

# Spring Avenue School Overview

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## School Overview

Welcome to Spring Avenue Elementary School. On behalf of the entire community and staff, we welcome this opportunity to learn more about our system as a whole. We look forward to hearing feedback around our strengths and opportunities to improve. As part of our continuous improvement plans, we are always striving to meet new goals. We appreciate your time and efforts in helping us grow.

*–Spring Avenue School*

## Basic Description of Spring Avenue School

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

- Total enrollment 356 (200 males, 156 females)
  - 3 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 12 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 79 % White
  - 5 % Two or more races
- 3% mobility rate
- 4% ELL
- 10% Free & reduced lunch
- 17% Special Ed
- 97% Daily student attendance

### Grade levels/Departments

- Grades PreK-6
  - Pre K- 30
  - K- 38
  - 1<sup>st</sup>- 38
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>- 47
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>- 52
  - 4<sup>th</sup>- 57
  - 5<sup>th</sup>- 52
  - 6<sup>th</sup>- 42

## School Improvement Plan

School Improvement Plans are based on current data, including surveys, and relevant needs that have been determined through our District 105 Strategic Plan. (See district website.) All schools are aligned to this plan for greater focus and careful use of resources, including professional development, technology, teacher academies (for building Common Core Standards and plans), SMART Goal training, and parent involvement. This increased transparency through our open and consistent communication is the key to success in all of these areas. Our district involves all groups of stakeholders on committees that support each of these areas.

All schools should work on increased comprehension, better problem solving, zero bullying practices, a clear writing focus and integration throughout all subjects, as outlined in our past Action Plan. In addition to this, we are able to determine specific areas of improvement based on many data points, trends and data analyses. Creating a School Improvement Plan through the SMART goals process has allowed us to focus on the most important needs, or **Greatest Areas of Need (GAN)**. Within this SMART goal plan, we include:

FY14 Team SMART Target	Research-based Strategies and Actions	Who is Responsible/ Target Date	Support/ Professional Learning	Evidence of Effectiveness
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The most important part of the School Improvement Plan is our constant reflection on our progress toward our SMART goals. Staff members revisit the plan and its components at every meeting, whether in staff meetings or during our institute days, to consider next steps and needs. The critical part of the plan is that we discuss, plan and consider each and every child. We use daily observations, data, grouping, differentiation, consultation, and collaboration in order to keep the plans current and alive.

Along with our GAN of increasing progress of high achieving readers, we will work on the following: (in response to surveys, conversations, observations and data)

#### **District Strategic Plan, Long Range Goal 1**

Increasing student involvement in setting and achieving goals in all subject areas  
Differentiating in math and reading, moving all students forward in all areas

#### **District Strategic Plan, Long Range Goal 2**

Constant focus on respect throughout the building in every setting  
Helping students solve their own problems by providing strategies and support (in math, homework, project selection, planning, and peer relationships)

#### **District Strategic Plan, Long Range Goal 3**

Consistent communication with parents to share their child's progress and needs

#### **District Strategic Plan, Long Range Goal 4 and 5**

Collaboration with specialists at Big Team Plan meetings to align standards, plans and strategies  
Increased knowledge and implementation of Common Core Standards

## **School Vision, Mission**

**Vision:** Our vision mirrors the district vision. District 105 strives to be a high performing school district that celebrates the importance of each individual student.

- We want each student to feel that he/she is a valued member of the school community prepared for future academic and career success.
- We want our communities to feel pride in our work and express confidence that we are good stewards of their resources.
- We want each staff member to make a positive difference in the lives of our students and their families.

**Mission:** The mission of District 105 and Spring Avenue School is to empower students to pursue their interests, talents and dreams. At Spring Avenue, we celebrate, embrace and value the power of the whole child. We believe in supporting and nurturing students as we empower them to achieve their highest potential in every area. We focus on the academic intelligence, as well as their physical health and their social-emotional well-being. To do this, we work with a focus on our vision, a deep care and concern for each child and family, and we reach above and beyond to collaborate and learn together.

## **School Goals**

To make this vision come to life, we target the four district goal areas for our school improvement plan (SIP) to support our culture, instruction and progress with the student at the heart of all our decisions.

### **1. All students will demonstrate continuous growth and achieve college and career readiness standards.**

At Spring Avenue, our students achieve at very high rates and our community provides them with the resources to come to school ready to learn. (82% of our students achieve at or above the 50th percentile on our Measures

of Academic Progress- NWEA MAP tests.)

Our staff focuses on the goal of academic progress for each child. Our professional development is centered around how to help each child progress at the expected rate of improvement, or beyond. Using Webb's Depth of Knowledge, we are able to scaffold our instruction to challenge students appropriately. Nationally, we are ranked in the top 10% for students making their expected progress on the MAP tests from fall to spring. Spring Avenue School was recognized by the State of Illinois for the sixth consecutive year and received the Illinois "Academic Excellence Award."

In 2009, through a systems assessment, based on the Baldrige Model, we were rated by CEC (Consortium of Educational Change) as a high performing school in the areas of collaboration, learning and results. This systems analysis included data review, parent, student and staff interviews, as well as observations in the classrooms. The feedback provided our staff with specific goals. Marzano's Strategies have now come to life on a daily basis, including setting learning goals with students. Our school will participate in another systems analysis in FY15 to help us grow and maintain high expectations. In addition, our school was recognized as a Blue Ribbon School for the 2013-14 year.

**2. All students will attend school in a safe, supportive and healthy learning environment.**

District 105 is committed to ensuring that all Spring Avenue classroom teachers and the building principal are trained in Responsive Classroom (RC). Responsive Classroom is a research-and evidence-based approach to elementary education that leads to greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate. We utilize RC through Move it Monday, Morning Meetings, Think it Thursday and whole school meetings every morning to kick off the day.

On surveys, 95-98% of our students, parents and staff share that they feel safe and supported in our school. In response to details on our surveys, we updated necessary equipment and facilities, including a student designed, parent supported playground and learning garden.

**3. District 105 will enhance learning partnerships by connecting schools, families and communities.**

According to the parent survey, 90% of our parents feel they are welcome and that their ideas are included. Parents are involved in several learning events including Ellis Island, Poetry Corners, Art Awareness, and Mystery Reader. Our PTO supports our school's goals by providing volunteers for family events, running After 3 Programs, and attending Parent Universities to learn and stay connected.

**4. We will recruit, retain and develop a high quality, collaborative staff.**

Spring Avenue has increased our student population by 100 students over the last eight years. This growth has been exciting and challenging, and the teachers we hire are experienced, committed and passionate about their positions. Our state approved mentoring program, alongside our rigorous and collaborative appraisal system, helps retain these quality teachers. Surveys confirm teachers' desire to stay at our school. (98% of all staff report that they wish to stay at Spring Avenue).

There are 3 National Board Certified Teachers at Spring Avenue; all classroom teachers have, or are pursuing advanced degrees, (master's, administrative or ELL certification) including four staff members who currently have their administrative certifications. All staff members attend Professional Development; four have presented at seminars, nationally or locally.

## State School Report Card Summary Results

From our School Dashboard:

Goal Description	Subject Area	Comparison Year	Most Recent or Current Year	FY 2014 Benchmark District	2014-15 School Year Spring Target
<p>Students <b>meet or exceed state ISAT</b> standards in reading and math</p> <p>*ISAT 2013 raised performance cut scores in line with College and Career Readiness standards.</p> <p>**ISAT 2014 will be 100% aligned with new Common Core Standards. Performance cut scores will be consistent with 2013 version.</p>	ISAT Math	88%-2013	<b>85%</b> (Spring 2014 results)	N/A	<b>Parcc Test</b>
	ISAT Reading	89%-2013	<b>84%</b> (Spring 2014 Results)	N/A	<b>Parcc Test</b>

Traditionally, Spring Avenue has performed very well on ISAT tests, receiving the Excellence Award for Exemplary Academic Performance each year. We have been working to improve instruction and rigor for students to understand the changes and increased Common Core State Standards to best prepare them for the future.

ISAT example- 5 years of results

READING- 6 <sup>TH</sup> gr School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
% Meets plus (+) % Exceeds	98	95	95	100	98

MATH- 6 <sup>TH</sup> gr School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
% Meets plus (+) % Exceeds	94	93	92	100	98

## Faculty and Staff Size and Demographics

Staff 46 total- some part time (2 male, 44 female)

- Administrators- 1.5 (Principal, Part time Assistant Principal)

Classroom 17 (ECE- 6<sup>th</sup>)

- ECE- 1.5; Developmental Kinder- .5
- K- 1.0
- 1<sup>st</sup>- 2.0
- 2<sup>nd</sup>- 2.0
- 3<sup>rd</sup>- 3.0
- 4<sup>th</sup>- 3.0
- 5<sup>th</sup>- 2.0

- 6<sup>th</sup>- 2.0

#### Support Staff/Additional Specials Departments

- PE- 1.4
- Advanced Academics- 3.0, shared with the District
- Music/Art- 4 part time teachers, shared with Middle School
- Band/Orchestra- 4 part time teachers, shared with District
- Social Worker- .5
- Psychologist- .5
- OT/PT- 2 part time teachers, shared with other schools in the LADSE coop
- Speech- .5
- Resource- 2.0
- Reading Resource- 1.0
- Librarian- 1.0
- Paraprofessionals- 11

Student : Teacher ratio 1 : 20

## School Specifics

**School Culture/Climate:** All staff members and community members work collaboratively in ways that are unique and above and beyond the regular expectations. We wish to teach students to honor and respect themselves, their peers and the world around them. Reciting mantras and banner mottos on a daily basis, along with some reminders about what is really important in becoming a well-rounded individual, combined with constant practice and modeling is the key to our positive culture.

Respecting every single person in the building, celebrating their gifts and contributions help the children see that it takes a whole village of people in order to have the opportunities and comfort of a safe and positive school. Guest Teachers (aka Substitutes) often comment on this positive feeling and put in their requests to return here, usually after just one visit. Visitors, First Responders, grandparents, student teachers and observers often comment and recognize the efforts of all staff as we come together to support the children and create the environment where students are encouraged to solve problems, resolve conflict, and design plans to become better owners of their learning. Parents feel comfortable to empower their children to share their feelings and observations with an adult at school in order to keep the goals of a positive culture at the forefront of our decisions and procedures. Students work through many issues with the support, but not control, of teachers, staff and administrators. Students respond to this expectation and repeat offenders are few. Often, one of the two adults students feel comfortable confiding in or sharing concerns with is the very visible and involved head custodian, or a lunchroom supervisor, or the administrative assistant, or a paraprofessional. The same is true of our parents; for example, parents will see the head custodian and ask if their child is enjoying lunchtime and eating what is packed. She knows because she is there- every single day. This is just one example of the level of commitment and involvement at Spring Avenue.

As a district, we have embraced the training and philosophy behind **Responsive Classroom** practices. As a school, we meet every day in the gymnasium, in class lines to Kick Off our day- whether with a Move-it Monday, Thankful Tuesday, We-Read Wednesday, Thinking Thursday or Fun Friday, we are together with a focus for the day. The lesson of the day or the review of an expectation is then revisited in the classrooms during a morning or afternoon classroom meeting. For example, excluding a peer from a group or leaving someone out in a game is an area of focus for our school. Students share ideas about how to improve or stop this habit and how it must feel. Working through this as a group helps students build awareness and share strategies to stop this.

**Changes:** As a school, we have determined that increasing progress of high achievers is the greatest area of need. Because of this district wide goal, we have had the recent opportunity of changing our gifted programming. Over a two-year period, a committee of parents, administrators, and teachers from all schools was formed to study and determine new approaches, and to implement the reorganization of pulling out and pushing in to meet the needs of the gifted and high achievers. We are in the midst of clearly determining and fully implementing best practices in this area, but we have made drastic changes in helping parents, teachers and students understand that high achievers' needs can and

should be met in the classroom with some extra support and professional development. With the support of an Advanced Academics Department, teachers are collaborating bi-monthly as a small group to determine how to differentiate within the classroom to truly meet the needs of high achievers and gifted individuals. By modeling questioning, increasing rigor and pacing, pushing in and team teaching, we believe we are on the road to better instruction for all our learners.

In addition, due to the increase of student population over the last few years, we were able to add a part time administrator to be shared across two schools in the district. Teachers embrace the additional support, evaluation opportunities and help with professional development.

Learning about and adjusting instruction for the **Common Core State Standards** has brought a whole new way of planning. Teachers are creating curriculum in teams and preparing these units around pre and post-tests. This has become a major focus of professional development as we design the tests and instruction around our four PLC questions: what do the children know, how do we know they know, what do we do if they already know and what do we do if they don't know the concepts? We are seeing the value and use of these pre and posttests to help truly monitor student understanding and growth. Combining this with the analysis of MAP testing has been a big challenge, but a more beneficial approach to understanding progress and needs. Some major changes to support this goal have been to increase common plan time and provide professional development opportunities for teachers to plan and work together.

**New Technologies:** Since our middle school has committed to a one-to-one computer plan (determined by a committee that included parents), all the elementary schools benefitted by the redistribution of their older laptops. Our students now have access to more computers more often and each grade level has one full set of computers to share. These computers are being shared across grade levels as well, and are in constant use, including hourly writers' workshop for the 6<sup>th</sup> graders where each student has their own computer for the entire writing process.

Recently, the entire student body participated in the Hour of Code with the support of a parent coordinator and other volunteers from Microsoft. These six adults supported the librarian and teachers by conducting an hour of code instruction. Our K-6 students were fully engaged and students began using this website at home, as well. This was evident at a recent concert where we asked parents to raise their hands if their child/children had shown them the code.org website. Response was enthusiastic and supportive.

## **Other Information**

*Elizabeth Webb, Jennifer Mindy (administrators)*

*CEC team/ School Leadership Team: Rachel Dickerson, Lynn Halfpenny, Lauren Parrino, Wendy Daly, Amanda Dahlin, Christine Eck, Julie Folliard, Elizabeth Charlton, Nicole Manganello, Luke Arneson (representatives from each grade level, ECE-6<sup>th</sup> and other departments)*

### **Other important information we wish to share:**

As part of our #1 School award from the Chicago Magazine, we were spotlighted for "Parent Power." We embrace this on a daily basis. Our parents are known to help supervise the running club, teach After 3 classes, facilitate the Field Day centers, coordinate volunteers for our Learning Garden, run the Book Fair and organize the Fun Fair. Our Math and Science nights are hosted by our PTO and are open to all schools. The community attends all Family Nights en masse. Parents also help coordinate hands-on activities for art, science and centers, as needed.

The most unique and supportive program that our PTO organizes is the After 3 program. During the months of December through March, students attend classes that are taught by parents or teachers after the regular school day is out. Many days the classrooms and spaces are filled with students staying after school to learn unique skills or participate in fun activities. We have an 83 year old grandmother who teaches students the art of cooking through a class called "Dough with Della." Some students have been attending this class for all of their seven years at Spring Avenue, a very cherished memory for them. Other examples include teachers and parents who run a yoga club, backyard sports, math club, chess club and knitting class during this After 3 program.

Each year our PTO also sponsors an author visit. Our librarian works collaboratively with a small committee to secure a local or nationally known author to visit. When Ralph Fletcher visited, we invited parents and teachers to have lunch with Mr. Fletcher. We asked him about motivating boy writers. This was inspiring to all teachers and parents as we realized that together, we could create strong writers of all our children.

Our parents are willing to help in a variety of ways and come together during times of need, from deaths in the community to flooded basements; Spring Avenue School knows that our families are going to be taken care of within our community.

Our Illinois 5 Essentials rating for Involved Families was VERY STRONG with a score of 98. We are very proud of the efforts of the community, our staff and entire student body in keeping this as a priority for the success of our school. Teachers and parents continue to work very closely together in many ways to support the needs of the children. We realize on a daily basis that our families and their high involvement help keep the goals of the school focused on students and their overall progress as individuals who are preparing for the future.