Student Opportunity Act Plan

Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical

# 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)

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

The rationale for selecting the above-mentioned students came from several sources. The first was the state accountability reports. Our reports show a clear gap between all students and our lowest 25%. Looking at the population of our lowest 25%, these four sub-groups show up again and again. The next was from internal student grading reports. These reports identify a gap for students in these sub-groups when compared to their counterparts. Additional data came from ACCESS scoring for EL students.

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

Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups

As a vocational school district in an urban Gateway community, Greater Fall River has a diverse population of students in grades 9-12. As an urban district with 76% of its enrollment coming from Fall River, Greater Fall River has a large population of students that are economically disadvantaged or high needs. Accountability data over the last several years clearly identifies a growing concern on MCAS for students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English Language Learners.

Analysis of data, as well as interviews with staff, parents, and students, shows growing concerns with the master schedule and the lack of flexibility associated with our course offerings and building make-up. Students report frustration connected to course selection and actual scheduling. Lack of physical space at the high school adds to the frustration and inflexibility of the schedule.

Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps

The Student Opportunity Act offers an opportunity for Greater Fall River to commit to additional evidence-based programs with the expectation of minimizing the gaps among our student subgroups. The Department has allocated approximately $1.8 million in Year 1 (FY21) towards these initiatives. Based on projections, we anticipate incremental Chapter 70 funds for evidence-based programs in Years 2 and 3 will be in the range of an additional $2,000,000 per year.

We intend to use the Student Opportunity Act funds to adopt or deepen three new programs, and intend to make multi-year, sustained commitments to these areas:

* Increase staffing to expand student access to art and humanities.
* Increase inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners.
* Improve facilities to create healthy and safe learning environments.

In addition to the narrative below, the accompanying budget file provides a detailed FY21 budget for these programs. These investments are as follows: $462,500 for expanding arts and humanities, $160,000 for expanding inclusion/co-teaching, $1,221,596 for facility improvements.

## Focus Area 1: Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers (B and D)

Students impacted: This initiative will give access to over 350 students in the area of art and humanities, including students will disabilities and English learners. The district will look to hire a history and art teacher to assist with issues related to schedule inflexibility and teacher/student ratios in these areas.

Greater Fall River would look to expand offerings to students in the areas of art and humanities. This added staff would allow for greater course offerings. Added staff members would allow for greater flexibility in the master schedule by having more sections open to students in the junior year for their electives. Currently, no art classes are offered at Diman Regional Voc Tech. Additionally, limited humanities are offered to students in grades 11 and 12 due to mandatory content areas as graduation requirements. These two additional faculty members will allow greater opportunities for students as it relates to Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Whole Student Learning. This initiative will blend the need to increase staff for art with the DESE's initiative to increase services to support holistic student needs.

Key steps connected to this initiative would include:

* mentoring of new staff members
* development of curriculum, scope, and sequencing
* professional development related to SEL and mindfulness connected to the arts
* preparation of new teaching spaces to include movable and adjustable furniture
* purchasing of supplies and equipment to meet the needs of students to be enrolled in these new courses

## Focus Area 2: Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners (D and/or E)

Students impacted: This program will serve nearly 200 students in both programs.

Greater Fall River will partner with outside agencies, including Bridgewater State University, to expand its continuum of services for students. Currently, we offer sub-separate and pull-out services for students with disabilities and English learners. Research shows many of these practices alienate students and raise anxiety levels. With these new Chapter 70 funds, Greater Fall River will introduce inclusion/co-taught classes across content areas and allow for equitable access to all students. This initiative will combine with the district's position to improve student performance connected to accountability and high needs.

Key steps connected to this initiative would include:

* professional development for staff moving from sub-separate into inclusion courses
* contract services for outside providers working with staff
* stipends for common planning time connected with new co-taught classes
* stipends for curriculum development of new courses
* expansion of classrooms to accommodate larger classes moving from sub-separate to co-taught

## Focus Area 3: Facilities improvements to create healthy and safe school environments (J)

Students impacted: This initiative has the potential to reach all 1450 students currently enrolled at Diman Regional Voc Tech.

This program will provide the greatest support for students as it will incorporate numerous Evidence-Based Programs established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Greater Fall River's plan would connect facility improvement with expansion of career/technical education, expand Early College programs, and improve Labor-management partnerships.

Greater Fall River will look to expand its current Chapter 74 offerings during the traditional school day. Utilizing the partnership already in place with our local Chamber of Commerce and the Workforce Investment Board, Greater Fall River expects to add two new technical programs to assist with the Governor's identified skills gap. To that end, additional or renovated campus space will be transformed into state-of-the-art teaching labs. These new spaces will then be transformed into "After Dark" options for students from sending communities. These "After Dark" programs can run for second and third shirt options in accordance with the Governor's initiative to expand access to technical programs.

Early college resources will connect to this initiative as Greater Fall River looks to collaborate with Bristol Community College and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth in college pathways for underrepresented students and sub-groups.

Key steps connected to this initiative would include:

* upgrading campus security (surveillance, doors, key pads)
* expanding campus footprint to increase technical offerings
* professional development for new programs
* curriculum development for new programs
* staff training for new security equipment
* community outreach for labor market partnerships
* collaboration with post-secondary institutions to strengthen access to under-represented students
* develop pathways for dual-enrollment courses connecting Diman Regional to post-secondary institutions

**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 Achievement: English language arts (ELA) achievement as measured by average scaled scores on MCAS
* Student Achievement: Mathematics achievement as measured by average scaled scores on MCAS
* Student Achievement: Science achievement as measured by average scaled scores (or CPI, depending on grade level) on MCAS
* Student Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Student Growth: Mathematics mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* English Language Proficiency: Progress made by students towards attaining English proficiency (percentage of students meeting annual targets calculated to attain English proficiency in six years).
* Additional Indicators: Percentage of 11th and 12th graders completing at least one DESE-identified advanced coursework
* Post-secondary Success: Enrolled in college during the first year after high school
* Custom District Metric 1: Accountability Scores from DESE
* Custom District Metric 2: Vocal Survey from DESE
* Custom District Metric 3: YRBS data and survey
* Custom District Metric 4: Staff survey on inclusion
* Custom District Metric 5: Staff survey on culture
* Custom District Metric 6: Parent survey on inclusion

**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.*

Greater Fall River recognizes family engagement is critical to ensuring successful outcomes for all students. We fully comprehend the systems currently in place may not reach or meet the needs of all families in our community. To that end, Greater Fall River will implement a wider variety of offerings revolving around the goals connected to the Student Opportunity Act.

Key steps connected to this initiative would include:

* Offering meetings at more diverse times including nights and weekends
* Providing translators for parents whose first language is not English
* Videotaping or live streaming meetings to engage families that have transportation issues and are unable to attend meetings
* Providing written correspondence to families regularly in multiple languages
* Offering parent forums/round table events as information sessions to garner family input
* Creating "family fun nights" where parents can bring children. During these events, Diman will provide care for the children allowing parents to meet and easing the burden of childcare

**Certifications**

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

* Parent forum meeting in Auditorium February 29, 2020 from 10 am-12 pm
* Faculty/Staff survey with 25 responses
* Phone conference with head of Workforce Investment Board on March 4, 2020

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

Date of Approval: 03/12/2020