

Mullen-Hall Elementary School 2018-19



Nancy Ashworth, Principal

130 Katherine Lee Bates Road Falmouth, MA 02540

“Embrace the premise that the fundamental process of the school is to ensure that all students learn at high levels and enlist the staff in examining every existing practice, program, and procedure to ensure it aligns with that purpose.”

-ASCD 4/2013

If you want to go quickly; go alone; if you want to go far; go together.

-African proverb

School Council Members

Tania Oliver, Teacher

Nicole Bell, Teacher

Serena Lo Piccolo, Parent

Nancy Ashworth, Principal

Teacher Data

Falmouth Public Schools is proud to hire highly qualified, skilled, and passionate educators to work with our 3,300 students. Our teachers work daily to support the various academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs of our diverse student population. As such, Falmouth Public Schools actively works to recruit, hire, and retain a teaching staff that will provide the students of Falmouth the education they deserve.

The table below provides information related to the faculty of Mullen-Hall Elementary School, Falmouth Public Schools, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Indicator	MH	District	State
Number of Teachers	38.8	291.7	73,419
% Licensed in Teaching Assignment	100	99.2	97.2
Student/Teacher Ratio	11.2 to 1	11.6 to 1	13.0 to 1

Student Attendance

Falmouth Public Schools strongly emphasizes the importance of being present and on time to school unless it is medically necessary for a student to be absent. There is a direct correlation between students with frequent absences and those students in need of academic remediation. If parents/guardians are having difficulty getting their child to school, please contact your child's principal for support.

Descriptor	MH	District	State
Attendance Rate	95.1	94.0	94.6
Average No. of Days Absent	8.5	10.5	9.3
Absent 10 or More Days	35.4	42.1	33.3
Chronically Absent (10% or More)	9.3	15.6	13.5

Professional Development

Falmouth Public Schools understands the importance of providing its teachers with frequent, relevant, and high quality professional development to improve teaching practices and student achievement. We strive to provide opportunities that are both practical and meaningful. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has provided guidance related to high quality professional development. Below are the ten standards we strive to meet during each of our training sessions:

- High quality professional development has clear goals and objectives relevant to desired student outcomes.
- High quality professional development aligns with state, district, school, and/or educator goals or priorities.
- High quality professional development is designed based on the analysis of data relevant to the identified goals, objectives, and audience.
- High quality professional development is assessed to ensure that it is meeting the targeted goals and objectives.
- High quality professional development promotes collaboration among educators to encourage sharing of ideas and working together to achieve the identified goals and objectives.
- High quality professional development advances an educator's ability to apply learnings from the professional development to his/her particular content and/or context.
- High quality professional development models good pedagogical practice and applies knowledge of adult learning theory to engage educators.
- High quality professional development makes use of relevant resources to ensure that the identified goals and objectives are met.
- High quality professional development is taught or facilitated by a professional who is knowledgeable about the identified objectives.
- High quality professional development sessions connect and build upon each other to provide a coherent and useful learning experience for educators.

The Offices of Teaching and Learning, Digital Learning, Student Services, and Human Resources have developed a professional development program designed to prepare our educators to meet the needs -- academic, behavioral and social/emotional -- of our students. The areas identified for professional development come from the analysis of a variety of data:

- Student achievement and growth data
- Data collected from educator evaluation
- Trainings related to state mandates
- Data from conversations with administrators and educators.

Throughout the academic year, various professional development sessions will be offered to educators to help them meet the academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs of our diverse learners. The following list of professional development opportunities is being planned for educators during the 2018-2019 school year:

- Differentiating Instruction to Meet the Needs of Academically Accelerated Learners
- Differentiation in Grades 5 - 6
- Vertical Alignment in Response to Updated Frameworks
- Strategies for Responding to Student's Needs
- Developing Trauma Sensitive Classrooms
- Implementation of the new *Journeys* Reading Program in Grades K-4
- Effective Assessment of Student Growth and Grading
- Fostering Inclusive Practices
- Revitalizing Instruction for Students and Educators (RISE)
- Structured English Immersion Professional Learning Communities
- Writing and Implementing Behavioral Support Plans
- Understanding Disabilities Beyond the Label
- Safety Care
- Specialized Lateral Programming Curriculum
- Unpacking Cultural Proficiency
- Meaningful and Innovative Health and Physical Education

Enhancement of Parental Involvement

Mullen-Hall is effortful in making connections with families. Every teacher distributes a newsletter, many have a blog, a few send daily emails with pictures of student learning for the day, and frequently staff demonstrate an inordinate flexibility to meet the scheduling needs of families.

PTO has provided child-care for Meet Your Teacher Night. This year 149 students attended the child-care sessions. Two sessions were offered during Meet Your Teacher Night to provide parents/families with information relative to our Student Support Model – a multi-faceted model featuring a continuum of support and interventions. Our Bullying Prevention and Intervention policy was also presented.

Families are invited to special events such as the Art Show, Curling Tournament, PTO-sponsored events, Student Government Inauguration, movie nights, Wax Museum, field trips, volunteering, Banking Day, and Career Day. We have used conference calling to include families, interpreters are provided for meetings when required, videos are crafted to welcome students to school and to introduce families to staff.

School Safety & Discipline

Mullen-Hall prides itself on the personalized care students receive during their school day. Our motto of: “Do Well; Do Good!” encourages students to focus on their academic tasks as well as their contribution relative to kindness and good citizenship. Our learning community favors a focus not only on academic planning, but also on habits that affect success in school and in life. The Peace Builders program is used as a framework for behavioral expectations as well. Additional programming exists to support positive behavioral expectations, coupled with interventions, and coping strategies to address the stress youth are experiencing. Calmer Choice lessons have begun in grades two, three and four. These lessons are providing students with ways to learn to face challenges, stick with difficulties, manage emotions, make decisions, and learn from mistakes to grow, adapt and improve, both academically and in life. We have welcomed a therapy dog to Mullen-Hall School in September 2016. Together, Mullen-Hall School and Gosnold Prevention Partnership programming have united to schedule counseling services at school three days/week. Student Government promotes student feedback relative to their learning community. Involvement and contribution are hallmarks of this initiative. Our September 2018 Community Meeting focused on our school-wide positive behavioral initiatives and recognition of student cooperation. This was also our first spirit day – Pirate Day was great fun for everyone in school. In sum, the robustness of support to address health, well-being, and happiness contribute to an environment to realize the best in students.

We adhere to the handbook descriptions and language relative to student behavior, address any bullying matters with sincere integrity and vigilance, and understand the rights of disabled students and the manifestation determination process. We set high standards and consider the 'whole child' when a student is referred to the office. We work to ensure that our approach to discipline places an emphasis on serving as a protective factor rather than creating more risk.

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Mullen-Hall School has focused on pedagogical beliefs such as maintaining a solution-based focus and we continue to pay close attention to the issues of equity, access, and opportunity. Finally, the use of space, roles and responsibilities, and meetings all focus on the important aspect of school safety and discipline.

Our Safety Team and Medical Emergency Teams have met and have a calendar of meetings established for this school year. The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan will be reviewed with local police and fire departments to train staff in dealing with safety drill procedures and with emergency planning. The support of Falmouth Police and Fire, along with administration personnel, is evidence of partnering with the greater community to support and maintain safe environments for students.

2018-2019 School Goals

School Success Goal 1

Close the achievement gap & communicate learning standards and performance expectations which are personalized for learners.

Mullen-Hall School will study Webb's Depth of Knowledge in order to create rich environments and increase the level of instructional rigor for all students. We will reduce achievement gaps and improve outcomes for our lowest performing students.

Connection(s) to the Falmouth Public Schools Strategic Plan

Our goal aligns with the Falmouth Public Schools' mission and core beliefs:

In order to ensure success for all students, three core beliefs define us as a school system and enable us to accomplish our mission:

Continuous Improvement for Students, Teachers, Staff, and Administrators

We strongly believe in continuous improvement, and we achieve this through actions such as

- clearly communicating learning standards and performance expectations which are personalized for learners
- assigning tasks that challenge learners to move to deeper and more complex levels of knowledge and understanding along a developmental path that is age-appropriate
- helping learners develop the self-discipline to work hard and persist at assigned tasks
- helping learners feel empowered in the learning process through rigorous preparation.

Enthusiasm for Teaching and Learning

We strongly believe in the enthusiasm for teaching and learning, and we achieve this through actions such as:

- supporting curiosity, inquiry, active learning, reflection, creativity and innovation
- fostering in teachers and learners the confidence it takes to accept new ideas
- helping teachers and learners overcome the challenges that sometime accompany learning.

Collaboration in Teaching and Learning

We strongly believe in schools where collaboration is highly valued, teachers and learners feel safe, diversity in all its forms is celebrated as an asset, and we achieve this through actions such as

- acting with integrity, demonstrating honesty, responsibility, thoughtfulness, encouragement, and respect
- modeling the good citizenship and encouraging these goals from the greater educational Falmouth community including parents, volunteers, and community leaders.

Action Steps

Rationale

1. Following a review of our preliminary MCAS data, we noted a trend relative to the language of the questions where students faced challenges. (Rather than 'chasing' a standard or test item, we will focus on levels of instruction featuring Webb's Depth of Knowledge Levels.
2. One exercise with a grade 4 class featured a review released MCAS math questions. Conversations discovered where/what/how students were confused. Another discovery during this exercise was the observation(s) of teacher(s) quickly solving and re-teaching problems as opposed to listening to students report how they learn, think and struggle.
3. We have discovered the need to focus on Instructional process vs product.
4. The end-of-year Administrative surveys and feedback revealed requests for our school to focus on 'how students learn vs. what they learn.'

Administrative Action Plans

- Obtain teacher buy-in
- Develop a common language using one guide/resource
- Model questioning techniques during classroom visits
- Focus on long term, impactful solutions, not 'quick fixes'
- Re-introduce the Norms of Collaboration for all team(s)
- Focus on instructional time – (school-wide schedules and student support schedules)
- Use data to drive instruction – (MCAS, FAST, CBM, DIBELS)
- Disseminate resources (*articles, strategies to support educators, students and overall goal development*)
- Support continuous professional development and goal attainment (Staff Meeting time)
- Schedule wisely relative to instructional blocks
- Stress differentiation as an essential part of teaching and learning

● Reinforce the bottom line: “Every student; Every Day”

Educator Action Plans:

Educators will apply Webb’s Depth of Knowledge to design rigorous instruction.

1. Monthly, teachers will create a list of every task asked of students to do in a 2 - 3-day span of learning (including classwork, homework and projects.)
2. Monthly, grade level teams will sort the tasks into categories according to the four Webb’s Depth of Knowledge Levels.
3. During Common Planning Time, teacher teams will review these tasks and their designated groupings. Discussion will include the clarification and understanding of the levels.
4. Teachers/teams will analyze groupings.
 - a. What patterns do you see?
 - b. Is there a reasonable distribution of tasks across the four levels?
 - c. What is noticed, discovered whether expected or unexpected?
5. Teachers will access and include the Essential Questions in the Journey’s weekly program guide
6. Teachers will read two ‘growth mindset books’ in class twice/month.
7. All staff will contribute to a shared Google doc to house supportive questions for our growth mindset book library using Webb’s Levels of Depth of Knowledge.
8. Administration will assist with the provision of books and coordination of Depth of Knowledge questions for each book.
9. Teachers will offer differentiated activities and/or products for students to demonstrate their learning
10. Teachers are encouraged to seek guidance and/or support from their evaluators as needed. *(At a minimum, staff will be asked to complete the End-of-Year Administrative Survey.)*

School Success Goal 2

Enhance Mullen-Hall School's safety and security measures.

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Action Steps

1. Partner with elementary principals to create a training video for substitutes, interns and mentors relative to fire drills, lockdowns and building-based procedures
2. Create a list of the Mullen-Hall School's field trip destinations and each location's safety plans
3. Participate in FPS security trainings and practice drills
4. Monitor dismissal procedures at Mullen-Hall School
5. Partner with FPS to develop standardized practices (Fire Bags, Go Buckets..)
6. Attend Wellness Committee Meetings

School Success Goal 3

Improve Mullen-Hall School's physical plant.

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- goals from the greater educational Falmouth community including parents, volunteers, and community leaders.

Action Steps

Partner with FPS administration, community departments and the greater educational Falmouth community including parents, volunteers and community leaders to:

1. Repair picnic tables, kiosks, lending libraries, garden signage and playground equipment
2. Purchase new carpet for the school library
3. Pursue painting for the school's exterior
4. Install interior office doorway to enhance safety
5. Install exterior keypad at rear of the school
6. Clean rooftop cupola
7. Repair front stair railing
8. Maintain safe mulch levels on the playground
9. Partner with professionals to repair cupola and the affected ceiling in the top floor office spaces
10. Develop re-seeding plan for the front field
11. Purchase cubbies for pod use/storage
12. Install additional water fountains in grade level pods

13. Investigate installation of air-conditioning (as ducts were installed during renovation)