Student Opportunity Act Plan

Gardner

# 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.*

* English learners and former English learners
* Students with disabilities
* Low income/economically disadvantaged students
* African American/Black students
* Hispanic or Latinx students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

After a collaborative, working meeting with over fifty stakeholders, we identified the largest academic and social/emotional gaps for all subgroups in four different areas:

* Suspensions/SSDR data and Office Discipline Referrals
* MCAS Data (ELA and math)
* Advanced Courses at the high school level
* Graduation and Drop-out Rate

Subgroups were prioritized in our plan according to the greatest to least disparities in academic and social/emotional outcomes over the last three academic years.

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

Unfortunately, as of the House 1 budget, we are receiving a smaller increase in funding than we have under the previous formula. With this budget, we have a $200,000 level services funding gap. Our SOA plan has prioritized the most important district needs to address disparate outcomes from the largest disparities to the smallest disparaties for our subgroups. This plan will only be realized if we receive more funding from the state. We are one of the few districts that has been tragically, greatly, and negatively affected by the lack of funding for the low-income population we serve. We are doing our best to make these programs a reality, while we, once again, struggle financially to meet the needs of our most marginalized populations.

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

We will increase the supports for students with disabilities to better meet their social/emotional and academic needs at the early elementary level. Although targeted supports were identified for students with special needs, these positions would support the needs of all of our identified subgroups. Our goal is to have building-based social/emotional support services and increase inclusive practices and RTI programming in the earliest grades.

Additionally, to implement this plan with fidelity, we would need to increase collaborative time for staff to improve data driven instruction and intervention practices. This will require additional unified arts staff to allow daily common planning time for core teachers (DESE evidence-based strategy #12).

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Early Elementary Psychologist** | **70000** | **Guidance and Psychological** |
| **2** | **(2) K-1 Special Ed. Inclusion Teacher** | **130000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **3** | **Adjustment Counselor-Secondary Level** | **55000** | **Guidance and Psychological** |
| **4** | **(6) First Grade Instructional Tutors** | **180000** | **Other Teaching Services** |
| **5** | **English Learner Teacher** | **65000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **6** | **Unified Arts Teacher** | **55000** | **Other Teaching Services** |

***Focus Area 2:*** Early College programs focused primarily on students under-represented in higher education (I)

With local funds, we have created a dual enrollment program for 25 juniors and 25 seniors to take 6 to 8 college classes at the Mount Wachusett Community College campus. Local funds and grants have fully funded this program and its required transportation. However, we would like to increase the number of students participating from our priority subgroups. This will require funding of more than one cohort of juniors and more than one cohort of seniors.

Additionally, we plan to have students earn a vocational certificate and/or associates degree upon graduation. This requires an influx of funding for additional college sections.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **20 college sections** | **140000** | **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.*

* Additional Indicators: Chronic absenteeism (percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership)
* Additional Indicators: Percentage of 11th and 12th graders completing at least one DESE-identified advanced coursework
* Post-secondary Success: Enrolled in college during the first year after high school
* Post-secondary Success: Persisted in college into the second year
* Custom District Metric 1: DIBELS and Wonders for Early Literacy assessments
* Custom District Metric 2: PBIS/SWIS Office Referral Data

**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.*

Streamline calendars to increase flexibility of events and meetings for families, including availability in multiple languages. Seek voice of families through more parent and family outreach/conferences and more face-to-face school/community sessions.

More effectively use social media to connect with families.

Provide opportunities for focus group forums (by subgroup; tailored to stakeholder needs). Provide more adult education opportunities.

Provide textbooks and curriculum materials in the student's native language

Teacher support & communication for increased knowledge and sense of connectedness

**Certifications**

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

On Monday, March 2, 2020, over 50 stakeholders of the Gardner community attended a working group meeting to provide insight into the development of a 3-year strategic plan for Student Opportunity Act funding. The working group broke out into smaller focus groups to examine student academic and social emotional/discipline data to determine priorities for the district moving forward. Utilizing a list of Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) evidence-based strategies, the working group prioritized current and future initiatives.

Community outreach included: OneCall, Website, Facebook, and personally reaching out to engage stakeholders. Attendance included: a diverse range of parents representing all schools and subgroups; the SEPAC chair; city and state representatives; current and former teachers and paraprofessionals; CHNA9 9 (an equity advocacy group); school committee members; and interested community members.

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

Date of Approval: 03/09/2020