily available to other teachers who were trying to incorporate numeracy into their lessons, there were many informal meetings between teachers in order to accomplish this goal.

University Park continued to offer after school help for students in mathematics. Throughout the year at least one high school and one middle school math teacher stayed after school to help students struggling with mathematics for at an hour a day. Massachusetts School of Pharmacy and Health Studies (MCPHS) were in school throughout the year, they spent time in math and science classes as well as after school. Using data from MAPS teachers were able to use MCPHS volunteers to provide one-on-one assistance to students who needed additional help.

During the 2014-2015 school year University Park continued to provide both math and numeracy classes to middle school students. Numeracy class provides extra time for students to be working on their skills and establish a strong mathematic base before moving on to more challenging classes in high school.

<p>What improvements are needed?</p>	<p>At this point, the test scores from the 2015 administration of the PARCC exam are uncertain. There is no real way of determining if UPCS has achieved its goal without these scores being available.</p> <p>Even without the scores available, University Park will make efforts to improve scores on mathematics exams in all grades. University Park will increase the use of diagnostic tests (MAPS) to inform instruction of math, especially in the middle school. This year, there is a new platform for the MAPS testing. Students in grade 7, 8 and 9 will take the MAPS in the beginning of October. The Focused Instructional Coach/MAPS Testing Administrator will ensure that the results of this exam are used to inform instruction. Meeting time will be dedicated to looking at results and identifying areas of high need. Math teachers will develop plans for students or groups of students who need targeted help.</p>
<p>What are our next steps?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The schedule at University Park has been changed to allow for longer blocks in the middle school. Teachers requested this change in order to allow students more time during the day to continue longer projects and assignments. • University Park is dedicated to continuing working on numeracy across the curriculum. The Focused Instructional Coach will visit classes and report out ways in which teachers of subjects other than math are integrating math skills into their daily lessons. The Instructional Coach will share strategies out during department and team meetings. • This year, University Park will complete the first round of MAPS testing by the beginning of October. The Focused Instructional Coach will use meeting time within the next three weeks to allow teachers to go over scores and look for students who will need extra helps and interventions. • University Park is running a new Middle School PLC (Professional Learning Community). One of the topics of this PLC is motivation and engagement strategies. Teachers in this PLC will read articles and discuss ways to implement new motivation and engagement strategies into their classrooms. The Middle School PLC will also take a look at assessments and study skills. Teachers will be encouraged to find new ways to teach study skills in the classroom.

Goal 2: The percentage of students in the 7th grade cohort moving to 8th achieving advanced or proficient on ELA MCAS will go up from 57% to 70% in the 2015 administration of the PARCC ELA exam.

What worked well?

University Park continued its best practice strategy of, “Literacy Across the Curriculum.” Teachers at University Park continue to teach ELA skills across all disciplines. During the two staff development days prior to the start of the 2014-2015 school year, math and science teachers spent time presenting different ways they implement literacy in class. At meetings throughout the year there was time assigned for teachers to share with their grade level teams what they were doing to promote literacy in their class.

One of the middle school teachers continued to operate a Middle School Book Club that met afterschool. This group was open to any interested middle school student and attendance at this club averaged over 18 students every meeting.

The English department conducted a lesson study last year. This lesson study was prepared by all the members of the English faculty. The lesson study gave teachers a chance to work within their department to plan a lesson. Working together to plan a lesson helped English teachers better understand what is expected of students at each grade level.

The English department worked with professors at Clark University to understand their expectations for what good college writing looks like. With these expectations in mind, the English department began to work backwards, from senior year to seventh grade, to ensure that their curriculum maps, rubrics and overall writing expectations were aligned to ensure that students leaving UPCS would have the skills they need to succeed in college.

What improvements are needed?

University Park ELA teachers need to continue their work on curriculum maps to ensure that skills are aligned to achieve desired grade-level results. Time will need to be made for this planning and alignment; this should be facilitated by the Focused Instructional Coach.

University Park Campus School teachers will need to continue their work on Literacy Across the Curriculum. All teachers in every discipline must be able to provide examples of assignments they are giving and rubrics they are using to assess content-specific writing within their classrooms.

What are our next steps?

- **University Park teachers have decided that they will work on ELA skills across the curriculum by planning interdisciplinary units together. The Middle School PLC will work throughout the year to plan an interdisciplinary unit that they will carry out in the month of April. This unit will include a specific lesson that will incorporate a lesson study. Teachers will work collaboratively in PLC time to accomplish this task.**
- **University Park Campus School teachers will use ELA MAPS scores to identify areas where students or groups of students need targeted interventions. MAPS tests will be given out the first week in October and the Focused Instructional Coach will establish meeting time for teachers to analyze data and plan interventions and focus instruction according to results.**
- **University Park is running a new Middle School PLC (Professional Learning Community). One of the topics of this PLC is motivation and engagement strategies. Teachers in this PLC will read articles and discuss ways to implement new motivation and engagement strategies into their classrooms. The Middle School PLC will also take a look at assessments and study skills. Teachers will be encouraged to find new ways to teach study skills in the classroom.**

Goal 3: All 7th and 8th grade students will show growth in science. The percentage of middle school students achieving advanced and proficient scores on the Science and Engineering MCAS exam will rise from 24% last year to 35% in the 2015 administration of the exam.

What worked well?

The results of the 2015 administration of the MCAS Science and Engineering exam remained steady at 22% Proficient. There was a decrease in the number of students in the warning category, with only 24% in the warning category in 2015 compared to 26% in 2014 and 31% in 2013.

As a school, University Park continues to try and increase the number of proficient and advanced scores on the MCAS by focusing on strategies such as Writing to Learn and Numeracy Across the Curriculum, these practices directly affect the scores of MCAS tests by providing students with the skills to read and decode the complex questions found on the 8th grade MCAS science exam.

Interns from the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Studies provided assistance in science classes during the 2014-2015 school year. This one-on-one assistance for students who were struggling to understand concepts helped reduce the number of percentage of students in the warning category.

The University Park Campus School Robotics team was established and about 15 middle school students participated during the 2014-2015 school year. The Robotics team encouraged members to act as engineers and create robots to participate in multiple competitions.

What improvements are needed?

As a school, University Park must continue to work towards more proficient and advanced scores on the MCAS science administrations. University Park science teachers will continue to look at their curriculum maps in order to identify and focus on areas where gaps exist, this will be facilitated by the Focused Instructional Coach.

University Park science teachers will try to improve the coverage of content throughout the year that may improve scores on this exam. As a school, University Park will continue to improve these scores and specifically focus on decreasing the number of, “0’s” on open response questions. Overall, there is still much room to grow in this area and we will continue to look for methods of increasing our proficiency in science.

<p>What are our next steps?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Professional Development day in October, teachers will receive training on using standards-based assessments and reflections. This types of assessments encourages teachers and students to look closely at which content and strands are mastering and those that need further study. • University Park staff will use data from previous years testing to inform where there may be gaps in student knowledge of the science curriculum. Science teachers will use this information to inform there teaching and focus on content coverage. The Focused Instructional Coach will work together will science faculty to ensure there is time to analyze this data. • The Middle School PLC will focus on motivation and engagement strategies this year. This PLC will work to enact new strategies that may help increase overall performance in classes and on larger exams and tests. • The University Park staff will also continue to focus on study skills this year. This will help students become confident test takers on all exams, including science examinations.
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<p>Goal 4: The number of AP qualifying scores in the social science classes AP Human Geography, AP United States History and AP United States Government and Politics will double to 22% in the 2015 Administration of the exams.</p>	
<p>What worked well?</p>	<p>Unfortunately, University Park Campus School did not achieve its goal of increasing the number of qualifying scores on AP Human Geography, AP United States History and AP United States Government and Politics to 22%. Student performance on these exams remained consistent with the previous year’s results. The 2014-2015 school year was riddled with snow days, which led to many interruptions to instruction of these classes.</p> <p>University Park continues to increase the number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement classes. All students at University Park are eligible to take these courses despite past performance or GPA.</p>

<p>What improvements are needed?</p>	<p>University Park will continue to work and improve the number of qualifying scores on AP exams. The faculty at University Park recognizes the importance of these exams, as a qualifying score could earn students college credit. Students at University Park need to work on test-taking strategies. Many of the students at University Park who take an AP class (specifically AP Human Geography) are enrolled for the first time. AP exams are different than other high-stakes exams that students take because they are timed. Teachers of AP classes need to provide AP students with experience taking timed exams.</p> <p>University Park Campus faculty will work to improve study skills across all grades and disciplines. This study skill work will benefit students when they move on to take AP classes.</p> <p>AP teachers need to re-work instructional strategies in order to increase the rigor of class to better prepare students for exam. Focused Instructional Coach will need to check in on the new strategies that are implemented.</p>
<p>What are our next steps?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused Instructional Coach will consult with teachers of AP at other schools who are achieving higher scores on exams. Instructional Coach will bring back information they learn from these teachers and share it during meeting time with AP teachers at University Park. • AP teachers at University Park will actively look for Professional Development to attend in order to help achieve higher scores on exams. AP teachers should attend at least one professional development session before winter break. • PLCs will meet to research and discuss motivation and engagement strategies. These various strategies will be shared throughout the faculty. AP teachers will be encouraged to adopt specific strategies in an effort to increase motivation in difficult AP classes. Increased assessment of study skills across grade levels will better prepare students for entering AP courses. • All AP students will take at least 2 timed practice exams before the real test date. Students will receive feedback within 1 week of the practice exam. The students will reflect on their tests and identify strands of weaknesses and establish a plan to improve weaknesses with teacher. This process will be facilitated by the Focused Instructional Coach.

Goal 5: The number of school suspensions will decrease by 20%.

What worked well?

Although the total number of suspensions at University Park did increase in the 2014-2015 school year from 22 to 29, UPCS did make some improvements because the total number of out of school suspensions decreased by 11% in the 2014-2015 school year. The total number of students suspended represented just 6% of University Park Campus School's total population. Also, data demonstrates that the majority (86%) of the suspensions at University Park occur in grades 7, 8 and 9. The fact that students are not being suspended as frequently in the upper grades is a testament to their civic and social growth while at University Park.

Over the course of the 2014-2014 school year University Park Campus School enacted multiple behavior plans for students who had already been suspended. Once these behavior plans were enacted and followed these students were significantly less likely to be suspended again. The Middle School team assigned a faculty "check-in person" to any middle school students who had gotten into trouble and could be considered at-risk for suspension, this worked to help prevent many students from committing infractions that could get them suspended. Also, the Middle School team began the practice of holding, "Student-Centered Meetings." These meetings brought together the teachers, students and guardians to discuss issues that the teachers were concerned over. Students were responsible for conducting the meeting and establishing a plan to help them get on track, teachers and guardians were responsible for tracking the student's progress.

What improvements are needed?

University Park Campus School is committed to continuing to decrease the number of suspensions throughout the school year. Overall, University Park would like to see the number of in and out of school suspensions decrease; there is a specific emphasis on decreasing suspension numbers in grades 7, 8 and 9.

University Park faculty would like to see an increase in participation in extracurricular activities. Faculty will continue to encourage students to become members of clubs and teams. All students and teachers at University Park must be trained in Non-Violent Communication from the guidance staff.

What are our next steps?

- **Middle School team will work to expand the use of Student Led Meetings and customized behavior intervention plans in order stop student behavior issues before they lead to suspensions.**
- **PLC teams will focus on motivation and engagement across all grades and disciplines. Data proves that students who are more engaged in school activities are less likely to misbehave and act out in school.**
- **University Park will begin to use their new “Advisory” format. Students will have the opportunity to select advisories based on their own interests. University Park faculty is hopeful this will lead to increased student engagement.**
- **Middle School students and teachers will receive training on Non-Violent Communication within the first 3 months of school.**