Student Opportunity Act Plan

Ashland

# 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
* African American/Black students
* Hispanic or Latinx students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As noted in our Blueprint for Continuous Student Improvement, Ashland Public Schools, are committed to improving achievement for all students by providing individualized, equitable, and challenging opportunities in an environment that fosters growth and skill acquisition for each student. Based on a review of our district data, our Hispanic/Latino students, English learners, and students with disabilities are not experiencing the same level of MCAS outcomes, consistent school attendance and graduation rates as their peers. We also note that our students in Grades 3-5 in all subgroups except our Asian students, experience much lower growth in ELA. Additionally, our EL students experienced a decline in performance.

The Ashland Public Schools recognize our educator workforce does not mirror our student population, as just 3% of our educators are Asian or Hispanic and 0% being African American, compared to our students who are 16% Asian, 12% Hispanic/Latino, and 3% African-American. In the past three years, we have undertaken steps to ensure we are interviewing and hiring qualified diverse candidates by attending numerous job fairs designed to encourage minority candidates to apply, along with creating on-campus hiring opportunities at Framingham University, Bridgewater State University, and UMass Boston. As educator and leadership positions open, we are committed to hiring a diverse group of educators as we know by doing so will assist in closing achievement and opportunity gaps for these student subgroups and create more engagement with our families and community.

Additionally, at Ashland High School we offer our underprivileged students an opportunity to engage MassBay Community College through a grant program offered by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

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

In order to close achievement gaps the Ashland Public Schools over the past two years has invested heavily in changing our model of instruction for students with disabilities, EL, low-income, and economically disadvantaged and we have invested in free full-day kindergarten. Free full-day kindergarten is in its second year and we are seeing measurable gains and ensuring all students are receiving an equitable opportunity for success.

***Focus Area 1:***  Other district identified evidence-based program

* Social services to support students' social-emotional and physical health (C)
* Purchase of curriculum materials and equipment that are aligned with the statewide curriculum frameworks (F)

Culturally Sensitive Schools and Cultivating Well-Being of All

We will continue our work from the past two years of implementing Responsive Classroom in grades K-5. More professional development is required of our paraprofessionals and some staff, but we have seen great results with behavior and expectations. In addition, we have hired a full-time Director of Counseling and Social-Emotional Learning with a focus on meeting the social-emotional needs of all students.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** |  | **21000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **2** |  | **24000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |

***Focus Area 2:***  Other district identified evidence-based program

* Hiring school personnel that best support improved student performance (D)
* Increased or improved professional development (E)
* Purchase of curriculum materials and equipment that are aligned with the statewide curriculum frameworks (F)

Literacy Initiative K-5

The Ashland Public Schools is investing over $300,000 in the next 3-5 years to redesign and institute a new literacy model. We are currently providing professional development and purchasing appropriate reading level books for students in grades K-5, while implementing the Reading and Writer Workshop Model from Columbia University. Implementation will begin in School Year 2020-2021 along with continued professional development and purchase of materials.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **1** |  | **39000** | **Professional Development** |
| **2** |  | **65000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **3** |  | **30000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |

***Focus Area 3:***  Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners (D and/or E)

Co-Teaching Model:

Over the next two years we will move away from a model of using dually certified teachers in grades K-5 to a model of co- teaching in all inclusion classes. This transition will need to be supported by our budgeting process as this model is significantly more costly, but data show is more effective for students with disabilities.

|  |  |  |  |
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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** |  | **80000** | **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.*

* Student Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Student Growth: Mathematics mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* High School Completion: Four-year cohort graduation rate
* Additional Indicators: Chronic absenteeism (percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership)
* Custom District Metric 1: BAS Benchmark Assessment Reading Scores
* Custom District Metric 2: RTI - Response to Intervention Referrals
* Custom District Metric 3: Naviance Career and College Readiness System

**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 Ashland Public Schools in our Blueprint for Continuous Student Improvement has prioritized engaging all families as partners in learning. As our Improvement Priority reads: Engage Students, Families, and Community as Partners in Learning: We will continuously model a district environment based on collaboration, respect, and open lines of communication through partnerships with students, caregivers, community members, businesses, community-based organizations and educational institutions.

Actions that we will engage in include:

* Increasing parent participation in the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC)
* Create and implement a District back to school event with support from community partners, focusing on sub-groups
* Create and implement Cultural Nights at the Henry Warren Elementary School celebrating and learning about the varied cultures in our community

The administration will play an active role along with the School Committee in attending and seeking continuous feedback from our Special Education Advisory Council (ASHPAC) and school site councils.

Surveys were distributed to all students/families identified as Latino/Hispanic, not necessarily identified as only English Language Learners, focusing on how the District can better engage in home-school collaboration. The survey sought input on the following strategies:

* Implement home visiting programs to increase dialogue between administrators, teachers and families to best meet the needs of students
* Bi-monthly meetings between district leadership and PTO presidents or School Council chairs
* Development of Academic Parent-Teacher Teams to improve parent-teacher conferences
* Implement Academic House Parties (see a sample: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2eoWJFI4o1iTS1ndWUxNHRfSDQ/view
* Implement Parent Cafes (see examples: https://www.warehamps.org/Page/226
* In District parent classes to help students succeed
* Advisory Council to the Principal and Superintendent

**Certifications**

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

I certify that our district has engaged stakeholders in accordance with the SOA Ashland Public Schools engaged with the following groups: local foundation partners, special education advisory council, building based site councils, targeted Hispanic/Latino parents PreK-12 of Hispanic/Latino. Additionally, the plan was presented to the Ashland School Committee on March 11, 2020, where public comment was encouraged.

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

Date of Approval: 03/25/2020