Student Opportunity Act Plan

Amherst-Pelham

# 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.*

* First language not English students
* English learners and former English learners
* Students with disabilities
* High Needs students (defined as any student who is economically disadvantaged, has adisability, or is an English learner/former English learner)

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

Our district mission statement states: "The mission of our schools is to provide all students with a high quality education that enables them to be contributing members of a multiethnic, multicultural, pluralistic society. We seek to create an environment that achieves equity for all students and ensures that each student is a successful learner, is fully respected, and learns to respect others." Overall, our five-year graduation rate is high (92.7%) and many subgroups outperform that average (African- American five-year graduation rate is 100%). However, two subgroups fall well-below the average: students with special needs and ELL students (particularly ELL students who we classify as "SLIFE" Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education).

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

Last year, for the first time, the district invested in an ELL teacher specifically to work with SLIFE students. These students require different instruction and intervention than their ELL peers due to the lack of formal education in their first language.

***Focus Area 1:***  Leadership pipeline development programs for schools (D and/or E)

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, the district has proposed adding a math course, primarily for students with special needs and SLIFE students, to assist them in developing portfolio appeals to assist in graduation from high school. While the high school has interventions in place for students in mathematics and high-quality, licensed staff, this additional course sequence will offer a pathway for this subset of students to show their mastery of skills in a format and context that gives them the best chance of success and for graduation. The course will be taught by a licensed special educator and is being modeled after another district's model program, which has proven successful.

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| . | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **New Math Course Sequence (0.2 new in FY21)** | **13,000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **2** | **ELL/SLIFE Teacher (0.9 new in FY20, maintained in FY21)** | **54,000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |

**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.*

* High School Completion: Extended engagement rate (5 year cohort grad rate plus percentage of students who are still enrolled)
* Custom District Metric 1: 4 year graduation rate of students with special needs
* Custom District Metric 2: 4 year graduation rate of English Language Learners

**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 district ensures that families have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the district through a variety of means. Conferences are held annually in the early fall, and teachers connect with all families, whether in person or via phone conference. In addition, administration, school counselors, school nurses, and teaching staff make it part of their practice to conduct outreach to families on an ongoing basis, either through face-face meetings, phone calls, email communications, or home-school communication logs. Administration confirms that all families are on the newsletter and school news list to receive messages electronically or via hard copy. This provides an opportunity for parents to all have access to the current school events and to follow up with the school on shared information, as well. The district is using revised, standards-based report cards that include increased information for families; these report cards come with a comment form that parents can use to share concerns which are then followed up on by staff. Special education/intervention staff connect regularly with parents to share concerns, as well as to provide progress updates. Through the IEP team process, pre-meeting outreach, inclusion in team meetings, and follow up after the meeting, parents of students with more significant needs are invited and encouraged to articulate their concerns and engage with staff. Families of students with special needs are invited to be critical stakeholders in determining how the school can best meet the needs of their child. The ARPS Family Center includes two caseworkers who offer wrap-around services for families in need to critical connections in the community. Finally, the district partners with the SEPAC and ELPAC to increase family engagement for these specific populations of families.

**Certifications**

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

The district emailed a draft of this plan to gather feedback from all families and staff. The plan was also reviewed at a SEPAC meeting on March 6, 2020. Additionally, the plan is in accordance with a District Improvement Plan, adopted less than a year ago, that was developed by a team of families, staff members, and the principal of the school. This team used a facilitator (Dr. Albert Mussad) who was trained by DESE in facilitating these processes.

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

Date of Approval: 06/09/2020