***Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School***

**Student Opportunity Act Plan: SY 2021-2023**

# → Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups

**Which student groups will require focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life?**

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School has a three-part mission: 1. provide a world class education for all students, preparing them for long term academic success and responsible civic engagement, 2. serve as a driver of human and social capital development, preparing outstanding new teachers to drive excellent student outcomes throughout Boston, and 3. serve as a partner in catalyzing improvement of all schools in the Dudley area. While we are proud of the foundation we have built and the progress our students are making, we are acutely aware of the need to accelerate and sustain learning for all students.

In particular, in the state performance data, we saw that High-Needs and Latinx students’ performance declined on the ELA MCAS, and Latinx students’ performance also declined on the math MCAS. We also saw that our chronic absenteeism numbers increased. In our internal formative assessment data, we saw a gap between English learners and non-English learners in Reading and math. While the overall numbers are smaller, we saw similar trends with our students with IEPs.

# → Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps

**What evidence-based programs will your charter school adopt, deepen, or continue to best support the closure of achievement and opportunity gaps? What resources will be allocated to these programs?**

1. **Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades**. DSNCS seeks to provide all students with a strong foundation in literacy. To that end, K1-2nd grade teachers use a combination of research-based approaches, technology tools and curricula, including: Orton Gillingham, Fundations, Lexia,

Imagine language and learning, and Fountas & Pinnell assessments and materials. In addition, we employ a full-time literacy coach to support teacher development and the instructional core in literacy, a special education and ESL specialist to collaborate with our classroom teachers, and a paraprofessional in each K1 and K2 class. Many of the interventions we employ are aimed at students with IEPs and English learners, as well as our many high-needs students.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| Literacy Coach | $36,864 | Instructional Leadership |
| Curriculum materials | $11,000 | Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology |
| Software | $8,000 | Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Research-based early literacy programs in pre- kindergarten and early elementary grades |
| **SOA program categories:** | | E) Increased or improved professional development; F) Purchase of curriculum materials and equipment that are aligned with the statewide curriculum frameworks;  G) Expanded early education and pre-kindergarten programming within the district in consultation or in |

1. **Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum.** DSNCS places a large emphasis on the adoption and implementation of high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum. The school employs two full-time science/STEM specialists, in addition to the regular education, special education and ESL teachers. DSNCS employs three full-time instructional coaches: one in literacy, one in math and one who is in charge of adult learning overall. These three positions are tasked with carrying out the necessary planning, professional development, coaching, assessment and reflection to ensure successful implementation of these curricula.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| Instructional Coaches (3) | $205,575 | Instructional Leadership |
| Curriculum materials | $22,000 | Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum |
| **SOA program categories:** | | E) Increased or improved professional development; F) Purchase of curriculum materials and equipment that are aligned with the statewide curriculum frameworks. |

1. **Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs.** DSNCS added a half-time special educator and a full-tome social worker to support student needs. The special educator has enabled us to provide key additional services to students with the most needs. Our social worker leads our Student Support Team, participates in grade-level team meetings to discuss individual students, and brokers relationships with various community-based providers to ensure students’ access to needed services and supports.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| Special educator (.5 FTE) | $46,562 | Classroom & Specialist Teachers |
| Social worker | $50,000 | Guidance and Psychological |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs |
| **SOA program categories:** | | C) Social services to support students’ social-emotional and physical health; D) Hiring school personnel that best support improved student performance |

1. **Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners**. For a fairly small school of fewer than 300 students, DSNCS employs a robust special education and ESL staff, consisting of 2.7 FTEs in ESL and 2.8 FTEs in special education, plus 5 inclusion teachers leading inclusion classrooms. We have prioritized the hiring of a strong special populations team as a core strategy in reducing achievement gaps with both students with IEPs and English learners.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| Special educators (2.8 FTE) | $250,079 | Classroom & Specialist Teachers |
| ESL teachers (2.7 FTE) | $274,786 | Classroom & Specialist Teachers |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners |
| **SOA program categories:** | | D) Hiring school personnel that best support improved student performance; E) Increased or improved |

1. **Acceleration Academies and/or summer learning to support skill development and accelerate advanced learners**. In order to address achievement gaps, accelerate learning, and support students’ engagement with STEM, DSNCS runs both Spring and Summer vacation academies. The April academy will support 4th and 5th graders to engage in a variety of STEM-related activities, which we expect will support achievement in both math and science. In the summer, we run an intensive reading academy for struggling readers featuring some of our most effective teachers working with small groups of targeted students. We have seen a positive impact from this work in past years and are enthusiastic about continuing to implement it in years to come.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| April STEM Academy staffing | $6,000 | Classroom & Specialist Teachers |
| Summer literacy academy | $30,000 | Classroom & Specialist Teachers |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Acceleration Academies and/or summer learning to support skill development and accelerate advanced |
| **SOA program categories:** | | A) Expanded learning time in the form of a longer school day or year; E) Increased or improved professional |

1. **Diversifying the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention**. One component of DSNCS’ three-part mission is to be a driver of human capital development, preparing outstanding new teachers to drive excellent student outcomes throughout Boston as a Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) Teaching Academy. Every year, BTR prepares a cohort of 10 teachers at the school, who commit to teach in the Boston Public Schools after their preparation year. As part of its operating commitment, BTR ensures that at least half of its cohort every year are people of color. Many BTR graduates stay and teach at DSNCS, or are hired back to the school later on. In addition, DSNCS employs and retains many talented teachers of color who serve as mentor teacher to BTR pre-service teachers.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| BTR Coaches (3) | $205,575 | Instructional Leadership |
| Stipends for mentor teachers | $30,000 | Classroom & Specialist Teachers |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | **Diversifying the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention** |
| **SOA program categories:** | | D) Hiring school personnel that best support improved student performance; H) Diversifying the educator and administrator workforce |

1. **Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers** (B and D). As a core student engagement and enrichment strategy, DSNCS has added a full-time STEAM teacher and a full-time drama teacher (essentially doubling the specialist staff) to the teaching staff – thus ensuring that all students have additional access to these key fields. In addition, DSNCS ensures that every classroom teacher has two 90-minute blocks per week for co-planning and meeting with grade-level teams and academic departments, and a two-hour all-staff professional development block. These meeting times, which are led by teacher leaders and instructional coaches, are critical to our progress monitoring efforts.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| Specialist teachers (2) | $205,575 | Instructional Leadership |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers. |
| **SOA program categories:** | | B) Increased opportunity for common planning time for teachers; D) Hiring school personnel that best support improved student performance |

1. **Community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services** (C). DSNCS has a full-time family and community engagement director who is responsible for leading our collaborations with local community organizations, including the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Project Hope and Children’s’ Services of Roxbury. With these organizations, we have built the Nubian Neighborhood Network, which supports collaboration around the provision of enrichment and services to DSNCS families, with special attention to families experiencing homelessness, food insecurity and unemployment. This work has been particularly critical during the last year of the pandemic, but is a part of the long-term school strategy.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| Director of Family and Community Engagement | $96,705 | Guidance and Psychological |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services |
| **SOA program categories:** | | C) Social services to support students’ social-emotional an physical health |

# → Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets

**What metrics will your charter school use to monitor success in reducing disparities in achievement among student subgroups? Select from the list of Department metrics or provide your own.**

**Department-outcome metrics:**

1. **English language arts (ELA) achievement for the sub-groups identified above**
2. **ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP) for the sub-groups identified above**
3. **Mathematics achievement for the sub-groups identified above**
4. **Mathematics mean SGP for the sub-groups identified above**
5. **Chronic absenteeism (percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership)**

**Alignment with evidence-based programs**

**Metric A. English language arts (ELA) achievement for the sub-groups identified above.**

*Aligned with*

* 1. Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades. 2.Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum

1. Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners
2. Acceleration Academies and/or summer learning to support skill development and accelerate advanced learners
3. Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers
4. Community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services

# Metric B. ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP) for the sub-groups identified above

*Aligned with*

1. Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades. 2.Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum

1. Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners
2. Acceleration Academies and/or summer learning to support skill development and accelerate advanced learners
3. Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers
4. Community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services

# Metric C. Mathematics achievement for the sub-groups identified above

*Aligned with*

2.Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum

1. Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners
2. Acceleration Academies and/or summer learning to support skill development and accelerate advanced learners
3. Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers
4. Community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services

# Metric D. Mathematics mean SGP for the sub-groups identified above

*Aligned with*

2.Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum

1. Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners
2. Acceleration Academies and/or summer learning to support skill development and accelerate advanced learners
3. Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers
4. Community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services

# Metric E. Chronic absenteeism (percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership)

*Aligned with*

1. Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners
2. Acceleration Academies and/or summer learning to support skill development and accelerate advanced learners
3. Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers
4. Community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services.

# → Commitment 4: Engaging All Families

**How will your charter school ensure that all families, particularly those representing the student subgroups most in need of support, have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the charter school regarding their students’ needs?**

* + *[Use the prompts to answer the questions above. Delete the prompts below before submission]*
  + Describe your charter school’s ongoing plan for engaging families, including targeted strategies for families of student groups identified for support (e.g. low- income students, English learners, and students with disabilities).
  + Explain how your charter school will measure increases in family engagement based on theseefforts.

As mentioned above, DSNCS has a full-time Director of Family and Community Engagement, who works closely to support communication between school staff and families, runs monthly family leadership council forums which include the school principal. All classroom teachers are expected to be in contact with their students' families on a weekly basis, and the school tracks family contact closely. The special populations teachers are also in touch with the families of students with IEPs and English learners, ensuring closer contact with these two key sub-groups. The school's Board of Directors recently added two parents as Board members, in addition to two Board members whose own children have moved on from the school - ensuring strong family voice at the decision-making level. Finally, the school surveys parents twice per year to gain feedback for improvement.

The school measures increases in family engagement by tracking % of families who report they are informed about important school initiatives, events and expectations, % of families who report having voice in school decision-making, and % of families who report that their students are making significant academic progress.

# Certifications:

**☒ By checking here, I certify that the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter has engaged stakeholders in our community in accordance with the Student Opportunity Act. Our stakeholder engagement process including the following components:**

DSNCS has worked with the Family Leadership Council and the DSNCS Board of Trustees (with two parent reps) on the development and monitoring of our improvement plans. The school has received feedback from staff members, as well as community partners.

# ☒ By checking here, I certify that the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School Board of Trustees voted on our Student Opportunity Act Plan.

# The DSNCS Board met on March 31, 2021 to vote on the school's Student Opportunity Act Plan. The Board approved the plan unanimously.