Student Opportunity Act Plan

Blackstone-Millville

# 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
* Low income/economically disadvantaged students
* High Needs students (defined as any student who is economically disadvantaged, has a disability, or is an English learner/former English learner)
* African American/Black students
* Asian students
* Hispanic or Latinx students
* White students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

The work that BMRSD has set out to complete is best described as outlined below:

Our Vision:

The Blackstone-Millville School District embodies an appreciation of life-long learning; excellence in individual and educational programs; and shared accountability among students, staff, parents, and citizens of the community. Everyone works together in an environment founded upon trust, integrity, fairness, open communication, and the belief that all students can learn.

Our Purpose:

To develop happy, healthy, and proficient students who are prepared for college, career, and community.

Our Work in Action:

WHEN we focus on the what, the how, the whole child, and the community, THEN we will develop happy, healthy, and proficient students who are prepared for college, career, and make a positive impact on their lives and the lives of others.

Our District Core Values:

Community, Achievement, Respect and Civility

BMRSD has embarked on an ambitious three-year plan to improve the academic and non-academic trajectory for the 1,700 students we serve. This work began two years ago with the early development of the Blueprint for District Improvement, which is driven by the District's Improvement Strategy. The core tenets of BMRSD's Blueprint are anchored in "The What", "The How", "The Whole Child" and "The Community." These areas are defined in our Blueprint in the following capacity:

"The What" – Curriculum

We will develop and align curriculum, assessments, and educator professional development to the demands of the MA Curriculum Frameworks. The specific priorities are listed below:

* Develop a formal core curriculum and resource selection in the following areas: Science (2019), Literacy/ELA (2020), Secondary Social Studies grades 6-12 (2020), Mathematics (2021)
* Review and evaluate current specialized programs and resources - Special Education, Response to Intervention, Reading Intervention, and English Language Learners
* Investigate and pilot different structures, materials and assessments within each of the specialized areas
* Identify and implement a strengthened and aligned intervention program across and within each specialized area
* Establish a standardized approach for creating, documenting and archiving ALL curriculum
* Create a data-informed cycle to drive curriculum decisions including the use of authentic and common assessments, STAR data, and MCAS 2.0
* Develop central, building, and classroom level leadership in curriculum development, evaluation, and implementation

"The How" – Instruction

We will engage students by making learning purposeful and relevant, enhancing their academic self-concept, allowing students to show their learning in innovative and new ways, all while improving student personal growth. The specific priorities are listed below:

* Improve teaching and learning through the development and implementation of high-quality school improvement and staff development plans, school-based instructional leadership teams, and effective professional learning communities
* Strengthen core instruction by implementing a common set of evidence-based instructional practices
* Implement instructional supports to assist educators in strengthening their craft
* Develop an aligned instructional focus across all schools
* Develop central, building, and classroom level leadership in effective planning, teaching, and learning practices
* Research, create, and implement innovative opportunities for all students to demonstrate their learning

"The Whole Child"

We will engage the faculty and community in reducing/eliminating the non-academic barriers that prevent students from learning at their optimal level. The specific priorities are listed below:

* Establish and maintain positive relationships throughout the entire school community
* Identify and address academic and non-academic factors that hinder student learning and emotional development
* Embed a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework in the Pre-K-12 curriculum
* Develop a tiered framework to address the SEL and behavioral needs of all students

"The Community"

We will work side-by-side with the Blackstone and Millville communities to assist both towns in gaining a deeper understanding of today's learners and how to support their growth for future positive impact on our towns. With the following priorities:

* Establish productive two-way communication between schools, district, and home around our strengths, opportunities, and plans for improvement
* Educate families and the community about each schools' instructional focus and engage them in our efforts
* Build partnerships within our community and across our region to strengthen college and workforce readiness opportunities for our students
* Celebrate our students, staff, and communities

While the work and focus above clearly emphasizes addressing the needs of ALL students within the District, we will focus the narrative for this document specifically on our work around improving literacy.

As outlined in our Blueprint for District Improvement, we are setting the conditions to improve literacy outcomes for students PK-12. However, we are watching very closely the work happening at the elementary level to ensure that we are doing what is necessary to get all students on reading level by Grade 3. We are also working to narrow achievement gaps between our aggregate literacy performance, students with special needs, and English Language Learners.

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

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

As a District we have commissioned a K-12 literacy committee led by the former curriculum director of Memphis Public Schools that is currently a lead consultant with A-Net.

This work began last fall with an audit that was completed by Johns' Hopkins. With the support of DESE a study was conducted reviewing BMRSD's written, taught and learned curriculum, followed by classroom visits to see our teaching and learning in action.

Key findings emerged around the lack of a core literacy curriculum and resource consistency, not having the proper text complexity at all levels, and teachers spending an excessive amount of time finding materials for each lesson. The District took the feedback and immediately put next steps into action constructing a literacy committee and securing a field expert to assist us in leading the literacy work forward.

The District decided to stray from the more "typical" curriculum review/renewal process and decided to go straight to "the research." The committee began studying the elements of an effective literacy program at all levels, followed by looking particularly close at the student impact level of programs that contain each of the necessary elements. After an extensive review, many conversations, and site-visits each grade span selected their recommended core program.

At the elementary level, Wonders has been selected as our new core program K-5 and was formally recommended to the School Committee on March 3, 2020. A very deep look has been given to the program to ensure the necessary support is in place for students with special needs and English Language Learners.

The rollout of the program will begin in April of 2020 by training first the literacy committee members in order to build our capacity from inside out. This training will include classroom, special education and English Language Learner teachers, and instructional coaches. This will be followed by ongoing training and coaching through the summer and into the fall as we need to ensure fidelity and constancy of program implementation. The literacy committee will regroup in late fall/early winter of 2020 to reassess the level of support we still need.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **New Curriculum K-12 (this includes supports for students with special needs and English Language Learners)** | **200000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **2** | **Professional Development** | **10000** | **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 Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* 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).
* Custom District Metric 1: STAR ELA Achievement and Growth

**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.*

As outlined in our Blueprint, we are doing a significant amount of work to bring our two towns together around our schools. However, specifically, the literacy committee recognizes that the shift to a new core literacy program will be a change in the way we have conducted our work as a District in this area. This shift will require a "reset" in-terms of expectations and text complexity compared to the way it currently looks. The literacy committee is working on a community engagement strategy that will help families adjust their thinking around what we used to expect students to be able to read/do compared to what will now be expected of them. This is a very important part of the transition as we want our families to understand the "why" behind the shift in our work, believe that our students can reach a higher standard, and work collaboratively to do so.

**Certifications**

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

Principals reviewed with their school site councils and we discussed publicly at School Committee before taking the vote. This has also been a large part of our budget conversations. Since the state did not give BMRSD any additional funds for this project we had to work closely with the towns to ensure they understand why we have to take money from our excess and deficiency account to pay for the work outlined in the SOA plan.

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

Date of Approval: 03/12/2020