



March 3rd, 2023

**TO:** Jessica Boston-Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Academics

**FROM:** Felix M. Caraballo, Principal of Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center

**RE:** School Improvement (SIP) Memo to School Committee for the 2022-2023

**CC:** Dr. Jeff Curley, Interim Superintendent; SPS School Committee

## School Mission

Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center is driven by the mission of providing our students with extensive, varied and developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that will help each child grow intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially in a safe and nurturing school environment. We recognize parents and caregivers as their child's first teacher and encourage their active involvement in their child's education, both at home and at school.

## Our Values

**Community** is a welcoming group with a common purpose that supports the care, equity, and rights of one another resulting in ongoing respect and trust.

**Care** is providing an environment that supports the emotional and physical needs of everyone and creating meaningful relationships among individuals, family, and communities.

**Equity** is advocating for the rights of all people including children, their families, and one another to access everything needed to learn and grow.

**Respect** is valuing and showing appreciation for the worth of one another.

**Trust** is a reliance on, and the confidence in, the integrity, strength, surety, and ability of a person or entity.





## Our Beliefs

All children can learn, desire to learn, and have the right to learn.

Our community is strengthened by diversity, multiple perspectives, and mutual respect.

Educational experiences should engage the whole child through hands-on learning and real world opportunities that encourage critical thinking, creativity, curiosity, and inquiry.

Education is an active partnership with a shared responsibility between home, school, and the community.

All decisions concerning education should be based on what is best for children.

## Background / Information

The students who make up our population come from a variety of countries around the world, including but not limited to the United States of America, Brazil and every other country in South America, Central America, Nepal, Ukraine, Dominican Republic, Russia, Greece, Germany, Japan and China. There are currently 22 home languages other than English represented in our school. The multicultural composition of our student population provides a unique place for our students to begin their educational journey. Our students grow and thrive in a culturally rich environment where they experience school for the first time. Through these educational and play activities, they learn to be safe and kind with their classmates and themselves.

Our school houses the ECIP (Early Childhood Intervention Program), which includes 4 integrated classes and 1 substantially separate class. The integrated classes are made up of 15 students, 49% percent of whom are students with IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) and 51% of whom are community peers (students considered typically developing, after a screening process). The community peers provide social and language modeling, and will often stay for 2 pre-kindergarten years, forming strong relationships with their peers. The substantially separate class is comprised of up to 9 students, all with IEPs. Students with IEPs regularly enter as they turn 3, and community peers must be 3 years old by August 31st. All students benefit from developmentally appropriate language-based multisensory instruction and learning experiences. The 5 preschool AIM (Adapt Include Motivate) classes are also housed at the Capuano Center. The AIM classes have up to 9 students with IEPs and are solely for





students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Classroom teaching teams include Behavior Specialists, and as students make progress, teams and families will determine whether students will benefit from inclusion in an integrated ECIP class. We have 6 PK-SMILE, which is a general education program for students 4 years of age as of August 31st of the current school year. Given the variety of home languages and language learning needs, all students benefit from every teacher in the building either holding or working toward an SEI (Sheltered English Immersion) endorsement from the DESE. This is typically the first time students come to school, so it is imperative that teachers identify students who might need additional support to thrive in the classroom.

We also have 2 General Education Kindergarten classes which also have diverse students who might require additional language support or services as determined by their IEP in the classroom. These students may be serviced by an English as a Second Language Teacher, SLP, OT, PT, or Special Education Teacher throughout the school year. The AIM program, similar to the PK-AIM, has 4 multigraded classes of Kindergarten and 1st grade students. These are students who benefit from inclusion with the General Ed classes at different levels of participation during the day.

Capuano students have opportunities to focus on different aspects of their academic growth while simultaneously improving their English proficiency, developing social and academic language, and an appreciation of their cultural differences which helps them become more accepting of others regardless of their differences. This is a goal that all our classes at the Capuano share.

## **Focus Area w/Rationale and Theory of Action**

After a thorough discussion with different stakeholders and data review, school leadership has identified letter naming, phonemic and phonological awareness (academic), social emotional learning (student wellness), and Family Engagement (Equity) as overarching areas of improvement.

The decision to focus on letter naming, phonemic and phonological awareness was made because our specific student population comes to our school with little to no exposure to specific literacy skills. This is the foundation to success in reading and writing at their many academic levels in their future academic careers. Without this significant skill, these students would not be positioned for success. In previous years, our Improvement Plan goal on academics included only phonemic and phonological awareness. This limited the scope of the goal to only Kindergarten students who get assessed on those areas in their



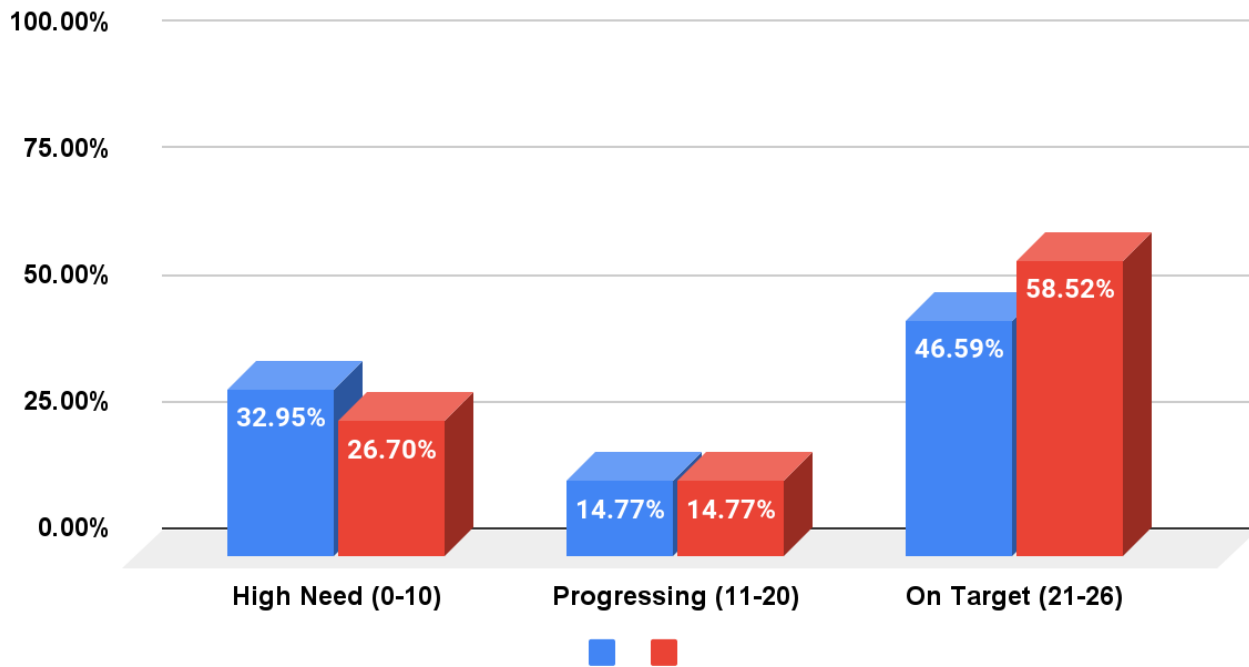


Dibels. We decided to add letter naming as a foundational skill that is already taught and assessed starting in the Pre-K in order to make the goal more inclusive of our diverse student population.

Teachers take a benchmark in the areas of letter naming, phonemic and phonological awareness to know where our students are currently standing:

**Chart 1: Progression of the Letter Naming Data between Fall Baseline and January checkpoint an increase of 11.93% is observed on the “On Target” area.**

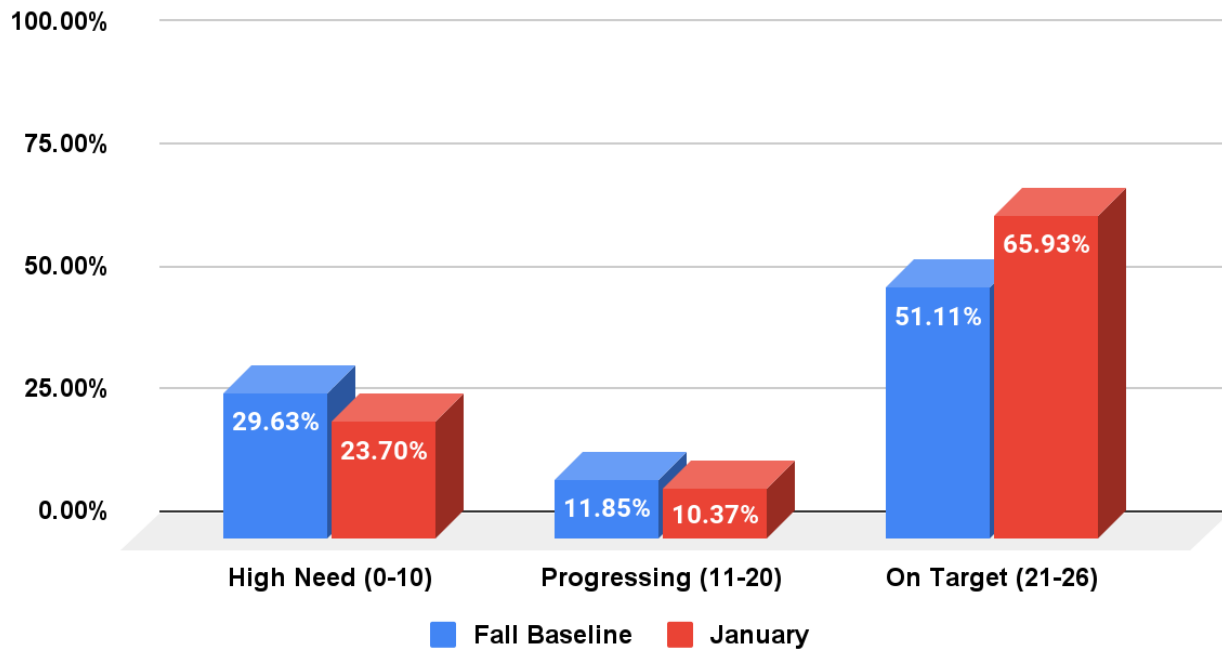
### Capuano ECC - Letter Naming Data SY23 - PK - All





**Chart 2: PK students who are 4 yrs old. This chart excludes data from students from other programs who can start attending at 3 yrs-old.**

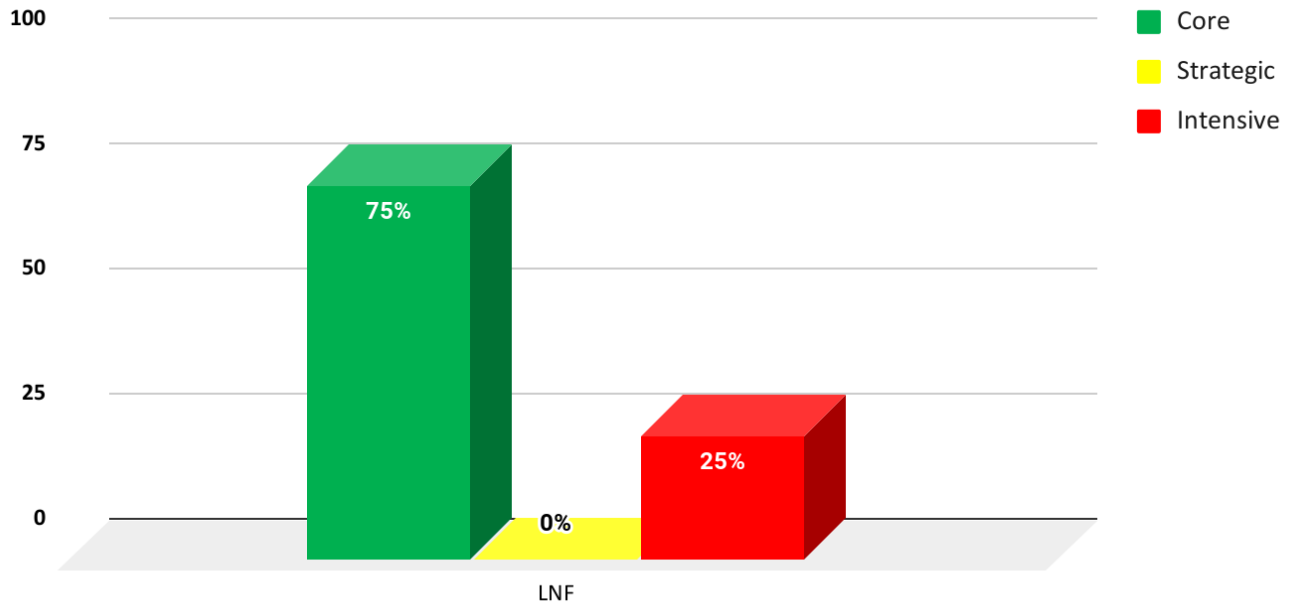
## Capuano ECC - Letter Naming Data SY23 - PK - 4 yrs only





**Chart 3: All Kindergarten students performance during the Winter 2023 DIBELS in the Letter Naming Fluency. We can observe that at the moment, 75% of all students are already at the “Core” Support (Minimal risk). 25% of students are still at the “Intensive” Support (At risk).**

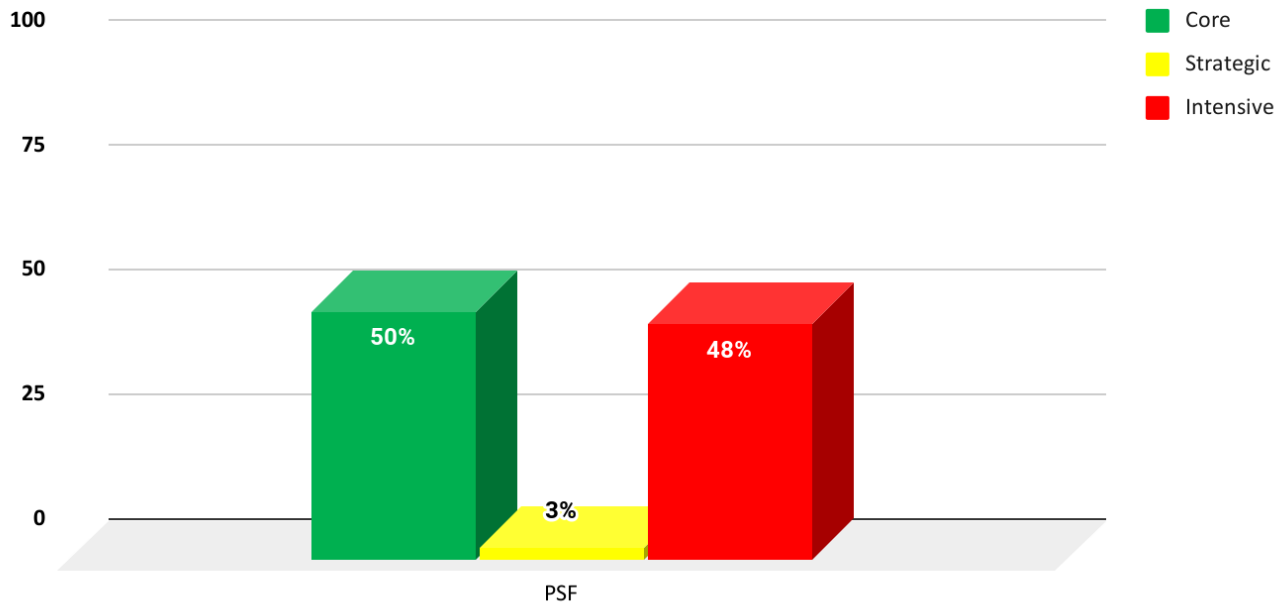
**Capuano DIBELS - Winter 2023 - Letter Naming Fluency - KF- All**





**Chart 4: All Kindergarten students performance during the Winter 2023 DIBELS in the Phoneme Segmentation Fluency. We can observe that at the moment, 50% of all students are already at the “Core” Support (Minimal risk). 3% of students are at the “Strategic” Support (Some risk). 48% of students are still at the “Intensive” Support (At risk).**

### Capuano DIBELS - Winter 2023 - Phoneme Segmentation Fluency - KF - All



We are also focusing on the Social Emotional Learning growth of our students. This has a special need because normally our students come to school for the first time when they come to us. In addition to that, some of our students have been socially isolated from peers during the COVID Pandemic. Therefore, their trauma levels are heightened and their social emotional development up to this point tends to be noncompliant with what they are supposed to display in that area at their age. By taking a benchmark of SEL Domains (we measure 6 domains at the Capuano), we know where our students stand and which domain(s) might need special attention. Being able to function at age appropriate levels of social emotional learning, will help the students continue learning without having interruptions from other areas of their lives. Additionally, if students do not meet their SEL expectations, they would not be able to





meet higher demands, both academics and socioemotional of a school setting, especially when they move on to another building.

In previous years, our student wellness goal was also based on our SEL assessment of students, but focused mostly on Domain 4B (Conflict Management). Although we want to keep working using the SEL assessment as a guide for our goal, we decided to expand it to make sure that we not only improve one domain, but all of them. We are also raising the bar from previous years in which the goal was 70-75% to at least 80%. The different stakeholders analyzing our current data and who have been involved in this process for years understand that this goal is attainable.

The domains that our school's SEL Measure assesses are based on the DESE SEL Framework. They are the following:

- D1      **Self awareness**
  - Standard 1: The child will be able to recognize, identify, and express his/her emotions.
- D2      **Self management**
  - Standard 4: The child will demonstrate impulse control and stress management.
- D3      **Social Awareness**
  - Standard 5: The child will display empathetic characteristics.
- D4A     **Relationship Skills**
  - Standard 8: The child will engage socially, and build relationships with other children and with adults.
- D4B     **Conflict Management**
  - Standard 9: The child will demonstrate the ability to manage conflict.
- D5      **Decision Making**
  - Standard 11: The child will demonstrate beginning personal, social, and ethical responsibility; and
  - Standard 12: The child will demonstrate the ability to reflect on and evaluate the results of his or her actions and decisions.







**Capuano ECC SEL Measurement - Fall 2022**

**Table 1: ECIP (PK) - Fall 2022 - All Students**

	D1	D2	D3	D4a	D4b	D5
Meeting	79%	68%	58%	95%	74%	84%
Progressing	21%	26%	42%	5%	26%	16%
Not yet	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**Table 2: SMILE (PK) - Fall 2022 - All Students**

	D1	D2	D3	D4a	D4b	D5
Meeting						
Progressing						
Not yet						

**Table 3: Kindergarten - Fall 2022 - All Students**

	D1	D2	D3	D4a	D4b	D5
Meeting	56%	64%	78%	89%	67%	86%
Progressing	42%	25%	19%	11%	28%	8%

**Table 4: Capuano ECC - Fall 2022 - All Students**

	D1	D2	D3	D4a	D4b	D5
Meeting	68%	63%	66%	91%	64%	83%
Progressing	31%	32%	33%	8%	32%	14%
Not yet	1%	6%	1%	0%	5%	3%





In terms of Equity, we decided to focus on the very important area of **Family Engagement**. There are several inequities that impact our families from accessing schools. As we know Somerville has a vast socio-economic field. We have students whose parents own multi million dollar homes and families who live in multigenerational apartments some as little as 1 bedroom not to mention our families that live in public housing. We have parents who work multiple jobs to make ends meet and parents who can work from home flexible hours as well as households with only one working parent. With financial inequities comes the inability to come to school during school hours to participate in student learning/activities. What we aim to do as best we can is offer parents the opportunity to join in school programs/activities at multiple times and in a variety of ways. Financial hardships are pervasive and do not just impact one milieu of a student's life. We know the importance of family participation in education and we continue to strive to level an uneven field.

The above became more obvious during and as an aftermath of the COVID Pandemic. However, historically this had been a concern for families who don't speak English as their first language. So, even though we are addressing the main concern of access to all families due to their general feeling of not having access to school reflected on the various surveys, we as a school are also thinking about those families who generally don't have advocacy to name their concerns or needs in an institutional setting due to lack of language accessibility.

The identification of these two inequity areas for families is based on observational/anecdotal evidence.

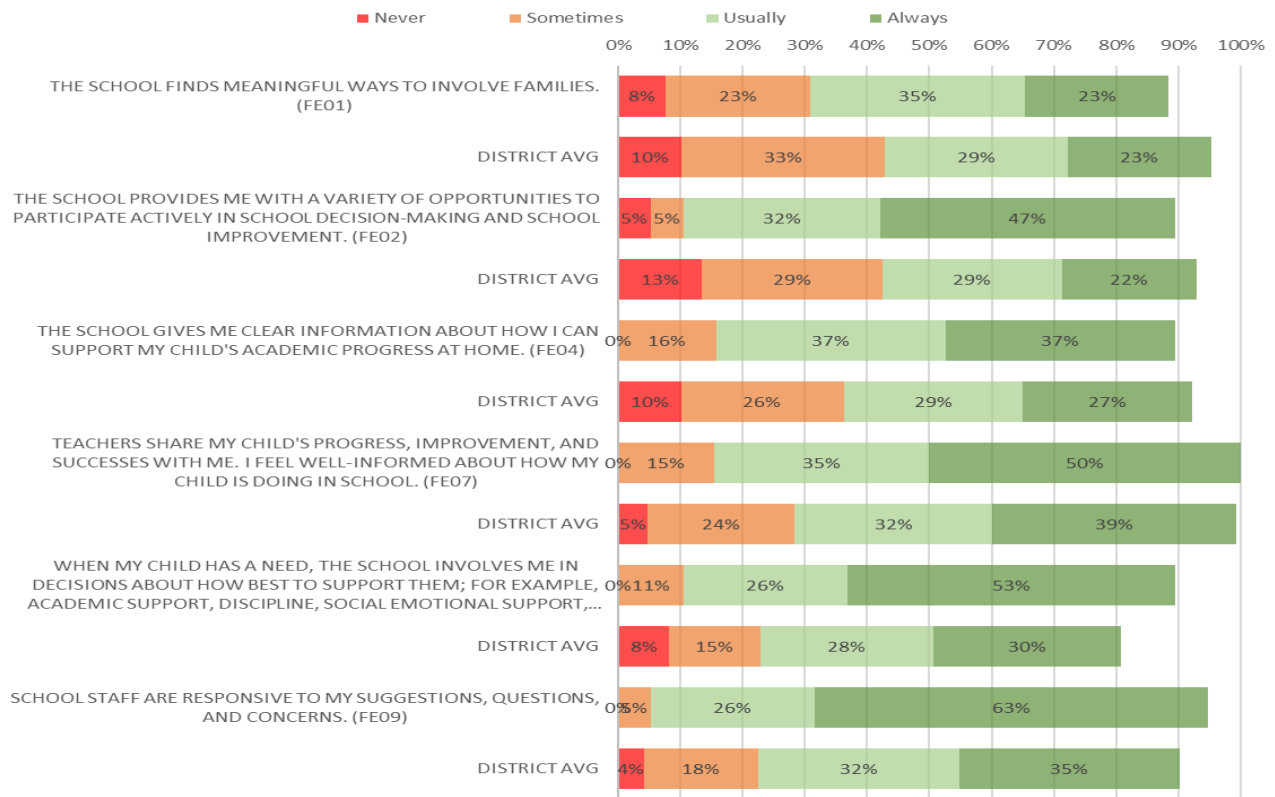
To support this notion, we used information gathered from the 2021 Conditions For Learning Survey. Families felt that they did not have enough access to school, and that this lack of access was hindering their ability to participate in their child's education. We think that by increasing the participation and equitable access of parents to school premises through activities, both schoolwide and in their child's classroom, will benefit all families to feel they are part of the larger community that is Capuano Early Childhood Center, and this will trigger an increase in engagement with their child's education and communication with the school and the homeroom teacher.





**Chart 5: Conditions For Learning Survey 2022 - Families**

**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT (CAPUANO: N=26)**



As the above CFL - Families Survey shows, almost a third of the respondents believe that the school never or only sometimes finds meaningful ways to involve families in their child’s education. This is the section of the survey that shows respondents in every question answering “never” or “sometimes”. This gave us, along with the interviews that the PTA had with their families, the indication that an approach to actively engage families in the school is necessary.





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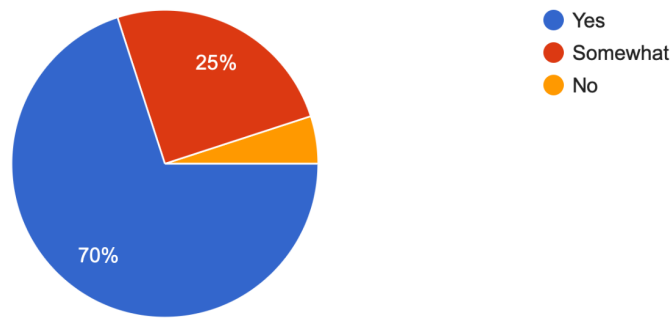
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**Chart 6: Capuano Family Survey - March 2022. On the graph below, we can observe that, once again, 30% of respondents expressed that their connection to the school was none or somewhat. This replicates the first answer in the CFL-Families of 2022 in which 31% of the respondents didn't think the school found meaningful ways to involve families.**

As a parent/guardian, do you feel connected to the Capuano School?

60 responses

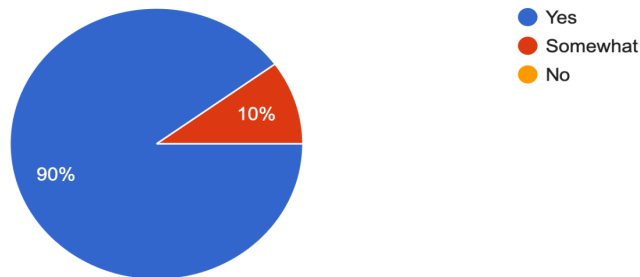




## Chart 7: 90% of the respondents think that they can speak with someone at the school if they have a need or question.

If you have a question or need, related to school, do you feel you can speak with someone at the Capuano?

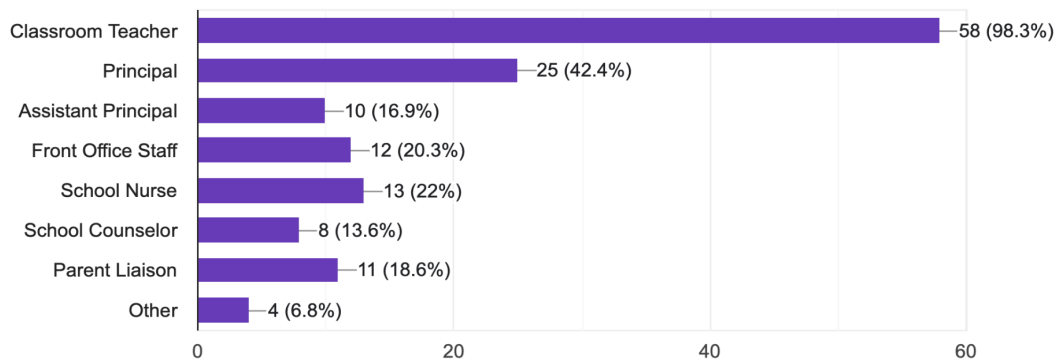
60 responses



## Chart 8: If parents have a question or want to contact someone about school related issues, their #1 contact (98.3%) is the Classroom Teacher. That's why our goal involves the homeroom teacher inviting parents to classroom activities.

If so, who would you reach out to? (select all that apply)

59 responses

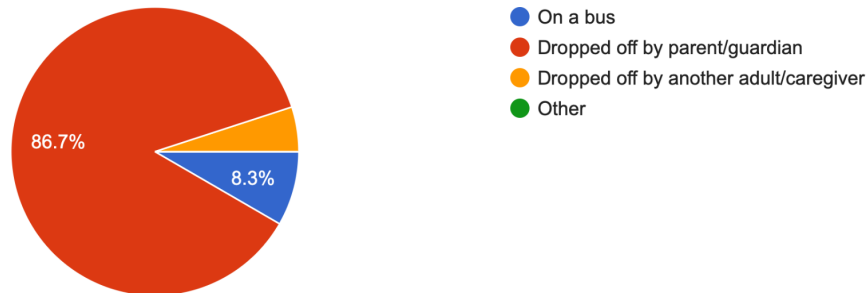




**Chart 9: This response still reflects a reality of our school: more than 95% of our students are either dropped off by parent/guardian or by another adult/caregiver. This presents a great opportunity for the school to reach out to families at the beginning of the day.**

How does your child come to school primarily?

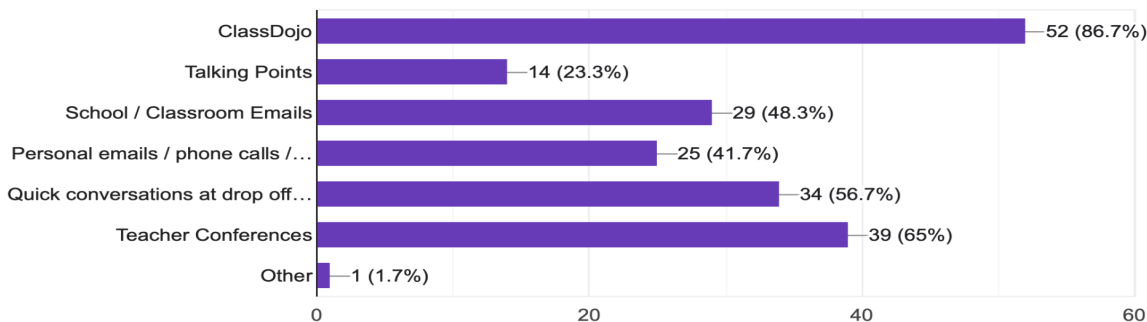
60 responses



**Chart 10: Ways in which families communicate with the school.** This shows that parents are not opposed to the use of technology to communicate with the teacher/school. Therefore, different ways of communication should be used to reach out to families.

What helps you to feel connected (Select all that apply)

60 responses





**Root Cause Investigation**

In order to investigate these areas further, our school’s leadership team spent some time identifying, gathering data, and discussing these three focus areas. The goal of this investigation was to ensure we had identified the appropriate bars to raise and change before identifying which strategies to use in pursuit of improving and achieving the proposed goals in these areas. Investigating these causes helped us fine tune our proposed goals to make sure that our goals are directly aligned with the needs of our students and school.

In the **academic area** of phonemic and phonological awareness, we took the following actions to investigate root causes prior to identifying strategies to implement over the next couple of years:

*Table 5*

Stakeholder	Responsible / Action	Finding
Educators	Professional Learning Community Meetings	Look at data and discuss possible areas that need addressing, also based on students’ performance in previous years.
	Grade Level Team meetings	Once a goal is proposed, possible action steps are discussed and decided.
	Instructional Leadership Team Meetings	Revise work of other teams and check for accuracy of proposed goals.
	School-based PD	As a whole school, we analyzed the proposed academic goal in order to make sure it was inclusive of all our students.
	Kindergarten Screening Meeting	Results of testing are discussed and analyzed to guide teaching and intervention for student success.





In the **Social Emotional Learning focus area** of students achieving “meeting standards” in our school’s SEL Measure Assessment, we took the following actions to investigate root causes prior to identifying strategies to implement:

Table 6

Stakeholder	Responsible / Action	Finding
Educators	Homeroom Teachers complete SEL Assessments in their classes	By administering a fall benchmark of the SEL Measure, we are able to see where our students enter and the areas that need to be addressed.
	Student Support Team meetings	They have been analyzing students who are brought due to behavior concerns and refer to in/out house resources to support their SEL needs.
	Instructional Leadership Team meetings	Analyzed all the SEL Measure data submitted by teachers. Data is processed and analyzed by program and subgroup where English is not their first language / EL. Data conglomerated by the whole school. It followed the same trends as in the programs.

In the **Equity Area** of Family Engagement and providing more access to school, we took the following actions to investigate root causes prior to identifying strategies to implement:







Table 7

Stakeholder	Responsible / Action	Finding
Educators	School-Based PD  Instructional Leadership Team	Presented and discussed the CFL Family Survey responses from Spring of 2022. Identified areas of concern for our students.  By analyzing the CFL 2022, the team was able to narrow down to the area of family engagement as the area that had more “never” (red) or “sometimes” (orange).
Parents	District Wide Conditions For Learning Survey (CFL)	CFL Family Survey of 2022 shows that the main concern families have regarding school is about their involvement with the school and having access to school.

**SMART Goals for 2022-2024 with Action Steps:**

Hoping to address the findings of our root cause investigations, we have decided on one goal pertaining each one of our foci: Student Learning / Social Emotional / Equity

**Student Learning Goal:**

**By the end of each school year, at least 80% of students will show academic improvement by being “on target” with letter naming, phonemic and phonological awareness as evidenced by a fixed set of assessments, access points, DIBELS, and accommodations, progressing towards student success during the next two school years.**

**Action Steps:**





- The usage and collection of reputable data that is agreed upon within each grade level.
  - PK - Teacher Assessments and Report Cards
  - K - Teacher Assessments, DIBELS, and Report Cards
- Collating best practices during PLC and PD times
- Bringing in experts to inform and update our best practices
- Curating materials
  - Use Early Childhood coaches as a resource.

### **Student Wellness Goal:**

**By the end of each school year, at least 80% of students will demonstrate improved social emotional learning by achieving “Meeting standard” on all standards as evidenced by an SEL Measure created and defined by state SEL frameworks during the next two school years.**

### **Action Steps:**

- Assess students using our school’s SEL measure 3 times every year
- Discuss results of SEL Assessment in PLC Teams and ILT in order to identify domains that need improvement
- Teaching foundational SEL vocabulary
- Using reflective strategies to regain rapport after crises
- “SEL-APL” Standards (Approaches to Play and Learning)
- Restorative Justice
- Make sure Individual Educational Plans include resources to address socioemotional needs of students

### **Equity / Family Engagement Goal:**

**100% of Families/Caregivers will be invited to whole school and class events through celebrations and academically oriented activities both in person and virtual during the next two school years, as evidenced by school communications, teacher invitations, and attendance logs.**





**As stated above in the “Focus Area w/Rationale and Theory of Action” section, the socio-economic inequalities some of our families face do not allow them to participate in school based activities. As we know from anecdotal and evidence based research students whose families engage in their education do better than students whose caregivers are unable to attend school-based projects. Our goal strives to close this gap by allowing students’ caregivers who would historically be underrepresented to participate.**

### **Action Steps:**

- School will provide consistent and constant communication to parents making sure that access to school is being given to parents.
- School will add a virtual alternative to most of the school activities such as Open House, Orientation Day, Parent Teacher Conferences, and any other future events that allow for such a format to be offered as an alternative.
- Educators will model best practices which will assist families to use school strategies to support language, inclusivity, predictable routines, and behavior at home. This will provide consistency to students when language and communication is used at home and at school, hence avoiding behaviors that might be reflective of confusion or not being able to understand what the expectations are.
- Educators will provide support materials as needed
- Results of CFL - Families - 2023 will be analyzed and compared to results from 2022.

### **Steps to be completed on 2022-2023**

- Professional Development on Restorative Justice
- Certify and Re-certify all classroom staff on CPI
- PLC on best practices to teach early literacy and address social emotional needs (Second Step, PBIS Matrix)
- Work with classroom teachers to invite parents to classroom activities and more teacher / parent communication
- Expand the scope of communication from school administrators through a thorough Weekly Newsletter
- Introduce more whole school activities such as Math / Literacy Nights, Principal’s Coffee





Hour / Roundtable, Movie Nights, PTA sponsored events, etc.

- Cohort on Trauma Sensitive school

## Monitoring for Evidence of Change

Once we begin implementation of the strategies outlined above, we will monitor progress using the metrics outlined below. Some of these measures are process measures, meaning that they measure implementation of the strategies. Others are outcome measures, which indicate how much progress towards the specified goals has been made.

Metric	Interim Goal	Final Goal
<b>SEL Measure</b> (Fall/Winter/Spring)	At least D 1-3 would be at 80% of meeting standards	All domains will be assessed as “meeting standard” in at least 80% of all students.
<b>Letter Naming Assessment</b> (Fall / Winter / Spring)	In Winter, an expected increase of 10% of students “On Target”.	At least 80% of students are “On Target”.
<b>DIBELS</b> (Winter (Middle) / Spring (End))	At least 70% of all students will be at the “Core” Support level.	At least 80% of all students will be at the “Core” Support level.
<b>Conditions for Learning Survey</b>		After comparing last year’s survey with the one given this year, there should be a growth in families feeling connected to the school of at least 20%.





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## **2022-2023 Capuano ECC School Improvement Council**

- Felix M. Caraballo, Principal - Chair
- Members:
  - Ayowole Delegan, Parent
  - Sobita Khatri, Parent
  - Aline Alves, Parent
  - Carolyn Beaulieu, Parent
  - Erika Monge, Parent
  - Makenna Hart, Parent
  - Kirjal Javi, Parent
  - Mina Lama, Parent
  - Eucinea Soares, Parent
  - Lori Gover, Assistant Principal
  - Ariel Mayer, Teacher
  - Jacqueline Lawrence, Teacher

## 2022-2023 Capuano ECC Instructional Leadership Team

- Felix M. Caraballo, Principal - Chair
- Members:
  - Lori Gover, Assistant Principal
  - Ariel Mayer, Teacher
  - Matthew Yiu, Teacher
  - Jane Ritchie, Teacher
  - Julie Jones, Teacher
  - Deana Attolino, Adjustment Counselor

