

This SY' 25-26 school plan has been approved at the building-level by the Principal and Teacher Leadership Team, and is final pending SEZP Board approval later this school year.



Van Sickle Academy

**2025-26
School Plan**



**Springfield Public Schools
2025-2026 Student Calendar
Van Sickle Academy
1170 Carew Street, Springfield, MA 01104**



Student Hours	7:25 AM - 3:05 PM
Teacher Hours	7:15 AM - 3:10 PM (M - Fri) *see calendar for specific extended M, Tu. & Th. hours

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2025-2026 Staff Calendar
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Student Hours 7:25 AM - 3:05 PM

Teacher Hours 7:15 AM - 3:10 PM (M - Fri) *see calendar for specific extended M, Tu., W & Th. hours

Aug 18 - 22: Teacher PD

Aug 21: Special Staff Hours (for 6th grade only, 10am-5pm)

Aug 22: Convocation

Aug 25: School Begins

August 2025				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

Feb 16: Schools Closed - Presidents Day

Feb 17 - 20: Schools Closed - Mid-Winter Vacation

February 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27

Sep 1: Schools Closed - Labor Day

Sep 9: Schools Closed - Teacher PD Day

Sep 30: Open House (4-6pm)

September 2025				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

March 2026

March 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

Oct 13: Schools Closed - Indigenous People's Day

October 2025				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

Apr 3: Schools Closed - Good Friday

Apr 20: Schools Closed - Patriots Day

Apr 21-24: Schools Closed - Spring Vacation

April 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
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Nov 4: Schools Closed - Teacher PD Day (Election Day)

Nov 11: Schools Closed - Veterans Day

Nov 26 - 28: Schools Closed - Thanksgiving Vacation

November 2025				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

May 25: Schools Closed - Memorial Day

May 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

Dec 19: Early Release at 11:05am for Students / Staff Release at 11:15am

Dec 22- 31: Schools Closed - Holiday Vacation

December 2025				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	2	3	4	5
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Jun 19: Schools Closed - Juneteenth Day

Jun 25*: End of School Year - Early Release at 11:05am for Students / Staff Release at 11:15am

June 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
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Jan 1-5: Schools Closed - Extended Holiday Vacation

Jan 6: Schools Closed - Teacher Professional Day

Jan 19: Schools Closed - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 2026				
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
			1	2
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*Calendar includes five (5) additional pupil school days for inclement weather. Schools will close after they have been in session for 180 pupil school days. Official end date and dismissal will be covered by bulletin.

- School Closed
- Staff Early Release at 11:15am
- Regular Day + PD until 3:45pm
- Full Day PD from 8:00am-3:00pm
- Regular Day + Thursday Extra Help until 3:45pm
- Regular Day + Wednesday Extra Help until 3:45pm
- Regular Day + Parent Conferences until 3:45pm
- Regular Day + Staff Meeting until 3:45pm
- Regular Day + Guided Planning until 4:00pm

1. Staff work year calendar and calculating total educator time

The calendar tool is built to give schools flexibility on the types of days (known as ‘day types’) that their school will follow during the following school year. The calendar tool correctly determines the total hours and salary based on calculations aligned to our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Student and staff calendars are then generated based on the information entered in Tab 1 of the calendar tool. The decisions made on the calendar tool will then become the school-specific Educator Working Conditions. This template will extract educator hours to provide everyone with a clear understanding of what is expected for total educator hours for the upcoming school year.

Part 1: School year hours

These hours reflect “**school year hours**” which is 180 days of instruction with students plus any professional development days during the school year (traditionally 3) and the 5 days of August professional development that occurs just before students begin the year.

			Grades 6-8		
	Day Type	Staff Category	Start time	End time	Hrs: Min
1.	Regular Day for Students and Staff	Regular Day	7:15 AM	3:10 PM	7:55
2.	Early Release for Students and Staff	Staff Early Release	7:15 AM	11:15 AM	4:00
3.	No School for Students / Full Day Staff PD	Full Day PD	8:00 AM	3:00 PM	7:00
4.	Regular Day for Students/ Extended Afternoon Staff - Parent Conferences	Special Staff Hrs - PC	7:15 AM	3:45 PM	8:30
5.	Regular Day for Students/ Extended Afternoon Staff - Extra Help	Special Staff Hrs - EH	7:15 AM	3:45 PM	8:30
6.	Regular Day for Students/Extended Afternoon Staff - Guided Planning	Special Staff Hrs - GP	7:15 AM	4:00 PM	8:45

Part II: Additional educator hours

Teachers may be required to participate in professional development activities, or student-related activities throughout the school year, including before and after the school day for students, and before or after the school year starts and ends.

These hours will be included in the total educator work hours and payment will be calculated into an educator’s annual compensation. This does not preclude teachers from independently scheduling individual parent-teacher meetings or other meetings as needed. Because compensation varies before the ‘traditional’ start of school, which in SY 25-26 is August 18th, please be sure to use the correct table to record (and transfer) events from your calendar tool into this document.

A. Summer Events Prior to August 18th

Event Description	Date/Time	# of Staff Hours in gr. 6-8
None	N/A	N/A
TOTAL ADDITIONAL SUMMER HOURS BEFORE 8/18/25		0 HRS

B. Other Events on or After August 18th

Event Description	Date/Time	# of Staff Hours in gr. 6-8
Family Event #1 Open House	9/30/2025 (4:00-6:00 pm)	2
TOTAL ADDITIONAL SUMMER HOURS ON OR AFTER 8/18/25		2 HRS

Part III: Total educator hours

The total educator hours are a combination of “school year hours” and planned “additional events” that require educators’ presence that fall outside of the typical workday.

Hours	Summer PD Hrs	School Year Hrs	Other Events	Total Hrs	Day Count
Gr. 6-8 Staff Hours	0	1493.333	2	1495.333	188

2. Staff workday

- Teachers will receive a 30-minute duty-free lunch
- Educators will have – at minimum - the equivalent of 350 minutes over ten consecutive school days of self-directed preparatory time. These minutes will be allocated across the ten days as evenly as the schedule permits. Schools will strive – as the schedule allows – for educators to have no more than one day each week when the educator does not have self-directed preparatory time. This self-directed time can be used to plan, grade, collaborate with colleagues, etc. In extenuating circumstances, teachers may be asked to perform some duties during this time. On that day, the teacher must have an equivalent non-instructional period.

In addition to traditional responsibilities in a typical workday, all staff may be expected to be involved in educational and administrative activities that are necessary to fulfill the mission of the school. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Phone calls/in-person meeting with families/guardians/care-takers about the academic/behavior progress of students (hours are already built into the calendar for specific Tuesday’s of each month)
- Preparation of individual student weekly reports, progress reports, and report cards;
- Working regularly with school administrators and colleagues to improve one’s instructional practices;
- Checking homework on a daily basis;
- Attending student-related meetings including, but not limited to IEPs and/or 504s;
- Serving as a mentor to a small cohort of students;
- Participate in staff recruitment and hiring processes.
- Attend/Participate in the Guided Lesson planning meeting as designated on the staff calendar. These extra help hours are accounted for in the total educator hours on the calendar.
- Attend/Participate in Parent conferences as designated on the staff calendar. These extra help hours are accounted for in the total educator hours on the calendar.

3. Additional staff duties

A. During the Workday

During a typical Monday-Friday school day work week, all staff members are expected to perform additional duties that the Principal and the TLT have determined are necessary to fulfill the school’s mission, operations, safety, and overall improvement efforts. This may include coverage of homeroom, community building or safety-related activities, including, but not limited to (examples are below but a school can customize):

- Coverage of arrival, dismissal, hallway, and Advisory periods; and
- Substitute coverage of classes and duties of others who are absent from school.
- All educators will be required to complete weekly lesson plans using the VSA Lesson Planning Template. Lesson plans must be completed - and submitted digitally - to administration each Monday morning by 7:15 am. If Monday is a holiday then lesson plans will be due - digitally - to administration on Tuesday morning by 7:15 am.
- On specifically designated Mondays (please see exact dates below and also highlighted in the calendar), after the regular school day ends for students, all Unit A members will be required to attend guided planning for 55 minutes, from 3:05-4:00 pm, and will be compensated at the contractual hourly rate of \$22.50/hour.

The following Mondays are when specified staff will be required to stay after:

- September 22nd
- October 20th

- November 17th
 - January 26th
 - February 23rd
 - March 23rd
- Types of tasks educators may be asked to perform may include coverage of lunch, coverage of break periods, safety-related assignments. All efforts will be made to avoid teacher prep time or counseling services to students;
 - Substitute coverage of classes and duties of others who are absent from school;
 - Development and maintenance of hallway bulletin boards;
 - Staff will video record themselves utilizing Swivl/Reflectivity teaching a one-block period a minimum of 3 times between September 1, 2025 and April 18, 2026 to be used exclusively for training and coaching. Not to be used for evaluation.

If an educator is asked or directed to perform these duties during the contractual lunch break, self-directed preparation periods or during collaboration time, they shall be compensated at \$35 per/occurrence.

B. Afterschool Support for Students

All educators will offer extra help/makeup sessions - to support students - one day after school from 3:05 pm - 3:45 pm for 22 weeks as designated in the calendar and beginning the week of September 16th. These extra help hours are accounted for in the total educator hours on the calendar. The day of the week that educators will be required to stay after is dependent on the subject taught :

- **Wednesday** = ELA, Social Studies, ESL, LLD and Special Education Inclusion teachers.
- **Thursday** = Math, Science, Art, PE, Life Skills teachers.
- Counselors will also be required to stay after from 3:05 PM - 3:45 PM on either Wednesday or Thursday, and they will be able to determine which day (Wednesday or Thursday) works best to support students either through academic or social/emotional support.

4. Professional learning

Teachers are required to participate in professional development activities throughout the school year, including before and after the school day for students, and immediately before or immediately after the school year starts and ends as outlined in section 1 above from the calendar tool. Most professional learning activities should be connected to TLT identified priority levers and the capacity and skill building needed to help the school reach their improvement goals.

All staff members are expected to participate in professional development, collaboration activities and/or PLC meetings, unless otherwise directed by the principal.

5. School curriculum issues

The school's curriculum will be aligned with the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks and receive a high rating for quality and rigor as defined by [Edreports](#). In instances where highly rated curriculum is not available, teachers may be asked to assist in developing new and improved curricula for their own use and that of other teachers in the building. To the extent possible, teachers will be made aware of curriculum changes in advance and will have an opportunity to provide feedback.

6. Notices and announcements

Teachers will be notified in advance of special events which will involve students such as Zone, district, or school mandated assessments, health testing, assemblies, etc. Classroom interruptions for notices or public address announcements will be kept to an absolute minimum.

7. School health and safety issues

The school will make every effort to provide appropriate materials, space, and technology to support effective teaching and learning. Security of school premises will be maintained. Visitors to the school will be required to check in upon entry and all

members of the school community are expected to monitor visitors without badges and immediately report these instances to the main office or security desk.

Every effort will be made to mitigate painting or repairs to buildings while school is in session, to avoid distractions or interruptions to student learning.

8. Staff dress code

Staff are asked to dress professionally for a school setting. Excessively casual clothing such as ripped jeans, sweat pants, revealing clothing, beach wear, hats, baseball style caps, tank tops,, open toe shoes/slides/flip flops/sandals, sports/athletic jerseys is not permitted.

9. Class size

Efforts are made to ensure a reasonable class size for students and teachers. Class sizes may be differentiated, to support student learning and teacher development and/or to support a school's specific model (e.g.,co-teaching, dual language, etc.).

10. Bulletin boards

The Springfield Education Association (SEA) will be provided a clearly designated bulletin board for the purpose of posting Association-related notices and other materials. Such space will be provided in each building for the exclusive use of the Association.

11. Family-teacher communication

Relationships between teachers and families/caregivers are critically important to the overall academic success of a student's school experience. Teachers may be required to make regular phone calls to families about the academic progress of students, as well as respond to family inquiries via email, phone or in-person meetings throughout the school year. Teachers are not required to respond to families outside of the work week.

12. TLT elections for the next school year

Teacher Leadership Teams play an essential role in planning and decision-making in SEZP schools. While the TLT itself is a permanent body, the composition and dynamics of the team will change annually as individual TLT members' terms expire, and new members are elected. It is important that TLT elections take place in a timely fashion at the beginning of each school year to ensure the TLT can operate effectively on a continual basis. For the coming school year, our TLT elections (for any open positions) will be held on 08/22/2025.

Ways in which the faculty was engaged in Phase 1 of School Planning:

- TLT members presented mid-year data to the faculty during PLC
- TLT members sought faculty input through their individual teams and brought their feedback to the TLT meetings in January.

Priority 1

Selected Lever: Lever 2

Text of Lever: Coherent Actions for Improving Assurances for Educational Equity, which include the following:

- Instructional Leadership for Equity
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Feedback System for Building Educator Capacity
- Professional Learning and Collaboration

What is our most concerning data, and what are some working theories of what needs to improve to drive better results?

Data:

- The School Quality Review cites Targeted Planning (2m) as an area of focus to support a continued area of progress in Data Driven Instruction (2f).

Working Theory: We believe that the growth within our Data Driven Instruction lever has been a direct result of monitoring aggressively and the work done within the classroom. Teachers have demonstrated an understanding of the data that is collected in aggressive monitoring however they have stated they struggle with the next step. This would lead to an adjustment to the way that we are planning so that teachers utilize lesson planning to hone in on misconceptions and how to address them in the moment to close the loop on aggressive monitoring.

What questions or information will be needed to refine your theory of action and set goals in this priority area?

- Do all teachers know how to read the data that they are collecting at the moment?
- Do teachers have the tools to effectively predict and plan for misconceptions within their lesson?
- Do teachers have time to vertically plan and understand where students have struggled in the past and or may struggle in the future regarding that specific skill or standard?
- Do teachers receive targeted feedback on misconceptions?
- How do we better utilize Guided Planning and Coaching to push all teachers forward?

Priority 2

Selected Lever: Level 2

Text of Lever: Coherent Actions for Improving Assurances for Educational Equity, which include the following:

- Instructional Leadership for Equity
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Feedback System for Building Educator Capacity
- Professional Learning and Collaboration

What is our most concerning data, and what are some working theories of what needs to improve to drive better results?

Data:

- The School Quality Review cites Student Ownership (2b) as an area of focus for us and it has been a targeted area of improvement for the past 3 SQR's
- Review of MCAS data indicates in Math and ELA a drop in our written scores from previous years
- The SQR cites that not all classrooms offer opportunities to push students with higher order thinking skills and activities.

Working Theory: We believe that our declining writing scores and our highlighted area of growth are directly linked from our lack of consistent higher order tasks to push students to the full level of the standard. While we have had growth in the past year in student ownership and there have been consistent markers that teachers are asking students to complete the lift within the classroom, the level of work that they are challenged to do is not consistently at the highest level of the standard with high order thinking in mind.

What questions or information will be needed to refine your theory of action and set goals in this priority area?

- Do we provide feedback to teachers regarding actual tasks and assessments as opposed to just lesson plans?
- Do we utilize guided planning to better focus on higher order thinking tasks?
- How can we review our current Instructional Vision to better incorporate a focus on higher order thinking tasks?
- How can we better utilize PLC to work on planning horizontally to ensure that the rigor is held across a grade level?
- How can we better support teachers in their content understanding of the standards in partnership with the principles of higher order thinking?
- How can we better define our expectations around writing for higher order thinking?