Student Opportunity Act Plan

Chelmsford

# 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

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As stated in our district strategic plan, Chelmsford Public Schools (CPS) is committed to ensuring all of our students achieve success in school and after graduation. Our mission statement highlights our PRIDE core values of Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Empathy, so we can ensure that our students are well-rounded, productive global citizens as students and as postgraduates.

Currently CPS is making significant progress towards meeting targets for the entire district with a cumulative criterion- referenced target percentage of 66% on the state MCAS test. This is a 12% increase from 2018. However, we recognize that not all student groups have experienced the same level of success to date. Based on a review of our district data, our students with disabilities (SWD) and economically disadvantage (ED) students are not experiencing the same level of outcomes as their peers on MCAS. Although the achievement scores compared to state-set targets in each of these subgroups is not significantly high, it still stands out to us that particular attention should be placed on these groups to identify the gaps in learning for these students compared to their peers. It is important to note that students in these two subgroups are showing typical growth in English, mathematics, and science with either a year's or close to a year's growth in the subjects.

Additionally, CPS is experiencing an increase in the level of support needed for students in the district with social and emotional issues. Students are present in crisis and many have a significant history of trauma. These issues have required an increase in staff needed to support students of trauma. The connection of social/emotional health and academic achievement and growth is clear and it is unreasonable to expect achievement and growth to increase until the well-being of the student is addressed.

CPS is committing to providing academic programming and support to close achievement and opportunity gaps for these student subgroups and recognize that this important work will take the efforts of staff, families, and the support of our community.

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

CPS is committed to identifying gaps in achievement prior to state standardized testing results in order to support students learning throughout the year. CPS has been engaged in a variety of work-related to staffing, professional development, programming, and instruction and assessment that is aligned with our SDI and intended to address many of the concerns outlined above. Below are four major focus areas that we intend to continue working on in the upcoming school years:

## Focus Area 1: Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs (C and/or D)

STAFFING:

In order to support SWD and ED students, the district has made a commitment to increase staffing in several areas to support both the academic and social/emotional needs of students, continues with our 1:1 computer imitative to allow for additional access to programming, and to maintain a more desirable class size at the elementary level to provide support for students. The following staffing additions are as follows:

1. The FY2021 budget adds a 1.0 Instructional Technology Specialist position and 2.0 Technology Assistant positions to provide direct support services to students, and support and professional development to staff, as we enter year 2 of the 1:1 technology initiative to provide all incoming 5th-grade students at McCarthy and Parker Middle Schools and 9th-grade students at Chelmsford High School with a district-provided computer (Chromebook) for use at home and in school. At the start of the 2020/21 school year, over 1,500 students and staff will have district-issued devices under this initiative.

2. The FY2021 budget adds a 1.0 Elementary School Teacher (4th Grade) at the Center Elementary School to reduce current/projected class size. The FY2021 budget also includes funding to support two (2) additional Kindergarten Teacher positions at the elementary school level to maintain desired class size, if after the registration process it is determined additional classes/sections beyond the current Kindergarten grade level configuration (4 classrooms per school) are necessary.

3. FY2021 budget adds 3.0 Special Education Teacher positions at the elementary level (Byam, Center and Harrington Elementary Schools) to provide direct instruction, services, and support to students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) reducing current student:staff ratios for special education students that are not within specialized (i.e. ASD, LifeSkills, STRIVE) programs.

4. The FY2021 budget adds a 1.0 Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) position and a 1.0 Special Education Teacher position at the McCarthy Middle School to establish a middle school level therapeutic program (STRIVE) to provide a continuum of programming at the middle school level from the elementary school level therapeutic program (STRIVE) located at the South Row Elementary School.

5. The FY2021 budget adds a 1.0 Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) position at the elementary school level (Center and Harrington Elementary Schools) to assist staff in developing strategies to support all learners to develop a proactive approach to social-emotional learning (SEL) and behavioral interventions.

6. The FY2021 budget adds a 1.0 School Psychologist position to support students at the McCarthy and Parker Middle Schools. The addition of a School Psychologist position will allow for clinical support of the middle school level therapeutic program (STRIVE) to be located at McCarthy Middle School in addition to alleviating the testing caseloads at the middle school level.

7. The FY2021 budget includes funding to support a tutoring support service model at the elementary and middle school levels to augment grant funding that supports interventionist positions providing small group, Tier II, instruction to students identified in need of targeted academic interventions and academic supports.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Instructional Technology Specialist and Teacher** | **135771** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **2** | **Additional Classroom Teachers** | **175923** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **3** | **Special Education Teachers** | **175923** | **Pupil Services** |
| **4** | **BCBA/Special Education Teacher** | **117282** | **Pupil Services** |
| **5** | **BCBA** | **58641** | **Pupil Services** |
| **6** | **School Psychologist** | **73317** | **Guidance and Psychological** |

Focus Area 2: Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades (E, F, and G)

After a review of our current curriculum programming, it became apparent that students had gaps in their foundational skills, specifically phonics. Additionally, the districts reading program has become obsolete and we are unable to support the materials needed, as the publishing company no longer prints the materials. The current reading program was adopted in 2011 with the publication of the first iteration of the MA Curriculum Standards. Since then, the standards and the standardize testing has change, thus our curriculum materials need to be updated to reflect these changes. The district has launched a pilot of the phonics program Fundations to address the phonics gaps in students. Two reading programs are being piloted currently. One of the two reading programs will be adopted for the 2020-2021 school year, in order to address all new standards. The district will adopt Fundations for K-2 for the 2020-2021 school year and then students and grade 3 students in the 2021-2022 school year. All programs address the standard and skill gaps that we are seeing on both our internal benchmarks and state standards in the subject of English language Arts.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Elementary Reading Program** | **390000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |

***Focus Area 3:*** Hiring school personnel that best support improved student performance

Our District is continuing with our MTSS initiative. In the previous strategic plan, a framework was organized that included building foundational support and a plan. This included the use of separate outside consultants for both the elementary and secondary and the formation of a district MTSS team to oversee the entire plan and school level MTSS teams to implement changes in practice, create consultancy protocols to review concerns, and provide professional development. The district also provided the final resources necessary to create stipend facilitator position for teachers at each of the schools to implement Tier I, II, and III practices. These steps are necessary to implement and assess the fidelity of programming for each level.

As we create our newest strategic plan we plan to continues expand the MTSS initiative and have built a budget that continues to support the foundational plan and the necessary resources. Our district goal is to create a sustainable structure that promotes a positive school culture that keeps students safe, school accessible, and makes learning possible. The strategies from the MTSS initiative will be implemented within instructional practices and to strengthen student-teacher relationships. In addition, the continuation and expansion of this initiative will drive the collaborations with families and community partners.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **MTSS Teacher Stipends** | **42500** | **Other Teaching Services** |
| **2** | **MTSS Consultants** | **55000** | **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 Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Student Growth: Mathematics mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Custom District Metric 1: iReady
* Custom District Metric 2: IXL
* Custom District Metric 3: Fountas and Pinnell BAS
* Custom District Metric 4: Department Academic Internal Assessments
* Custom District Metric 5: Tiered Fidelity Assessment (TFI)
* Custom District Metric 6: School Assessment Survey (SAS)

**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 Chelmsford Public Schools has a variety of ways for all families to engage with the district about their children and to learn about the initiatives for our district. As part of the strategic planning, feedback was elicited from parents via a survey, and open session nights were parents could come meet and engage with the school committee, the superintendent, other school leaders in the district. The school committee also hosts several additional open session nights about important topics of interest for community members to learn information about have a venue to as questions and give feedback to the committee and school leaders. Another way parents are invited to engage is through the superintendents community coffee sessions that are held bi-monthly throughout the school year so that parents can informally stop in to ask questions or listen about any topic they would like to share about our schools.

To specifically address the sub-groups identified as our focus, Chelmsford as partnered with our active Special Education Advisory Council (SEPAC) who collaborates with the district to provide support for all parents by delivering programming on important and relevant topics, surveying parents for feedback to give input on school initiatives and concerns, present recommendations, and to meet with various school leaders to gain understanding around the work that is done at the schools. The goal is the working group so parents have a venue where they can learn about special education and its impact on their child(ren), a place for support on how to navigate their child(ren)'s educational needs, and to have a place of support where needed.

Another way our district engages families of one of our sub-group focus areas is through our Title I programming. As a Title I school district, Chelmsford host a variety of parent nights that invite parents in to learn about our interventionist programming, the different instructional pedagogy and tools that their child(ren) use daily, strategies to help support their child(ren) at home, and for general questions to school administrators to gather insight about our schools and their child(ren)'s learning.

**Certifications**

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

Our district benefits greatly from a community that values and supports the education. Without organizations such as the PTO, SEPAC, school councils, and school committee, as well as the support from our town manager, selectman, finance committee and the support of our community members, we would not be able to provide the same quality programs and/or materials that we do now. The District's SOA plan, has been developed based on feedback provided by many of these organizations in various ways including parent/guardian and teacher surveys from the superintendent, feedback from student meetings, and the open sessions with the school committee, the results of which have been used to inform this Student Opportunity Plan.

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

Date of Approval: 04/20/2020