Student Opportunity Act Plan

Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical

# 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
* High Needs students (defined as any student who is economically disadvantaged, has a disability, or is an English learner/former English learner)
* Asian students
* Course Failures
* Student Discipline

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

The Greater Lowell Technical High School (GLTHS) District's student population reflects the city's urban gateway status in the Commonwealth. At present, the School District's population (total 2,271) breakdown is as follows: 4.2% African American, 16.2% Asian, 35.2% Hispanic, 2.7% Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic and 41.4% White. Our selected populations include 25% students with a first language not English, 9% English Learner, 18.6% Students with Disabilities, 62% High Needs and 44.8% Low Income. With such a diverse student population and a wide range of student needs, it is important to monitor and ensure progress for all subgroups.

MCAS Achievement and Growth

In reviewing progress by subgroups on core MCAS achievement and growth metrics over the past year, the 2019 performance of the tenth-grade students at the Greater Lowell Regional Vocational School District is as follows:

Students with Disabilities

For ELA students with disabilities performed as follows: 0% exceeding expectations, 8% meeting expectations, 63% partially meeting expectations and 28% not meeting expectations.

For Math students with disabilities performed as follows: 1% exceeding expectations, 7% meeting expectations, 56% partially meeting expectations and 36% not meeting expectations.

Asian Subgroup

For ELA students in the Asian subgroup performed as follows: 3% exceeding expectations, 31% meeting expectations, 57% partially meeting expectations and 9% not meeting expectations.

For Math students in the Asian subgroup performed as follows: 7% exceeding expectations, 28% meeting expectations, 55% partially meeting expectations and 10% not meeting expectations. When compared to the state-wide performance of students in this particular subgroup, students in the Asian subgroup are performing well below the state average of students in this subgroup.

Low-Income

For ELA students in the economically disadvantaged subgroup performed as follows: 2% exceeding expectations, 24% meeting expectations, 61% partially meeting expectations and 13% not meeting expectations.

For Math students in the economically disadvantaged subgroup performed as follows: 1% exceeding expectations, 25% meeting expectations, 61% partially meeting expectations and 12% not meeting expectations.

English Learner

For ELA, English Learner and Former English Learner performed as follows: 0% exceeding expectations, 17% meeting expectations, 67% partially meeting expectations and 16% not meeting expectations.

For Math, English Learner and Former English Learner performed as follows: 1% exceeding expectations, 22% meeting expectations, 61% partially meeting expectations and 16% not meeting expectations.

High Need

For ELA, students in the high need’s subgroup performed as follows: 1% exceeding expectations, 22% meeting expectations, 63% partially meeting expectations and 13% not meeting expectations.

For Math, students in the high need’s subgroup performed as follows: 2% exceeding expectations, 24% meeting expectations.

Course Failures

Another factor that helps to determine the GLTHS's level of need is course failures. Based upon data analysis of course failures term 2, approximately 25% of students on IEP plans were failing at least one academic course. An analysis of whole school data did not show the issue to be as widespread for the school as a whole when compared to this as an issue for the students with disabilities subgroup. The high number of failures highlights the need for support goes beyond addressing MCAS scores which impacts content areas, grade levels, and graduation rates.

Student Discipline

Furthermore, GLTHS has noticed an increasing trend of reported disciplinary incidents. The combination of providing more social-emotional support for students and targeted in-classroom professional development for teachers to continue to learn about and implement research-based social-emotional learning practices to enhance skill building in both the classroom and shop. This will allow the School District to adopt a more proactive approach to behavior management and, in turn, impact the referrals or incidents to the Main Office. Efforts to shift toward adopting practices which utilize restorative justice techniques are also being explored. The School District does use a three-hour detention as an alternative to in-house suspension. During this time, targeted instruction occurs from a school psychologist about various topics. The purchase of a social emotional curriculum will help to support these efforts. Additionally, students with substance abuse issues are required to participate in a drug counseling group. The Main Office has noted an increase in the number of drug offenses, specifically marijuana and vaping.

In summary, GLTHS has recognized the high level of need, especially with our Asian subgroup, our English Learner subgroup, and our Students with Disabilities subgroup. With the shift to a new standards-based state assessment, the School District is committed to closing the achievement gap for our students by providing opportunities for targeted support.

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

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

The GLTHS FY 21 Budget includes funding for additional personnel to meet the diverse needs within our student population and best support improved student performance. The additional personnel will:

* support holistic student needs,
* increase inclusion/co-teaching sections in order to lower the classroom ratios for students with disabilities and increase student support,
* create balanced level teams for English Language Learners in order to strengthen their academic literacy and acquisition of the English language, and
* improve the continuum of practices and interventions to support social-emotional learning and resilience for all students.
* employ data tracking tools to identify students' social emotional well-being, focus the interventions and provide progress monitoring adjusting interventions as needed
* ensure equity of opportunity and learning, and
* strengthen the ability to embed literacy instructional strategies for all students.

GLTHS wishes to create a continuum of curricula and assessments for all academic and technical programs that are vertically and horizontally aligned to the standards. The Director of Curriculum Instruction and Assessment works with academic and technical cluster-chairs and grade level curriculum teams on a regular basis to evaluate and revise curriculum to ensure that it is rigorous relevant and aligned to the standards. In addition, formative and summative assessment data is used to inform instructional practices in all classrooms and shops. GLTHS is also committed to providing instructional coaching and professional development opportunities to improve instructional practices in addressing student engagement, differentiated instruction, social-emotional learning, literacy, and higher-order thinking skills to provide equitable access and academic and technical growth for all students, while closing achievement gaps for our students with disabilities, English Learners, Asian, low income and high needs subgroups. In conjunction with providing instructional coaching and professional development opportunities, GLTHS is dedicated to purchasing curricular materials that support our students' academic and social- emotional success especially in our students with disabilities, English Learners, Asian, low income and high needs subgroups.

## Focus Area 2: Expanded access to career-technical education, including "After Dark" district-vocational partnerships and innovation pathways reflecting local labor market priorities (I)

The Greater Lowell High School district, in partnership with Lowell Public Schools has implemented through grant funds an After Dark program for a cohort of 20 eleventh grade Lowell High School students in Information Technology and a cohort of 12 eleventh grade students in Advanced Manufacturing this school year; 2020-2021 and will expand by adding two additional programs (Auto Technology and HVAC) for the 2021-2022 school year. With this expansion, it will be necessary to hire two After-Dark paraprofessionals to specifically support students with high needs, students with disabilities and/or those students who are English Language learners with achieving proficiency on expected technical competencies. The salaries for these two positions ($42,000) to be sustained through SOA funding.

## Focus Area 3: Community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services (C)

In order to truly address the entire achievement gap, the Greater Lowell Regional Vocational School District is committed to nurturing the needs of the whole child. As such, the School District desires to create an environment to meet the academic, vocational, and socio-emotional needs of all students so that they can make effective progress.

The RISE (Resilience in Student Effort) Program, in partnership with Bridge for Resilient Youthin Transition (BRYT) created by the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health, helps students and their families with the process of re-entry and reintegration into the school community after an extended absence due to a social-emotional or medical hospitalization by supporting their academic, social, and emotional well-being. The GLTHS District has made significant strides in strengthening the home-school connection as evidenced by the development and implementation of the RISE (Resilience in Student Effort) program. The School District will continue to build community partnerships, as well as wrap around services to support the students in this program with the following: Lowell Community Health Center, NFI Family Resource Center, Trauma & Family Integration (TFI), Vinfen, and Wayside Youth Family Network, as well as Lahey Behavioral Health.

Lowell Community Sexual Reproductive Mobile Health Clinic

In order to improve access to reproductive health care for our students, Greater Lowell Technical High School has partnered with Lowell Community Health Center (LCHC) to offer targeted reproductive health services to students on site. This is an opportunity for students to obtain information and counseling on health care questions or concerns while at school. These services will include pregnancy and sexually transmitted Disease (STD) testing, as well as reproductive health counseling.

Gryphon Pantry/Merrimack Valley Food Bank

GLTHS, in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Food Bank, has established a Food Pantry to service students and families of our community.

Cooperative Education Program in partnership with over 80 local businesses provides students with an opportunity to expand their educational knowledge through an experience that directlyrelates to their career goals. Currently, 34% of our seniorsparticipate in the Cooperative Education Program; by the end of next year, we would like to increase that percentage to 50%. With an increase in enrollment, the school will require future additional funding in order sustain the program's growth.

Catie's Closet

GLTHS works in partnership with Catie's Closet to provide students in need access to an in-school resource of clothing, toiletries and basic necessities. Catie's Closet aims to improve school attendance by ensuring access to these resources for students living in poverty.

Advisory Boards made up of members from local businesses and educational institutions to support our twenty-three (23) technical programs by providing them with feedback regarding safety, equipment and industry trends in order to keep our programs current and our students with the skills necessary to be successful in the workforce.

Summer Transition Program

The Summer Transition Program has been an annual program that has serviced up to 100 students for 5 years. This program has emphasized academic enrichment with an emphasis on service learning. Our service-learning community partners have been Merrimack Valley Food Bank, Lowell National Park, and Mill City Grows, among other public and private partners.

Dual Enrollment. GLTHS currently offers two dual enrollment courses, 10th grade General Chemistry I Hybrid With Lab with Quincy College and 12th grade Composition I with Middlesex Community College. Twelfth grade Composition I with Middlesex Community College has been offered annually for 7 years with an average of 20 students and 10th grade General Chemistry I Hybrid With Lab with Quincy College has been offered for 3 years with an average of 75 students per year.

Mass Rehab/Mass Hire Students with disabilities who meet the criteria, have support through Mass Rehab and Mass Hire for postsecondary transition 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)
* High School Completion: Four-year cohort graduation rate
* 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: Course Failure Rates
* Custom District Metric 2: Social Emotional Metrics
* Custom District Metric 3: Parent/Guardian Survey
* Custom District Metric 4: Discipline Baseline 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.*

Greater Lowell Technical High School (GLTHS) is committed to increasing parent engagement.

GLTHS developed an EL Parent Advisory Council in the 2018-2019 school year. This council meets quarterly with the EL Director, Family/Parent liaisons, and an EL teacher to discuss EL programming. The purpose of this council is to provide parents/guardians with an opportunity to offer input and feedback. The Parent/Family liaisons in Khmer and Portuguese and Spanish provide additional capacity for outreach purposes as well as a sense of community for our EL students. The District consistently translates all communication into Khmer, Spanish and Portuguese as well as any other language necessary. In addition, the District expanded its parent outreach by holding focused community events for the EL Parent population such as Game Night and Resume Writing Night.

GLTHS has an Attendance Officer who makes home visits regularly with a translator as needed. The purpose for this position is to ensure the safety of all of our students.

GLTHS has an established School Council composed of parents/ guardians, teachers, and community members. The School Council meets to provide input in the development of the school improvement plan as well as input in the budget process. The Assistant Superintendent-Principal uses the feedback from the council to improve the school

GLTHS has a Special Education Parent Advisory Council. This group meets periodically to discuss special education programs and practices. The feedback from parents is shared with the Director of Special Education and the Assistant Superintendent-Principal. Maintaining parent participation has been challenging. The District is looking to make meetings more accessible for parent involvement by holding meetings in the City of Lowell. Additionally, the District will utilize connect- ed, twitter and other social media to publicize meetings.

GLTHS has an established Parent Organization (GLTPO), and this group works with an Assistant Principal on special school events, fundraising, maintaining the snack bar, comedy night and craft fair. This parent group provides valuable feedback.

GLTHS offers our support to all families. Teachers and administrators communicate directly with families in person, by phone, email, through the school Blackboard Connect-Ed communication system, school website, and Twitter. Greater Lowell is committed to keeping families engaged in their child/children's learning experiences.

GLTHS is committed to increasing parental and community involvement through opportunities that target improving student outcomes especially for our low income, EL students, and students with disabilities. As noted above, the district has an EL Parent Advisory Council, a Special Education Parent Advisory Council, a School Council, a GLTPO, and parent family liaisons.

GLTHS District, in partnership with Lowell Public Schools, has implemented an After Dark program for a cohort of 20 eleventh grade Lowell High School students in Information Technology (Programming and Web Development) and a cohort of 12 eleventh grade students in Advanced Manufacturing in the 2020 school year. There is a plan to expand by adding two additional programs (Auto Technology and HVAC) for the 2021-2022 school year and continue the partnership.

The RISE (Resilience in Student Effort) Program, in partnership with BRYT, helps students and their families with the process of re-entry and reintegration into the school community after a social-emotional or medical hospitalization by supporting their academic, social, and emotional well-being. The GLTHS District has made significant strides in strengthening the home-school connection as evidenced by the development and implementation of the RISE (Resilience in Student Effort) program. The School District will continue to build community partnerships, as well as wrap around services to support the students in this program with the following: Lowell Community Health Center, NFI Family Resource Center, Trauma & Family Integration (TFI), Vinfen, and Wayside Youth Family Network, as well as Lahey Behavioral Health.

GLTHS Annual College and Career Fair - Held in the fall, up to 30 local colleges/universities, local unions, all four branches of the military as well as Massachusetts Educational Financial Authority (MEFA) attend. The fair has grown each year in organizations and attendees. School Counselors deliver a college application and timeline presentation for parents at the start of the event to increase access and knowledge base for all parents/families.

The Leadership Team will review all family outreach programs for their effectiveness through pre and post surveys to all families. The Leadership will use the results from survey data to make actionable steps for improving areas of need. Two-way communication will continue through family engagement activities, and available media outlets.

GLTHS has a number of partnerships with local businesses and colleges to provide additional support to our students.

**Certifications**

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

The Greater Lowell Technical High School District led our school community engagement efforts to ensure a broad representative participation from our school community. Through these efforts, we engaged the following groups: Greater Lowell Parent Organization, Greater Lowell Teacher Organization, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, EL Parent Advisory Council, School Council, Greater Lowell Health Alliance, Greater Lowell Mass. Hire, as well as a survey to all staff.

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

Date of Approval: 02/11/21