Student Opportunity Act Plan

Bedford

# 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
* Low income/economically disadvantaged students
* African American/Black students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As noted in our District Improvement Plan, the Bedford Public Schools is committed to developing skillful, reflective, lifelong learners who think critically and creatively and who are informed, responsible, and productive global citizens. The school community provides a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment in which the unique intellectual, social, ethical, and emotional growth of each learner is realized. While our commitment is to all of our students, we recognize that not all student groups have experienced the same level of success to date. Based on our district data, our African American/Black students, Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged students are not experiencing the same level of MCAS outcomes as their peers. The areas of concern for these subgroups are in ELA and mathematics, and span over at least a three year time period, based on data from MCAS, and with specific focus on the K-5 level for these subgroups. While these subgroups show concerning data at the K-5 level, the trend of underperformance extends to the middle level in Bedford as well.

Bedford is committed, and has been committed for several years, to closing the achievement and opportunity gaps for these student subgroups. We are focused on including all staff members, and our parent community to improve achievement for all of our students, and specifically to the improved achievement of students in these subgroups.

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

Bedford Public schools has focused during the past few years on Literacy across the grades levels and content areas. Along with implementing improved strategies for teaching Literacy, we have also focused on using data to inform instruction, and to help inform decision making in relation to improving teaching and learning for students. We have also been supporting our ability to improve math coaching and curriculum alignment, by hiring a math curriculum specialist/coach for the 2019-2020 school year (this position will continue to be implemented). In order to continue and deepen our work in both the areas of literacy and mathematics we would like to focus on two important initiatives.

***Focus Area 1:*** Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades (E, F, and G)

Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades. An analysis of ELA MCAS grade 3 data from 2019, 2018, and 2017 reveal that three subgroups African American/Black students, Students with Disabilities, and Economically Disadvantaged students perform well below their peers. BPS has invested in full time Literacy Specialists at the first through fifth grade levels, and at a .5 level in Kindergarten, along with a K-5 Literacy Curriculum Specialist. We have also added to our expansion budget for FY 21 to increase the .5 Literacy Specialist in Kindergarten to 1.0 FTE. Along with a focus on trained literacy professionals working with students, we have also implemented Units of Study for Writing, which includes a clear scope and sequence for writing at the K-2 level, and we are currently piloting Units of Study for Reading at the second grade level, to investigate a more consistent approach to a reading scope and sequence. At the grades 3-5 level Units of Study for Reading has been fully implemented at each grade level, and we are seeking to implement Units of Study for Writing during the next few years. Fundations is used at the K-3 level in Bedford, and traditionally we have implemented DIBELS during the kindergarten year in the fall and during January.

The area that we are seeking to improve in regards to Literacy is in our ability to assess phonics skills, along with fluency and comprehension skills at the K-3 level specifically. Currently, we have assessments at the K-3 level which assess various components of reading, we are looking to improve these assessments, which would include specific screening tools that are easy and efficient to implement, while providing us meaningful data that we can use to inform our instruction and our tiered interventions. We have spent the 2019-2020 school year learning about and designing data plans for the 2020-2021 school year, based on the Data Wise process designed by the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Based on the needs of all of our students, but specifically the subgroups outlined here, we need to implement a more robust and informative assessment system, which would include DIBELS administration in grades 1-3, which include both the materials and professional development for a beginning of school year, middle of school year, and end of school year administration. While DIBELS will assess phonics skills, and fluency, we will implement Track My Progress to assess comprehension specifically, while this assessment tool will also assess reading subcategories, including vocabulary and foundational reading skills.

An overall program we seek to implement to improve phonic skill and application is Lexia. This online application, individualized for each student through levels, will address strategically students' phonics learning and acquisition. This product can be utilized at both school during reading workshop sessions, tiered intervention times and at home by students.

As part of our focus in Bedford to address the achievement gap within both the Davis and Lane Schools has been the addition of a K-5 Academic Achievement Program Administrator. This position has been utilized to work with administration at both schools to seek consistency for all elements of teaching and learning, and to also focus specifically on the data over several years for our most struggling subgroups. The gathering, analyzing of data along with the implementation of action plans that have been created by this position have led us to the important professional development for teachers, on best practices to utilize with diverse student needs. This position has been critical in the implementation of the Data Wise process at both Davis and Lane, and has orchestrated the data plan for both schools starting in September. This position is vital to the clear application of data driven decision making at both schools.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **DIBELS grades 1-3** | **8,000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **2** | **DIBELS PD** | **2,000** | **Professional Development** |
| **3** | **Track My Progress grades 1-5** | **4800** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **4** | **Lexia K-5** | **18,000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **5** | **K-5 Academic Achievement Program Administrator 1.0 FTE** | **112,186** | **Instructional Leadership** |

***Focus Area 2:***  Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum (E and F)

Supporting educators to implement high-quality aligned curriculum. Our African American/Black, Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged students not only show lower performance on MCAS ELA in grade 3 over a three year span, they also show lower performance than their peers in mathematics on the same assessment, during the same span of time.

BPS has invested in a math curriculum specialist/coach during the 2019-2020 school year and this has had a dramatic impact on coaching in mathematics throughout the grade levels, along with specific interventions that have been able to be utilized for students. The math curriculum specialist/coach ideally would continue with the coaching and professional development, and curriculum alignment work specifically at the K-2 level, and we would like to continue the impact this position has had on , coaching, alignment and organizing interventions by adding a grades 3-5 instructional math coach for the 2020-21 school year, and beyond. We have an aligned mathematics curriculum for grades K-2, and we are looking to pilot and gather data on a new math program for grades 3-5 during the 2020-21 school year, due to the fact that the current math program implemented at those grade levels is not aligned to the newest state standards. We are also looking to lessen ability grouping at the grade 5 level in math, and provide a more differentiated and data-driven approach to math instruction, to allow all students, especially those not traditionally able to access math at a higher level, an opportunity to grow mathematically before being ability grouped and allowing gaps to widen. An instructional math coach at the grades 3-5 level will help us continue to build on what we have put in place, and help us to focus on improving overall achievement, but specifically subgroup achievement.

While we have had a math interventionist at the grade 3-5 level, as a 0.2 FTE for several years, in Bedford, we haven't had a similar position at the K-2 level. With math coaches ideally at both Davis and Lane, and a math interventionist at Lane, adding a math interventionist at the Davis school would add the much needed math intervention at the K-2 level that is clearly needed based on the subgroup data in mathematics.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Instructional Math Coach 1.0 FTE (Lane School)** | **75000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **2** | **Math Interventionist (Davis) .2 FTE** | **18,334** | **Other Teaching Services** |

**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)
* Student Growth: Mathematics mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Custom District Metric 1: DIBELS scores
* Custom District Metric 2: Track My Progress Scores in reading and math

**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.*

Bedford Public Schools is committed to engaging families in students' learning, and we understand how vital it is to have parents included as part of our community. Parent involvement is central to successful outcomes for all students. With a specific focus on our subgroups, we need to focus on engaging our families of our African American/Black students, Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students.

While our schools have opportunities for parents to engage with each other and staff members, these opportunities do not always provide the engagement we seek for families, and the types of opportunities that we know parents want to have- specifically with the teachers that work with their students on a daily basis. We are looking to engage parents in understanding what specific teaching is happening within their students daily program, how their students are progressing and how understanding these aspects of their students' learning can provide them information on how they can support learning at home, and communicate/advocate for their students. During a traditional school year there are two opportunities for parent/teacher conferences, generally speaking in November and then again during the late winter.

We are seeking to add an additional parent/teacher conference during the early October timeframe where parents of students within the outlined subgroups will meet with a literacy specialists, math coach and classroom teacher to specifically share student data, gathered during September data sweeps with the parent, which will include a learning plan, outlined benchmarks that will indicate progress points throughout the year, and specific times during the school year to report progress on the plan to the parent.

This will provide a very structured and goal oriented conference for parents, and will also provide an additional conference for the parent, along with the two other conferences traditionally provided during the school year. This conference is encouraged to occur in the most beneficial venue for the parents, this can include at the parents home, via teleconferencing, or at school.

**Certifications**

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

Bedford Public Schools has engaged the faculty specifically by creating a Literacy Planning initiative. A Literacy Planning Committee was assembled in January, 29 educators throughout the district, representing all schools, and various departments comprised the committee. Eight subcommittees were formed to research and present findings based on everything from assessment, tiered interventions to resources and scheduling. The strengths and weaknesses from the subcommittees reports yielded five goals with specific action steps over a three year period. Many of the goals, and actions plans relate specifically to the focus on Literacy for early grades as outlined above.

Our SEPAC in Bedford has been meeting regularly this school year, to specifically discuss with faculty and administration in Bedford regarding the need for a continued focus on early Literacy programs, assessments and interventions, especially as it relates to our Students with Disabilities.

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

Date of Approval: 05/19/2020