Student Opportunity Act Plan

Arlington

# Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups

*Student subgroups requiring focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life.*

* English learners and former English learners
* Students with disabilities
* Low income/economically disadvantaged students
* High Needs students (defined as any student who is economically disadvantaged, has a disability, or is an English learner/former English learner)
* African American/Black students
* Hispanic or Latinx students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

Our mission statement states that Arlington educators are "committed to helping every student achieve emotional, social, vocational, and academic success." In order to ensure that all students achieve at the highest level, Arlington educators consistently meet to review our annual MCAS data. Based upon the last MCAS testing results, our data exhibits that there is a disparity in how our subgroups achieve. More specifically, Arlington's African American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities (SWD), English Language Learners (EL), and high needs students score lower than overall district averages on the 2019 MCAS. Factors that may contribute to this disparity include a lack of diversity amongst staff, curriculum that has not been created from a multicultural perspective, a lack of culturally responsive pedagogy implemented throughout the district, access to the general education curriculum by our students on an IEP, and a need to integrate social and emotional (SEL) competencies into daily instruction.

As a result, administrators and teachers have created goals that commit district resources to strengthen Tier I instruction, evaluating current curriculum resources and practices from a multicultural and SEL learning perspective and a focus on using informal and formal assessment data to monitor student progress throughout the year.

**Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps**

## Focus Area 1: Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs (C and/or D)

Implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): Arlington has created a 5-year plan that is focused on creating multi- tiered systems of support to respond to the academic and SEL needs of all students. The foundation of this plan is to support Tier I instruction which impacts all students. Coupled with this approach is understanding what students may need when they do not respond to Tier One instruction. The supports vary between adding instructional resources and personnel who can support the implementation of Tier I instruction and provide targeted Tier II and III intervention.

## Focus Area 2: Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum (E and F)

Creating an Anti-Racist Learning Environment for all students: Arlington Public Schools employs a staff that is 92.1% White. This presents a challenge since the majority of students may matriculate through Arlington Public Schools without coming in contact with a teacher or staff person of color. It is especially problematic for our students of color who are not exposed to teacher role models who share their same race/ethnicity. Thus, preparing students to enter into a world that is diverse and requires the skill of "...cultivating and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups" can be a challenge without explicitly exposing them to a curriculum and instructional workforce that is representative of all cultures. To address this disparity, Arlington has created a district goal of diversifying its administrative and instructional staff and providing professional development focused on creating an anti-racist learning environment. As a result, Arlington offers an opportunity for all staff to take the IDEAS (Initiatives for Developing Equity and Achievement for Students) I course: Anti- racist School Practices to Support the Success for All Students. This 25-hour course is designed to introduce educators to the complex issues raised by race and racism and their impact on student learning and achievement. The course will encourage educators to recognize the link between self-awareness and professional development as a component of providing equity to all students.

## Focus Area 3: Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs (C and/or D)

Arlington Public schools invested in several platforms that support instruction and close achievement gaps across the district. In general, these tools have impacted our support by generating additional opportunities for practice, both in school and at home, provide additional opportunities for targeted support for identified gaps for students in subgroups, and for providing formative data for guiding future Tier I instruction.

For the current school, the k-12 mathematics department expanded the use of two digital platforms to enhance skill building, data collection, and asynchronous support for all students. Dreambox, an adaptive standards based platform, was expanded to all students in grades k through six. IXL, a standards based skills platform, was expanded to all students in grades 6-12. The English department expanded the use of Raz Kids and Scholastic Pro at the elementary level and IXL for grades 6-12. With the use of these platforms, we have been more efficient in identifying students of concern as well as assigning work that will support their growth. All teachers had several professional development opportunities during the summer.

**Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets**

*Outcome metrics that will be used to measure progress in closing gaps for selected student groups.*

* Student Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Student Growth: Mathematics mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* High School Completion: Four-year cohort graduation rate
* Custom District Metric 1: Student Engagement (measured by annual district-wide student survey)

**Commitment 4: Engaging All Families**

*District plans for ensuring that all families, particularly those representing identified student subgroups most in need of support, have access to meaningful engagement regarding their students’ needs.*

Arlington Public Schools strives to create effective and trusting relationships with all families. The connection between school personnel and families is a key factor in raising student achievement and ensuring the social and emotional well-being for all students. This is especially significant for the district goal of decreasing the opportunity gap between Arlington's student subgroups. The district has contracted with Panorama Education to survey all families. The results from the survey will be disaggregated to determine areas that need attention.

Through training with Panorama technical assistance, participation in DESE MTSS Academies (PBIS, SEL/MH, CRT) and the Commitment to Equity with School Reform Initiative and Pegasus Springs, administration and teacher leadership will bring climate data, student learning, student engagement and staff climate data to professional learning communities and integrate efforts into a whole child, whole school, whole community approach, ensuring families and students are at the table.

**Certifications**

*Certification that stakeholders were engaged in accordance with the Student Opportunity Act.*

Arlington Public Schools throughout the budget process and development of this plan engaged the school committee, district administration, AEA union leadership, and school site councils. Several meetings were held where principals were able to present and engage with the school committee in regards to the needs of each of their schools. In addition, AEA union representatives also were provided with the opportunity to present their needs to the school committee and district leadership. Also, principals consulted each with their school site councils to help provide feedback and understand the needs and wants of the community. District administration also engaged with parents and other community members at a SEPAC meeting where feedback was given in regards to district needs.

*Certification that School Committee has voted (or is expected to vote on the district’s Student Opportunity Act Plan.*

Date of Approval: 01/14/2021