



## Executive Director Report February 09, 2023

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### State of the School | Student Achievement

January and February are two winter months filled with excitement here at South Shore Charter. The Lunar New Year began on January 22 celebrating the Year of the Rabbit. February brings the celebration of Black History Month. Black History Month is an educational opportunity that promotes understanding of the history and experiences of Black people throughout the Western Hemisphere, knowledge which serves as an essential tool to combat racism and prejudice. At the high school, our students have done exceptional work creating displays on classroom walls and hallways reminding us all of how the contributions of African-Americans are a foundation of United States history. In classrooms K-8, students and teachers explore and recognize the essential contributions of African Americans throughout history. Displays of student work and reflections serve as visual reminders of Black individuals not always mentioned in history books. Efforts throughout the month aim to educate about the rich and diverse history and culture of Black people, and foster a greater understanding of human universals that make us all one.

On Wednesday, February 1, our school participated in a special event called [World Read Aloud Day](#) once again. During this morning event, 22 classes were visited by readers from our school community, including high school students and teachers, who read aloud a story to our youngest students. This tradition has become extremely popular in our school in the four years since it began. The morning event is a terrific way to promote the love of reading and to bring our school community together. In four years, World Read Aloud Day has become a favorite school-wide tradition.

### DESE Site Visit | January 31, 2023

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign conducted an accountability site visit on January 31, 2023. As a Massachusetts charter school, SSCPS is required to seek renewal of the school's charter every five years. The purpose of the visit was to gather information for a written report that will become part of evidence the DESE will deploy when our charter comes up for renewal in 2025. The last SSCPS charter renewal was in 2020. The midpoint before the next renewal has passed and the visit is one year overdue. Consequently our school was more than ready when representatives from DESE came to SSCPS to learn about SSCPS and our unique educational model.

Site visits are an important opportunity to showcase our school's achievements and to demonstrate the ongoing commitment to providing a high quality education for our students. The site visit serves as a check-in to our school's progress on three important areas of charter school accountability: faithfulness to the charter, student academic performance, and organizational viability. Representatives from DESE looked closely for *Mission, Key Design Elements*, and *Classroom Instruction 6.2*.

The South Shore Charter Public School has an ambitious mission — Inspiring every student to excel in academics, service and life. As our school community continues to grow, we call on our mission as the compass to navigate our school’s direction. Over time it has become even more essential that our school community shares a belief in our mission, as well as the design elements of the school, and that this belief is reflected in all we do as an educational institution serving students throughout the South Shore.

Criterion 2, Access and Equity, speaks directly to our mission and our need to ensure that every student has access to our school equally and fairly. Starting with the recruitment process, it is important to demonstrate that all eligible students have equal access to our school. In Massachusetts, school enrollment has been given a crucial role in improving access and equity for all students. In our case, this includes students living in one of our 26 sending districts. Our school is unique in that we have a diverse student population, which we are proud of, and we are grateful for the strong support from our families. By ensuring equal access to all eligible students, South Shore Charter can continue to foster a diverse and inclusive school community.

In addition to equal access in recruitment, our school must also demonstrate equal access to rigorous academic coursework, extracurricular activities, and athletic programs. The DESE reviews student enrollment in Advanced Placement courses, learning services programs, and tiered support systems. The DESE assesses family communication, including the website and weekly updates, to ensure that all families have access to school information. It is particularly important that communication from the school is easily accessible to non-English speaking families, and that electronic communication can be easily translated through a browser and other translated materials are readily available. This is essential in ensuring that all families have equal access to educational opportunities.

Efforts to promote equal access and equity are well documented and available for review. SSCPS admissions policies and practices can be found in the South Shore Charter Public School Enrollment Policy, while our student Recruitment and Retention plans can be found in the Annual Report. Each year, the school updates these plans to reflect current admissions and educational practices and to ensure that our student population reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

DESE determination of classroom instruction is done by reviewing documentation and by classroom visits to look at trends. The DESE has reviewed the school curriculum to assess the implementation of statewide learning frameworks and standards in the classroom. This is significant for the school community as it has given DESE an insight into the teaching and learning that takes place each day. The DESE team observed teachers using instructional strategies to cater to the needs of a diverse student body during classroom visits. As a fully inclusive school, SSCPS has received positive feedback from past site visits and it is our hope that this site visit will further highlight the school’s commitment to providing a high-quality education to all students.

As a component of the site visit, representatives from DESE conducted three focus groups. The first was the Board of Trustees Virtual focus group on Thursday, January 26. Special thanks to Katie Cianelli, Cynthia Lyons, Natacha Julien, Edwin Rivera, and Kathleen Trask for participating. On January 31, teachers and school leadership participated in two DESE focus groups: the Teacher Focus Group and the Admin Focus Group. We will learn more about the outcomes of the focus groups once the site visit report is shared.

## Regional Transportation Update

The South Shore Charter Public School has received positive feedback from the parent community regarding the new regional transportation program. School administration is working with First Student to optimize the bus stops and routes. SSCPS families have been asked to provide official feedback through the SSCPS Family Survey. This year's survey includes a short evaluation of the transportation program and a space for comments. In addition, this year's Intent to Return form will include a place for families to indicate whether or not they will be using transportation for the upcoming school year. This information is essential to the school and First Student as planning for next year's routes and stops is scheduled to begin in April. Families who indicate their transportation preferences and needs on the Intent to Return form will be given first priority for next year's transportation services.

## Enrollment

Our current enrollment is 1063 as of February 3, 2023. The February enrollment table is below and included within the Board of Trustees documents. The School began the FY24 enrollment season on November 1, 2022.

Table I: SSCPS Enrollment as of February 3, 2023

	FY23 Projecte d as of 2/11/22	FY23 Promoted as of 2/11/22	FY23 Not Returning or W/D	FY23 Adjusted Pre-Enroll	FY23 Sib Apps	FY23 Apps for Lottery	FY23 Lottery Accepts Due April 1	FY23 Pre-Enroll	Accept 01/15 Intent Due 01/30	FY23 Not Returning or Withdrew	Total Declined	Updated Enrolled 01/24/23	FY23 Revised Projection Budget	Potential Sibs	Randolph Waitlist / Waitpool	Waitpool Apps 01/03/23	
K	80			0	31	144	56	56			58	74	56		13	8	K
1	80	80	1	79	1	65	1	81		7	18	84	84		13		1
2	80	78	1	77	2	48	2	80		3	13	84	84		6		2
3	80	81	2	79	2	50	2	81	1	9	24	83	84		7		3
4	83	83		83	3	63	3	86		5	4	84	84	1	9		4
5	82	82	1	81	2	52	2	83		7	7	83	84	1	4		5
6	80	77	1	76		58	3	79		8	13	80	84	1	9		6
7	81	81	2	79	4	51	4	83		7	12	83	84		14		7
8	81	81	2	79	4	53	5	85	1	12	34	80	84		9		8
9	90	82	2	80	2	55	30	110		13	42	91	90		10	5	9
	91	91	1	91	1	18	5	94		14	15	89	91		4		10
11	76	77	2	76		8	0	75		12	7	70	76			8	11
12	83	84	1	83		3	0	83		10	1	78	83			5	12
	1067	977	16	963	52	668	113	1076	2	107	248	1063	1068	3	98	26	
	Data from Lottery and Pre-Enrollment Report															*4 9th skipovers	

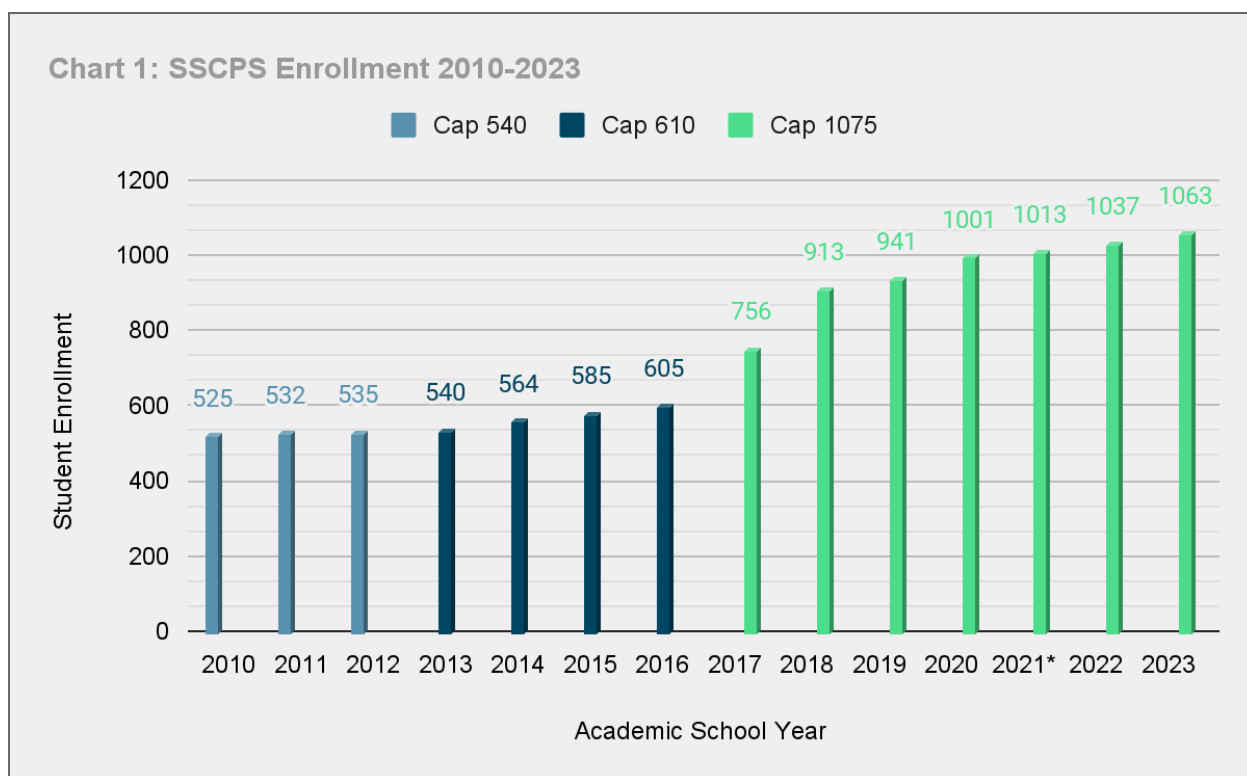
## Admissions Update

Enrollment events have continued throughout the winter. *Talk to us Tuesdays* in January and February have been well attended, with 85 students for the first two sessions, and have proven beneficial to this year's enrollment as well. Prospective students and family members have been able to visit the school while in session to see the campus and classrooms. The school has created new marketing materials and increased outreach initiatives throughout the South Shore. SSCPS has received 534 applications as of February 1, 2023.

The enrollment application deadline is February 27, 2023. The Enrollment Lottery will be on March 3, 2023. The number of available seats at Enrollment Lottery based upon the information we receive from the Intent to Return forms. Intent to Return forms were sent to current families February 3, 2023. Intent to Return forms are due back by February 27, 2023.

Students accepted at Enrollment Lottery will receive an acceptance package inviting them to participate in an upcoming *Welcome Wednesdays* to be held on March 15, 22, and 29. Letters of *Intent to Attend* for accepted new students will be due April 1, 2023

## SSCPS and Massachusetts Enrollment Trends



\* SSCPS opted to limit enrollment in grades K-1 during COVID-19 to decrease class size and maintain health and safety for in-person learning.

The South Shore Charter Public School has experienced a positive increase in student enrollment over time. *Chart I: SSCPS Enrollment 2010-2023* demonstrates the school's enrollment over a period of 14 years. It is provided above to give some perspective to the growth of our school and prompt consideration of the reasoning behind two prior enrollment expansions. From 2010-2012 the enrollment cap was 540 students. In 2012 school administration made the recommendation to the Board of Trustees to apply for a minor amendment to increase student enrollment to 610. The reason behind the request was to improve academic programming for middle and high school students. In particular, school administration sought to establish an Honors and Advanced Placement program to increase course offerings. In 2010 the Advanced Placement course offerings were primarily virtual. By expanding the enrollment cap from 540 to 610 the School was able to begin offering in-person as well as virtual Advanced Placement coursework with the ultimate goal of improving college admission opportunities.

The Board of Trustees approved the recommendation and SSCPS applied to DESE for a minor amendment. The minor amendment was approved by DESE increasing student enrollment to 610. Student enrollment remained capped at 610 from 2013-2016. As the school once again began approaching its cap, school administration, the Board of Trustees, and the school community began meeting about the next increase in student enrollment to support expanding course offerings as well as improving classroom space and facilities. Meetings were held during the 2014-2015 school year. By July 2015, the SSCPS Board of Trustees approved moving forward with the significant expansion. SSCPS administration and the Board of Trustees submitted a major amendment to the Charter which would increase enrollment to 1075.

The Massachusetts Board of Education approved the 2016 major charter amendment request, and SSCPS added additional seats in the 2016 lottery for the 2016-2017 school year. With the additional seats, the school was then able to grow the campus by moving the high school to 700 Longwater Drive in August 2016. During this phase, there were many moving parts, enrollment, hiring, design and construction of the facilities at 700 Longwater Drive, and communicating and updating the school community. The increase in student enrollment is evident in the bar representing the 2017 academic school year.

Student enrollment trends are a significant issue throughout Massachusetts. SSCPS enrollment has continued to grow since 2017. Earlier this month the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released student enrollment data for public review. Data presented includes enrollment trends in charter schools, public school districts, and statewide over a five year period. *Table II: Comparative Enrollment Trends*, has been generated from data provided by the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign. Table 2 shows SSCPS student enrollment, the student enrollment of our top four sending districts, as well as statewide enrollment over a five year period.

Table II: Comparative Enrollment Trends

	Total Enrollment					% Change 2019 to 2023	# Change 2019 to 2023
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
South Shore Charter Public School	940	1001	1009	1050	1054	12.13%	114
Weymouth	5857	5763	5585	5560	5599	-4.40%	-258
Randolph	2737	2742	2660	2571	2563	-6.36%	-174
Brockton	16349	16024	15384	15265	14906	-8.83%	-1443
Rockland	2228	2273	2179	2118	2163	-2.92%	-65
State Totals	951631	948828	911465	911529	913735	-3.98%	-37896

Chart II: Total Enrollment Percent Changes 2019-2023 is created from newly available data which allows school districts and charter schools to analyze enrollment trends, make comparisons, and use data-driven decision making for institutional planning.

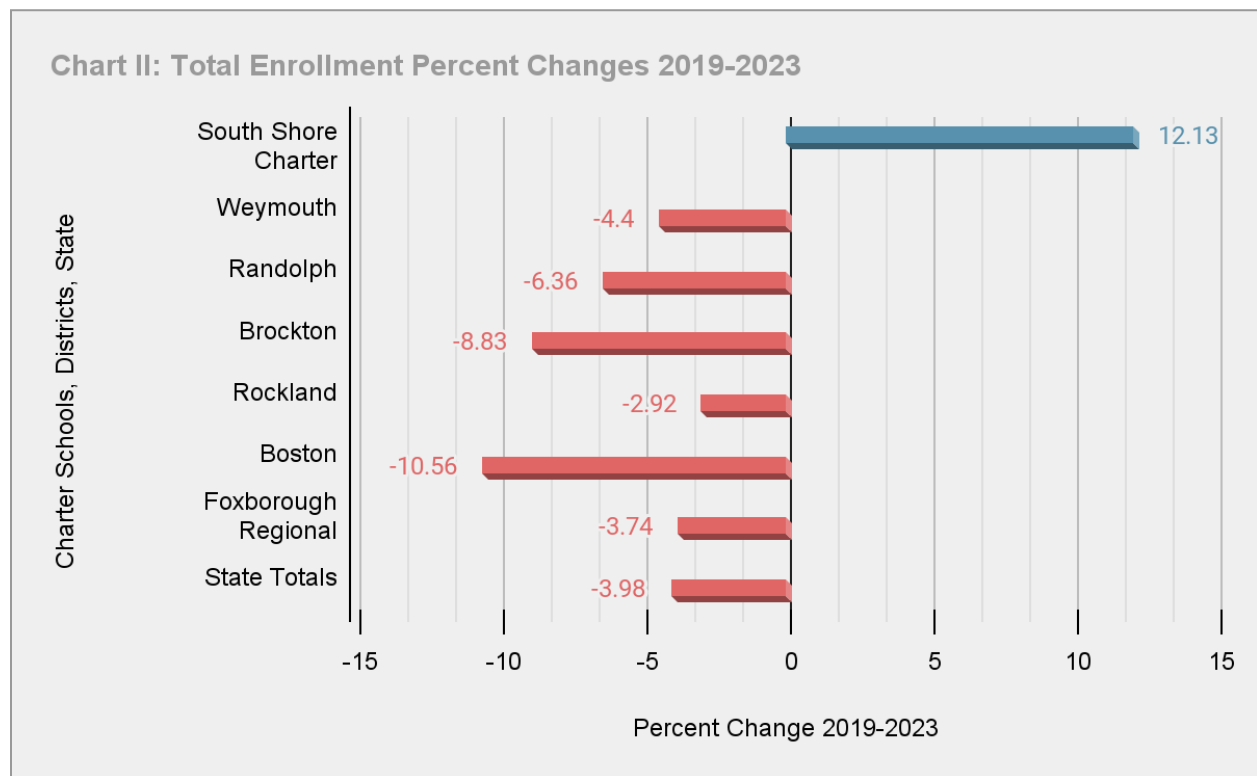


Chart II illustrates the enrollment growth of South Shore Charter as compared to the declining enrollment for its top four sending districts, Boston, a comparative charter school, and the state. Enrollment declines were evident in all but three sending districts.

## Minor Amendment Growth Plans/Facilities Improvements

The current SSCPS Enrollment Policy cap is 1075. Should the Board of Trustees consider increasing enrollment, the school would apply to DESE for a minor amendment to the charter allowing an enrollment increase. Table III provides one draft model of a four year growth plan beginning in FY 24-25. This draft growth plan would increase enrollment by 125 students bringing the enrollment to 1200 students by FY 27-28.

Table III: Four Year Draft Growth Plan

Grade	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28
K	72	72	72	80
1	80	80	80	80
2	80	80	80	80
3	83	80	80	80
4	84	83	80	80
5	83	84	83	100
6	83	83	100	100
7	100	100	100	100
8	100	100	100	100
9	100	100	100	100
10	100	100	100	100
11	91	100	100	100
12	90	91	100	100
Total	1146 (+71)	1153 (+7)	1175 (+22)	1200 (+25)

The purpose of this growth plan is to continue to increase educational programming, athletic programs, and extracurricular activities as well as improve campus facilities. Additional growth plan options may be found [here](#). The South Shore Charter Public School seeks additional learning areas at 700 Longwater Drive, Norwell, to meet a wide range of strategic objectives to enhance student learning and improve campus facilities. The School will require additional classroom space to accommodate the possibility of an additional 125 students 5-12.

Additional students would be throughout the campus at both 700 Longwater Drive and 100 Longwater Circle. In so doing, the school would pursue significant facilities improvements including an art studio, learning commons, expanded student and faculty eating areas, athletic facilities, and an auditorium. The need for this institutional growth is outlined in the 2020 SSCPS Strategic Plan.

### **Timeline**

#### **February 2023**

The SSCPS Finance and Ad Hoc Facilities Committee meet to discuss campus needs and school budget.

#### **March - May 2023**

The SSCPS Board of Trustees deliberation on possibilities for a minor expansion and improvements in programming and facilities.

#### **March - May 2023**

The SSCPS Board of Trustees works with school administration to review family survey data and develop a communication plan for the school community.

#### **July 2023**

The SSCPS Board of Trustees votes on deciding whether or not to apply to the state for a minor charter amendment to increase student enrollment.

#### **August 1, 2023**

The school submits the minor amendment request to DESE.

#### **Fall 2023**

DESE approves, modifies, or denies the request.

#### **March 2024**

If the request is approved, the new growth plan is implemented in the Enrollment Lottery.

#### **Spring/Summer 2024**

Facilities improvements begin to accommodate the new student enrollment growth plan.