Student Opportunity Act Plan

Groton-Dunstable

# 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

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As noted in our district vision and strategic plan, the goal of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District is to "Eliminate inequities for all students." We recognize that not all student groups have experienced the same level of success to date, most notably, our students with disabilities.

Based on a review of our district data, our students with disabilities are not experiencing the same level of MCAS outcomes and graduation rates as their peers. Our 2019 MCAS proficiency data (grades 3-8) reflects these inequities. In ELA, sixty-eight percent (68%) of all students were meeting expectations in comparison to 26% of students with disabilities. There was a similar trend when examining 2019 MCAS Math proficiency data (3-8): 68% of all students met expectations compared to 27% of students with disabilities.

When examining the MCAS-ALT data, student performance is categorized as above progressing, progressing, emerging, awareness, and incomplete. In Groton-Dunstable, in 2019 72% of students who took the MCAS-Alt in ELA (13/18) were progressing. In Math, 83% of students who took the MCAS-Alt in ELA (15/18) were progressing. Both these percentages are below previous year's achievement levels. In 2018, 79% students (11/14) were progressing in ELA and 93% students (13/14) were progressing in ELA.

This gap is also reflected in student growth. When examining ELA MCAS SGP (2019), all students had an average of 53.2 compared to 44.6 for students with disabilities. We saw the same trend in math. 57.7 was the SGP for all students compared to 49.8 for students with disabilities.

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

Within the adoption of our district strategy in 2017, GDRSD has begun to adopt strategies that

focus on meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Alongside several other improvement strategies detailed in our strategic plan, we intend to continue and deepen our work on two

important initiatives already underway.

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

A key finding in our district strategy was our need to provide comprehensive social, emotional, and behavioral support to our students. In GDRSD, the number of students requiring social, emotional, and behavioral support is growing and we need increased personnel and services to support these needs. We have made significant investments in supporting academic instruction but achievement and growth gaps still exist and these need to be addressed. In FY19, for example, 50% of the students who were found eligible for special education services from the SST process had social-emotional goals written in their IEP.

Historically, we have been increasing support personnel to support the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of our learners. In FY18, we hired adjustment counselors at Swallow Union and Florence Roche elementary school, a Student Support Center staff member at the HS, and a district Clinical/Related Services Coordinator. In FY19, we also partnered with the Groton-Dunstable Education Foundation (GDEF) to provide professional development in the Responsive Classroom Framework to 25 middle school teachers. Responsive Classroom is an evidence-based approach that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective self-management, and developmental awareness. In FY20, GDEF supported Responsive Classroom training for all elementary teachers K-4 and the district brought in Jessica Minahan as a consultant to support elementary staff in better understanding and addressing student anxiety through professional development.

Additionally, in FY20, we hired an additional Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) to work with students. Through this work, our goal has been to support teachers in recognizing and addressing the significant social, emotional, and behavioral barriers that may prevent students from learning.

Some key changes we will make for FY21 will be to create a position for a Coordinator of Social Emotional Learning (SEL), who will develop and implement PK-12 social-emotional learning programs and coordinate internal and external resources to support all schools while providing professional development to administrators and educators. This position will work to support educators and administrators to proactively create environments that optimize students' ability to self-regulate and cope with challenges. The position will be funded by the awarded SOA funds and the remainder of the position will be supported with district resources.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Social emotional coordinator** | **80,000** | **Administration** |

***Focus Area 2:*** Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum (E and F)

Our district is committed to supporting educators in implementing a high-quality, aligned curriculum. Our focus has been on providing students with disabilities access to grade-level instruction using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). To support educators in professional learning, the district has invested in curriculum supervision and coaching to provide real-time professional development in classrooms. In FY17, we added both a K-8 ELA and math supervisor to facilitate curriculum design, delivery, and professional development. In FY20, we completed a district curriculum scope and sequence, aligned to state Curriculum Frameworks focused on identifying power standards, essential questions, and authentic assessments that could be used to drive inclusive practice and ensure grade-level expectations for all students. Additionally, in FY20, we added 2.0 literacy coaches (1.0 at Florence-Roche Elementary School and 1.0 at middle school) to support inclusive practices in literacy and support teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities while implementing standards-based instruction, using access and entry points if necessary.

In FY21, we will create specialized programming at the high school by assigning an existing mathematics teacher to co- support and provide supplemental specially designed instruction, aligned to state standards in math, for students with disabilities in learning centers. We will also use district funds to add a special education teacher who can support language- based programming in the district. In part, due to the variability of scores on the MCAS and MCAS-Alt, the district will use existing funds to add a new special education team chair for students in sub-separate programs to focus on consistency in standards-based instruction using access and entry points. By combining high quality academics with embedded social, emotional, and behavioral support, it is the goal of the district to increase academic outcomes for our students with disabilities.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** |  | 0 |  |

**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)

**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 district is committed to partnering with families, especially families of students with disabilities as we address the persistent gaps that have been present in the district for some time. The superintendent of schools and the Director of Pupil Personnel Services have made a commitment to regularly engage with the district SEPAC. As representatives for the district administrative team, they will meet monthly with SEPAC. Additionally, the School Committee created a seat for a non-voting member of the School Committee to be a representative from SEPAC so all district policy is informed by the needs of students with disabilities and their families. SEPAC will also make a presentation to the SC before the end of the FY20 school year to inform district improvement efforts.

**Certifications**

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

* Emailed to all members of the School Leadership Team for feedback on March 4, 2020
* Email to all staff for feedback on March 10, 2020
* Share draft with School Committee for feedback on March 11, 2020 (note: a representative from SEPAC non-voting member of school committee)

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

Date of Approval: 05/13/2020