Student Opportunity Act Plan

Stoneham

# 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.*

* High Needs students (defined as any student who is economically disadvantaged, has a disability, or is an English learner/former English learner)
* Hispanic or Latinx students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

Our high needs subgroup includes students with disabilities, English Learners, and students from economically disadvantaged families. For the past three years, the students in this subgroup have lagged substantially behind their non- subgroup-identified peers on both the math and English language arts MCAS exams at almost all grade-spans (elementary, middle and high), with no clear trends of decline or improvement, except for closing gaps for English learners in grade 5-12 on the English language arts MCAS. The gaps are substantially higher at the elementary and high school levels than at the middle level. With the switch to Next Gen MCAS in 2019, gaps increased substantially for all of our high needs subgroups at the high school level. This presents a new challenge in our effort to ensure high achievement and preparation for life for all our students.

At the elementary and high school levels, where our gaps are the greatest for our high needs subgroup, the gaps are highest for students with disabilities, with an average gap of 40% between the proportion of students with disabilities who meet/exceed expectations on ELA and math MCAS as compared to students without disabilities. Our graduation rates for students with disabilities, students from economically disadvantaged families, and students who identify as Hispanic/Latino lag significantly behind the aggregate graduation 4-year graduation rate.

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

Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum:

Access to high-quality, standards-aligned curricular materials is a critical component of the student learning experience, with growing evidence that curricular materials matter particularly for those students experiencing opportunity and performance gaps.

## Focus Area 1: Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum (E and F)

As our work continues to align our curriculum to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, we will be focusing our curriculum purchases, professional development, and instructional practices in the following areas:

* Commit resources to focused and aligned professional development opportunities on meeting the needs of diverse learners for administrators, teachers and support staff.
* Implement Universal Design for Learning across the school district
* Work with Administrative Leadership Team to review teacher evaluation and support practices
* Implement a high-quality universal screening assessment for K-4 students in literacy and mathematics.
* Using DESE guidelines develop and implement a process on Early Literacy Screening.
* Implement revised elementary standards-based report card.
* Develop and implement a plan to improve literacy skills, K-4, with an emphasis on early literacy skills in Grades K-3.

Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades.

High-Quality Program Components

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

A comprehensive approach to early literacy begins with adoption of high-quality literacy core curricular materials that have evidence demonstrating that they are aligned to standards and to research-based reading instruction. A valid, reliable, normed assessment for early reading is also necessary to track all students' progress, to identify students at risk for reading difficulties, and to intervene when necessary. When data indicates that a student is not making adequate reading progress, appropriately trained staff will provide interventions that match the student's learning needs. Finally, content-area learning (in subjects such as science, history/social science, and the arts), as these content areas support the knowledge development that is the backbone of reading and writing ability. Thus, a comprehensive approach to early literacy will include adoption of Fountas and Pinnell classroom curriculum and training for teachers.

Staffing and Scheduling

It is often necessary for schools to make structural changes that enable a comprehensive, research-based approach to early literacy. Some schools may need to revamp the schedule so that sufficient time is available to implement all components of a high-quality core literacy program and content area learning (such as mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts), with time also allocated for supplemental interventions, ongoing collaborative professional learning, and planning by teacher teams. Schools may need to hire additional qualified staff to provide interventions to students or to enable the scheduling described above.

Professional Learning and Leadership

Professional learning is a key aspect of implementing evidence-based early literacy practices. Both school leaders and teachers benefit from training on the implementation of high-quality curricular materials, including in-depth initial training and ongoing implementation support. PreK-4 teachers also benefit from training on early reading content pedagogy in order to understand and respond to individual student literacy needs. This training is particularly impactful when a high-quality, evidence-based curriculum is in place.

Diversifying the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention.

A growing body of educational research supports the positive impacts of teachers of color on short- and long-term academic outcomes of students of color. Specifically, the research finds that having a single teacher of color can boost academic achievement, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment for students of color (Gershenson et al., 2017; Cherng and Halpin, 2016; Recruiting and retaining a diverse and effective educator workforce is a promising strategy for districts.

In addition, a growing body of educational research (Griffin and Tackie, 2016, Carver-Thomas, 2018, Dixon, et al., 2019; https://1k9gl1yevnfp2lpq1dhrqe17-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ThroughOurEyes.pdf demonstrates the importance and need to develop inclusive school environments for students and staff to support the retention of a diverse teacher workforce. The research indicates that inclusive school environments include characteristics such as:

* Shared or collective decision-making
* Opportunities for growth and development such as mentorship programs and access to professional development
* Cultivation of relationships with students and families to strengthen the school community

Our teacher and administrator workforce does not mirror our student population, especially with our students of color. In future budget cycles we hope to include a Human Resources administrative role, which would enable us to allocate more time to recruitment and retention. This includes the development of a three-year induction program for all teachers new to Stoneham.

* Hire a Human Resources Admin Role
* As part of entry plan, HR Admin will review hiring and recruitment practices through interviews, focus group sessions, and surveys.
* Create a diversity hiring committee consisting of teachers, ESP's, and administrators.
* Conduct an internal audit of our current talent management process which includes an assessment of diversification for pipeline development, recruitment, and retention.
* Pipeline Development
* Increase the number of student teachers in the district and student teachers who are individuals of color, PreK-12.
* Increase the number of ESP's in our district who are individuals of color.
* Provide ESP's with Bachelor Degrees access to teacher preparation professional development.
* Develop education coursework for Seniors who may be interested in pursuing a teaching degree.
* Recruitment
* Prioritize recruitment through new recruiting mechanisms.
* Audit all recruitment materials, including the website, job descriptions, and job postings to ensure the district's commitment to diversity is clearly communicated.
* Identify and participate in job fairs that focus on recruiting teachers of color.

Retention

* Conduct qualitative data gathering through surveys or focus groups with teachers of color to ensure that they feel valued.
* Use the educator evaluation process and the mentor program to support teachers' progress.
* Continue to provide teachers opportunities for dialog and discussion through open door policy, staff forums, and office hours.
* Based on the audit, adjust our talent practices and create a long-term diversification strategy.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Curriculum Material** | **20000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **2** | **Professional Development** | **15000** | **Professional Development** |
| **3** | **Central Office Admin** | **TBD** | **Administration** |

**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)
* High School Completion: Four-year cohort graduation rate
* High School Completion: Extended engagement rate (5 year cohort grad rate plus percentage of students who are still enrolled)
* 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
* Custom District Metric 1: Engagement, Safety, and Environment Sections of the Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) 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.*

* Each school holds open house and back to school night events for all families.
* Weekly school and district newsletters sent to all families.
* Weekly office hours during different times of day at different school sites with the Superintendent of Schools.
* During SY2022 and 2023, schools and district will engage families in the "portrait of graduate" work where a vision of the skills and dispositions that we want our students to have when they leave high school will be generated.

**Certifications**

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

Our district is still engaging community and faculty stakeholders for their input, but school committee voted to approve the plan as presented on 01/14/2021.

*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