Student Opportunity Act Plan

Wilmington

# 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.*

* Students with disabilities

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As evidenced by a variety of initiatives within the Wilmington Public Schools' 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, the district is focused on improving student achievement and success through a commitment to inclusive instructional practices. This strategic focus is based on a review of district data, which shows that our students with disabilities (SWDs) perform at much lower levels on MCAS. Local reading and math assessment data largely mirrors state assessment results for this same subgroup. Data shows that SWDs at our middle school are especially performing poorly when compared to aggregate data. For example, in 2019 only 15% of 6th grade SWDs scored exceeding or meeting expectations on the ELA MCAS as compared to 57% for the all students category. Similarly, only 24% of 8th grade SWDs scored exceeding or meeting expectations on the math MCAS as compared to 70% for the all students category. Consequently, the rate that SWDs at the middle school are scoring "not meeting expectations" is more than 4-times the rate than the all students category. In addition to MCAS performance metrics, SWDs are lagging behind with respect to growth when compared to the all students category. Student growth percentiles (SGP) for SWDs is lower than the SGP for all students for 5 out of the 6 MCAS tests (ELA and math). The only exception is grade 8 ELA where the SGP for SWDs is 3 points higher than the SGP for all students (49.6 compared to 46.6).

During the 2018-2019 school year, 18.3% (n=46) of grade 6 students were included in the SWD cohort; 24.1% (n=64) of grade 7 students were included in that cohort; and 14.8% (n=36) of grade 8 students were included. Our data shows that students who perform poorly on the MCAS and local assessments in the middle school typically continue this pattern into high school where their performance is connected to graduation.

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

***Focus Area 1***: Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners (D and/or E)

Wilmington Middle School employs a typical middle school team model distributed over 3 houses. Each team consists of 4 teachers, one from each academic discipline (ELA, math, social studies, and science). Most teams have a dedicated special education inclusion teacher as a fifth member. Staffing limitations have, however, required that some teams share a special educator. This practice has limited the amount of inclusion support/co-teaching for those teams sharing personnel. We will use FY21 funds to add a full-time special education inclusion teacher to the middle school, which will allow us to better optimize staffing and provide more targeted student support and increase co-teaching opportunities. We will also use funding to provide professional development related to inclusion and co-teaching.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Inclusion Teacher** | **81675** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **2** | **Inclusion Professional Development** | **25000** | **Professional Development** |

**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 Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Custom District Metric 1: Reading Data from iReady
* Custom District Metric 2: EnVision Math Topic Assessment Data

**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.*

The Wilmington Public Schools is committed to increasing family engagement across all schools. To this end, we have identified 2 strategic initiatives within our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan that speak specifically to relationships and partnerships:

* 3.2 Enhance school and community relationships by increasing communication and collaboration
* 3.3 Engage families in multiple and meaningful ways to bridge home and school partnerships. As the Student Opportunity Act Plan is specific to students with disabilities at the middle school, efforts related to family engagement for this identified population are as follows:

Wilmington's Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) has struggled to maintain adequate membership in recent years. A small group of committed parents in partnership with our Director of Student Support Services have kept SEPAC in place, but meeting attendance is low and not representative of our 8 schools. The district is committed to participating in the Advancing Parent-Professional Leadership in Education (APPLE) Institute through the Federation for Children with Special Needs next year. APPLE was designed to help parents develop leadership skills that they can use to strengthen community support organizations like SEPAC. APPLE promotes skills that will help foster collaborative relationships between SEPAC parents and educators and help them develop action plans for increasing parent involvement in the district and community.

The district will engage with a guest keynote speaker in the fall to jump-start our year-long professional development focus on inclusive practices. We will seek a speaker who also has experience speaking with parents and look to have him/her facilitate an evening session specifically for middle school parents (but open to all) about learning styles, inclusion, and the middle school.

Middle school teachers will work to increase the number of parents of SWDs who take advantage of the two scheduled parent/teacher conference days (winter and spring). Efforts will include personalized outreach and providing flexibility with respect to meeting times

The middle school administration and special education leadership are committed to scheduling and facilitating multiple "parent coffee" sessions and parent information nights that focus specifically on special education topics. These events will be advertised by the middle school and through SEPAC and will feature guest facilitators from the Office of Student Support Services.

**Certifications**

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

* Multiple meetings with the district leadership team to develop and finalize the SOA plan
* Multiple public meetings of the Wilmington School Committee to engage the community by offering them the opportunity to speak about the plan
* Administration of an anonymous survey for the community

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

Date of Approval: 05/27/2020