

Springfield International Charter School's mission is to provide “a high-quality education to **our diverse student community** here in Springfield. Our mission is to help students reach their fullest potential, **prepare them for college**, and give them the skills and mindset they need for lifelong learning. We're also focused on building strong civic, ethical, and moral values so that our graduates leave here not only academically prepared, but ready to be responsible, **engaged members of their communities.**”

Our SICS family is a very diverse community. With diversity comes a range of experiences, and each deserving of representation. Our school's mission is to make sure that everyone receives that representation to its fullest, through our clubs and interactions with the surrounding communities.

1. **Asian Student Alliance Club (ASA)**: Asian students make up a smaller percentage of our school population than students of other ethnicities. After covid, the increase in racism towards Asians lead to the creation of our Asian Student Alliance, to create a safe space for Asian students and educate our school community about Asian cultures. Since its foundation in 2022, the club has grown considerably in size (from 6 to 37 members currently) and is made up of members of different ethnicities.

Our Lunar New Year is an annual event hosted by ASA that often features performances including modern and traditional Asian dances , a variety of Asian foods provided by members or local restaurants, games and raffle baskets. The event started with a humble goal to spread awareness and showcasing Asian cultures to our younger students in K-5. However, in the last three years, the event has become more than just for our students. It has become a community event with 200 attendees and students from our neighboring high schools as volunteers and performers.

ASA can often be found throughout the year hosting smaller events to bring attention to the club. Often connecting with younger members of our community, the club hosts origami teaching events with the 5th graders to teach the younger students about the club and expose them to a popular Asian art form. With the hard work of the students who are members of the club, it and its outreach and mission spread farther year after year.

Photo link: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/En43ovU4i9B1oaMs9>

2. **Afro Culture Committee (ACC)**: Another culture-centered club within our school is our Afro Culture Committee. This club works hard to educate students about black culture, spreading diversity and combating negative stereotypes about the black community through events and community outreach. The club was founded in 2023 a year after ASA. Its mission was to foster connections throughout members of the black diaspora within the school, as many of our black students are children of immigrants, with families coming from parts of Africa like Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, and the Caribbean such as Jamaica and Haiti.

This mission centers the idea of connecting African American cultures, and other primarily black cultures, to the greater school culture, helping spread awareness about the different black ethnic groups, and prevent racism through education and collaboration. The pride of our ACC club comes from our time spent in the community. Members of our club often venture to the Springfield area during dedicated events to fundraise and educate people about the club and its mission. Like ASA, ACC brings the community together through the Black History Month Showcase. Here, black local vendors, speakers, and performers, speak on black issues, provide inspiration to black youth through their moving speeches, and serve as beacons of inspiration as black entrepreneurs.

Starting last June, to close out the school year, ACC and SICS staffs hosted the Juneteenth Celebration event, which featured African American cultural staples to celebrate the anniversary of the freeing of all slaves in the United States. We will continue the tradition this year on June 23.

3. International Festival: Both ASA and ACC clubs are integral to our mission of spreading positivity regarding the diversity within our school community, often collaborating to spread positive messaging and educate our school community about the diverse groups that make it up. The collaboration is best seen every May during our International Festivals.

The first International Festival was in May 2016. The event was rather small, made up of only 8 tables worth of people, groups, or families coming in to represent their cultures. The event has grown dramatically since then with this year's event featuring over 20 tables. The international festival allows our school to come together and represent itself in a unique way. Individuals can set their tables with costumes, food, poster, items ... they chose to use to represent their cultural identity. This allows community members who visit the event to discover foods, items, performances, traditional outfits, and in general interact with cultures they may be unfamiliar with. Everyone here has a culture that guides their life, and the international festival allows them to share aspects of it with their friends, colleagues, classmates ... that they otherwise may not have had an opportunity or reason to share. Hosting such an event yearly promotes openness and diversity and allows people to come together and celebrate their cultures, whether they're members of our dedicated cultural clubs, or members of communities that don't have their own dedicated clubs but still want to display theirs to the community.

Photo links: <https://adobe.ly/4uENSpM>

Math Program: With the belief that all students can perform at the highest math level and appreciate the beauty of the math language, we design our math program to foster students' authentic thinking and problem solving skills, enrich students' math procedural skills with

practical application, and encourage as many students as possible to take advanced math courses in their junior and senior year.

1. Our math teaching motto is exploring first and formalize later. Each of our daily lessons has 4-part structure: Activator – review and hook to a new concept, Investigative activity – working with partners or in groups to informally make sense of new concept, Teacher-driven guided note – synthesize and formally teach the concept, and lastly checking for understanding.
2. We believe in the balance of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and practical application of the concepts. With that in mind, we incorporate spiral reviews consistently in all grades level, and provide time in class for practice problems, and guide students to self-assess routinely. We design our lesson with “low floor” activity to engage all students and set “high ceiling” expectations for all to thrive.
3. In high school, we don’t have a specific textbook curriculum. Having no set curriculum provides us the flexibility to address our students’ different needs each year. Our pacing guides are fluid and constantly includes needed revision and modifications as we identify new gaps in each class or grade level at any time.
4. Horizontal alignment in assessments: We understand and appreciate each teacher’s authenticity in teaching the math concepts. Our teachers can use any resources, materials, or teaching materials in delivering their lessons. However, our Unit assessments are common assessments so we can hold all students to the same standards and expectations.



International Festival

All SICS Families and Friends
are invited to our annual International Festival on

Friday, May 1, 2026

6pm to 7pm - Booths

7pm - 9pm - Presentations (booths will be closed)

Activities will begin at 6 p.m. in the Cafetorium. SICS families, students, and staff will host booths representing different countries.

We encourage everyone to come dressed in their traditional attire.

Everyone will enjoy learning about different cultures, sampling delicious ethnic foods, and, most importantly, watching cultural presentations by our own SICS students and community performers.

We hope to see you there!



**ASIAN STUDENT ALLIANCE CLUB'S
THIRD LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL !**

YEAR OF THE HORSE

LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL 2026

**MARCH 6, 2026 | AT 6 - 8
PM
160 JOAN ST, SPRINGFIELD
MA**

**Free Entry | Food Sale | Raffle Basket | Lion
& Dragon Dance | Games & Activities**

@sics_asian_student_alliance



BLACK HISTORY MONTH SHOWCASE

160 JOAN ST
FRIDAY FEBRUARY 27
6 PM-8 PM

The Afro-Culture Committee is hosting a showcase to celebrate black history and excellence.

The event includes guest speakers, black businesses, poetry, a stroll, music, art and food.

The event speakers include Tatiana Jones and SICS Board Member and Greater Springfield NAACP representative, Freda Malone.





Springfield International Charter School



Dissemination in Practice: Teaching, Creating, and Sharing Our Work

At Springfield International Charter School, dissemination is part of our daily practice. It is reflected in our classrooms, our programs, and the way educators collaborate, reflect, and share ideas with one another and with the broader educational community. It is not treated as a separate initiative, but as an ongoing part of how we teach, learn, and grow together.

My name is Lauren Bennett, and I have been teaching at Springfield International Charter School since 2005. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to grow alongside the school as it evolved into the strong and supportive learning environment it is today. I currently serve as the high school art teacher, and one of the things that continues to stand out to me is the level of support from administration and the collaborative culture shared among staff.

In the classroom, dissemination begins with instruction and reflection. Students are encouraged to take creative risks, explore new ideas, and develop confidence in their work. I often remind students that growth does not happen instantly—every student begins at a different level, and improvement comes through consistency, effort, and practice. The goal is not perfection, but progress.

Art education extends far beyond creating visual work. Students learn how to problem-solve, think critically, reflect on their process, and communicate ideas effectively. Through critique, revision, and discussion, students begin to understand not only how to improve their work, but how to support and learn from one another. Lessons often connect to art history, culture, storytelling, and personal identity, allowing students to strengthen both creative and academic skills simultaneously.

Over time, our visual arts program has expanded to include courses such as Intro to Art, Mixed Media Art, Advanced Art, Art History, and additional specialized offerings. Several of these courses are also available through Dual Enrollment partnerships with American International College, including Advanced Art, Art History, and After-School Illustration. These opportunities allow students to experience college-level expectations while earning college credit during high school.

Learning also continues beyond the traditional classroom setting. Our after-school art program, available to students in grades 6–12, provides additional opportunities for students to create,

experiment, and receive individualized support. Some students participate in structured projects, while others pursue independent artistic exploration, helping them build confidence, responsibility, and ownership over their work.

Summer enrichment and summer school programs have also remained an important part of our school culture for many years. Students choose to participate because they want to continue learning in a supportive and engaging environment while earning credit. This summer, I will be offering two new courses: *The Vital Basics: Drawing, Painting & Sculpting* and *Journal Your Journey Through Art*. Both courses have already generated strong student interest and reflect our students' enthusiasm for immersive, hands-on creative learning experiences.

One of the most visible examples of dissemination within our school is the way student work becomes part of the school community itself. In addition to our biannual 6–12 Art Showcases, where families are invited to experience student artwork and performances, students have also participated in a large-scale mural initiative throughout the building. Over the past several years, high school students have created more than 100 murals across the school environment. These projects are entirely student-driven—from concept development and proposal to approval and completion—and allow students to leave a lasting impact on the spaces they share each day



(Image #1) Students design and create murals that bring creativity and school spirit into shared spaces.

(Image #2) Student-created mural transforming a hallway into an immersive and engaging environment.

(Image #3) Students work through the full creative process, developing large-scale murals from concept to completion.

These murals do more than decorate the building. They reflect student voice, collaboration, creativity, and pride while transforming everyday spaces into meaningful learning environments.

Dissemination also takes place through collaboration among educators. In my role as Lead Mentor for grades 6–12, I work closely with new teachers by helping pair them with experienced mentors and supporting a structured mentoring system that includes classroom observations, meetings, and professional reflection. This process helps strengthen communication, collaboration, and the sharing of effective instructional practices across grade levels and departments.

As part of the school's dissemination team, we also participate in workshops, visit other schools, and engage in professional collaboration outside of our own building. These experiences allow us to both share our practices and learn from others, helping us continually strengthen our work as educators.

Beyond academics, students at Springfield International Charter School benefit from a wide range of opportunities including athletics, clubs, leadership programs, travel experiences, and scholarship pathways. In recent years, students have participated in international travel experiences to locations including the Netherlands and France, helping them connect classroom learning to the wider world.

What makes Springfield International Charter School a strong example of dissemination is not one single initiative, but the consistency of our approach. There is a shared understanding among staff that we are always learning, always reflecting, and always striving to improve opportunities for students.

From my perspective as both a teacher and mentor, dissemination is simply part of good teaching. It is how educators continue to grow professionally, support one another, and create meaningful experiences that positively impact students both inside and outside the classroom.

At Springfield International Charter School, this work is ongoing, collaborative, and something we take pride in every day.

K-5 Family Engagement

Back to School Night

- The Wednesday before students return to school, we invite families to come to the campus. We have food, ice cream and games. We also have different tables set up to help families with a need for uniforms, books, or outside services.

Meet the Teacher Night

- In September, instead of a traditional Open House, we welcome families in to meet their child(ren)'s teacher. This is an opportunity for the families to get acquainted with the classroom procedures, routines and expectations for the school year.

Literacy Night

- In late fall, we host a Literacy Night. Here we have students and their families come in to enjoy a story read to them by a staff member. They will then play games and/or complete activities or crafts based on the story that was read.



Winter/Spring Concerts

- Throughout the fall, our wonderful music teacher prepares students in grades K-5 for the Winter Concerts. Each grade performs one song and then the chorus sings a song as well. Families are invited in to watch our amazing young talent. When students return from the holiday break in January, they get right to work practicing the new songs they will sing in April.

Prince/Princess Dance

- We hold two separate dances, a Prince Dance and a Princess Dance. Here our students come with a special adult in their life to enjoy a night of fun, food and dancing!



Open House

- We have our Open House in April. This allows students to show their families the hard work they have been completing the entire school year.

International Festival

- Arguably our biggest event, the International Festival is a showcase of the many different countries that put the “I” in SICS. Families will sign up to run tables that feature the history of their country of origin. Many also choose to include a sample of a special food. To close out the evening, we have performances from outside talents, as well as our choruses and dance teams.



Grade-Level End-of-Year Activities

- In late May/early June, grade-levels will invite families in to have a look at projects the students have been working on.
 - First grade students have “Reader’s Theater”, where they perform a play for the families.

- Third grade students display their Animal Dioramas and talk to families about their projects and what they learned about their animal.
- Fifth grade students spend weeks learning about an important historical figure and how to embody them for the Wax Museum.

Best Practices in Instruction, Leadership, and School Culture

In my roles as a mathematics teacher, head coach of three athletic programs, PBIS team member, and social media coordinator, I strive to create environments where students feel supported, engaged, and accountable. Across both academics and athletics, I focus on consistency, communication, positive recognition, leadership, and relationship-building. The following best practices reflect strategies that have positively impacted students both inside and outside the classroom.

- Establishing Consistent Classroom Structure and Expectations

One of the most important practices I use in my mathematics classroom is maintaining a consistent and organized daily structure. Each day, students are greeted with a slide that includes the agenda, learning objectives, vocabulary, classroom expectations regarding personal devices, and a brief engaging element such as a joke or warm-up question. This routine helps students transition into class quickly and understand what is expected of them from the moment they enter the room. Posting vocabulary daily also

supports literacy and comprehension in mathematics, especially for students who struggle with academic language. The consistency of classroom procedures reduces downtime and helps maximize instructional time. It also creates a more predictable and supportive learning environment where students feel prepared and focused. By clearly communicating expectations every day, students are able to build independence, responsibility, and stronger classroom habits.

- Building Strong Communication Systems with Students and Families

As the head coach of cross country, indoor track, and outdoor track and field, communication and accountability are essential to maintaining a successful program. A major best practice I implement is establishing clear expectations for athletes, families, and coaches from the beginning of each season. Athletes and families receive information regarding attendance expectations, conduct, communication procedures, and team responsibilities. Maintaining open communication helps build trust between coaches, athletes, and families while also promoting accountability and consistency throughout the season. Coaching three seasons has reinforced the importance of creating a positive team culture where students understand expectations and feel supported both athletically and personally. Strong communication systems reduce confusion, improve organization, and allow students to develop responsibility, teamwork, and leadership skills that extend beyond athletics.

- Promoting Positive School Culture Through Social Media and Recognition

As a social media coordinator for the school, I help highlight the many positive accomplishments and experiences taking place within our school community. Through social media posts, we celebrate student achievements, athletic accomplishments, awards, events, and other positive moments that contribute to school pride. This practice helps strengthen the connection between students, families, staff, and the larger community by recognizing the successes of our students in a public and encouraging way. Positive recognition can have a significant impact on student confidence, motivation, and school engagement. Social media also serves as an important communication tool that allows families and community members to stay informed and connected to school events and accomplishments. By focusing on positivity and celebration, we help create a culture where students feel valued and recognized for their efforts.

- Encouraging Leadership, Growth, and Community Engagement

Participating in the 2026 Women's Leadership Conference provided valuable insight into leadership, communication, and empowerment strategies that can be applied within both the classroom and athletics. Listening to keynote speakers and participating in

breakout sessions reinforced the importance of resilience, confidence, collaboration, and mentorship. In my own work with students and athletes, I strive to encourage a growth mindset by helping students recognize that improvement comes through effort, consistency, and perseverance. Whether in mathematics or athletics, students are often more successful when they feel supported and encouraged to take risks, learn from mistakes, and continue growing. In addition to athletic and academic responsibilities, I also encourage students to participate in community service opportunities that strengthen their connection to the school and local community. Each year, members of the track and field team volunteer at a local 5K walk/run that raises awareness about dating violence in memory of a former student-athlete from our school. The event is organized by her family, who also provide scholarships to graduating students each year. Team members assist by cheering on participants, directing runners along the course, and helping organizers wherever needed throughout the event. Participating in this event allows students to recognize the importance of service, empathy, and community involvement while honoring the memory and legacy of a former athlete. Experiences such as these help students develop leadership skills and understand the positive impact they can have both within and beyond the school community.

As both an educator and coach, I aim to model leadership through consistency, communication, and positive relationships. Creating supportive environments where students feel respected and motivated contributes to stronger engagement and a more positive overall school culture.