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

***Holyoke Community Charter School***

→ **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?**

Holyoke Community Charter School (HCCS) has determined that the two student groups who require the most focused support to achieve at high levels are Students with Disabilities (SWD) and English Learners (ELs). By reviewing the Department of Elementary and Education’s (DESE) accountability system, both of these student groups at HCCS are underperforming when compared to students in the aggregate (*see data overview and figures 1 & 2 below).*

Through the SOA plan, HCCS is will increase supports for Students with Disabilities and English Learners to ensure they have equity and access to the school’s high-quality education. The school is committed to closing achievement and opportunity gaps for these student sub-groups and to underscore the school’s mission to prepare all children for success as students, citizens, and workers.

*Data Overview*

**Students with Disabilities (SWD)**

* **English Language Arts** Next Generation MCAS Performance averaged over a three-year period (2017-2019)
  + On average, 7.3% of SWDs have scored “meet or exceed expectations” whereas 32% of ALL students have scored “meet or exceed expectations”. This is a difference of 24.7% percent.
  + On average, 42.3% of SWD have scored “not meeting expectations”, whereas 13% of ALL students have scored “not meeting expectations”. This is a difference of 29.3% percent.
  + On average, SWD have scored 476.9 scaled points, whereas ALL students have scored 491.8. This is a difference of 14.9 scaled points.
* **Mathematics** Next Generation MCAS Performance averaged over a three-year period (2017-2019)
  + On average, 2.7% of SWD have scored “meet or exceed expectations” whereas 23.3% of ALL students have scored “meet or exceed expectations”. This is a difference of 20.6% percent.
  + On average, 44.7% of SWD have scored “not meeting expectations”, whereas 16% of ALL students have scored “not meeting expectations". This is a difference of 28.7% percent.
  + On average, SWD have scored 473.7 scaled points, whereas ALL students have scored 488.2. This is a difference of 14.5 scaled points.

**English Learners (ELs)**

* **English Language Arts** Next Generation MCAS Performance averaged over a three-year period (2017-2019)
  + On average, 12.3% of ELs have scored “meet or exceed expectations” whereas 32% of ALL students have scored “meet or exceed expectations”. This is a difference of 19.7% percent.
  + On average, 31.3% of ELs have scored “not meeting expectations”, whereas 13% of ALL students have scored “not meeting expectations”. This is a difference of 18.3% percent.
  + On average, ELs have scored 481.3 scaled points, whereas ALL students have scored 491.8. This is a difference of 10.5 scaled points.
* **Mathematics** Next Generation MCAS Performance averaged over a three-year period (2017-2019)
  + On average, 7% of ELs have scored “meet or exceed expectations” whereas 23.3% of ALL students have scored “meet or exceed expectations”. This is a difference of 16.3% percent.
  + On average, 32.3% of ELs have scored “not meeting expectations”, whereas 16% of ALL students have scored “not meeting expectations". This is a difference of 16.3% percent.
  + On average, ELs have scored 478.3 scaled points, whereas ALL students have scored 488.2. This is a difference of 9.9 scaled points.

*Figure 1: A comparison of the percentage of students scoring “Meets or Exceeds Expectations” on the Next Generation MCAS (averaged over a three-year period from 2017-2019).*

*Figure 2: A comparison of the percentage of students scoring “Not Meeting Expectations” on the Next Generation MCAS (averaged over a three-year period from 2017-2019).*

→ **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?**

**Evidence-based program #1: Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum**

HCCS implements a curriculum that is high-quality and standards-aligned. However, to better support SWD and ELs, the school will create Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to focus on alignment and implementation in the Special Education (SPED) and English Learner Education (ELE) departments.

* Aligning the English Learner Education Curriculum using the DESE Collaboration Tool

Over the past three years, the ELE department has researched, acquired, and implemented a new ESL program and used DESE Model Curriculum Units to develop an internal unit template. With the SOA, HCCS would like to continue this work to create an ESL curriculum that is fully aligned to the school’s general education curriculum. This work will take approximately three years to fully implement.

* + - In FY21, HCCS will be conducting a PLC made up of the ESL teachers, Academic Quality Controllers, and the ELE Coordinator to study the DESE Collaboration Tool to support the ESL curriculum planning development.
    - When that work is complete, HCCS ESL teachers and ELE Coordinator will form a PLC to develop ESL units of instructions aligning the ESL Curriculum to the HCCS General Education Curriculum.
* Provide professional learning to SPED teachers and paraprofessionals to better implement/support high-quality curriculum and instruction to diverse learners.

HCCS will create a PLC made up of SPED teachers, SPED paraprofessionals and Special Education Academic Coordinator to research and implement best practices for reaching diverse learners. Focus will be placed on inclusion services and collaboration between teachers and paraprofessionals.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category[[1]](#footnote-1)** |
| Presenter for EL PLC Sessions | 1,200 | Professional Development |
| Staff Stipend for EL PLC Sessions | 4,800 | Professional Development |
| Fringe Benefits for EL PLC Sessions | 87 | Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges |
| Presenter for SPED PLC Sessions | 1,200 | Professional Development |
| Staff Stipend for SPED PLC Sessions | 9,000 | Professional Development |
| Total Fringe for SPED PLC Sessions | 362 | Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Supporting educators to implement high-quality, alignedcurriculum |
| **SOA program categories:** | | E: Increased or improved professional development |

**Evidence-based program #2: Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs**

HCCS has fostered distinctive collaboration between the Student Management and Counseling Departments. By forming this collaboration students are supported holistically, with a shared vision of goals, strategies, and interventions consistently understood and applied by students, parents, and administrators. Student management and counseling staff implements Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) tiered by school wide/grade level interventions, group interventions, and individual interventions.

Through the SOA, HCCS would like to strengthen this collaboration. In order to provide more robust access for SWD and ELs to community-based services and supports to meet their individual holistic needs, HCCS will hire an additional staff in the student services department to fill the role of community-outreach and support. This individual will focus on the following:

* Engage community-based partners to provide needed wrap-around services for individual SWD and ELs and their families
* Increase arts and sports programming at the school through community-based programs
* Coordinate in-school supports to provide accommodations for SWD and ELs
* Coordinate the Summer Learning Program for SWD and ELs (see Evidence-based program #3, below)

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| Staff Salary | 45,000 | Pupil Services |
| Health, Dental, Life Insurance | 15,953 | Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges |
| FICA (Med, SUI, PML) | 1,049 | Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges |
| **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 |

**Evidence-based program #3: Summer learning to support skill development**

Through the SOA, HCCS will create a summer learning program for SWD and ELs, offering targeted supports. The program will run for four weeks with a full day schedule protecting and prioritizing instructional time. The new Community-Outreach and Support staff member hired under evidence-based program #2 (see above) will coordinate this summer learning program. The Community-Outreach and Support staff will support maximizing attendance rates at the summer learning program as well as supporting instructional quality with the support of an Academic Quality Controller. The school will invest in an evidence-based intervention program in ELA and Math and implement it using HCCS teachers. The school will offer transportation and breakfast/lunch to the students.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| School Buses | 5,258 | Operations and Maintenance |
| Curriculum | 10,000 | Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology |
| Materials | 5,000 | Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology |
| Teacher Salaries | 14,000 | Classroom & Specialist Teachers |
| Fringe (FICA) | 202 | Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Acceleration Academies and/or summer learning to support skill development and accelerate advanced learners |
| **SOA program categories:** | | A: Expanded learning time in the form of a longer school day or year  F: Purchase of curriculum materials and equipment that are aligned with the statewide curriculum frameworks |

→ **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.**

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| 1. **Department outcome metrics:**    * ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)    * Mathematics mean SGP    * Progress made by students towards attaining English language proficiency (percentage of students meeting annual targets calculated to attain English proficiency in six years) | **2) Custom metrics (must include targets as well):**   * + Summer Learning Program- attendance rate of 90% |

→ **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?**

Strong connections between home, school, and community are critical to the positive growth and development of children. Therefore, HCCS places particular emphasis on building close and respectful relationships with the families of the students it serves, promoting active parental participation in the life of the school and encouraging community service within the school and the broader community.

HCCS communicates frequently with parents to ensure they are partners in the education of their child. Given that approximately 92% of HCCS students are Latino, all communications to parents are translated and parents receive communication in both English and Spanish from the school. This is essential to ensuring parents are well informed and involved in the education of their children. HCCS makes use of the following methods to communicate with parents directly: interim reports, report cards, fall and spring parent/teacher conferences, targeted February parent/teacher conferences, Blackboard Connect Phone Messages, and the SABIS® Digital Platform website. The SABIS® Digital Platform application allows parents to access up-to-date grades, classroom notes, homework assignments, and teacher comments. Always looking for ways to further engage with parents, HCCS has a Facebook page with almost 1,300 followers and uses email to inform parents of important information and upcoming events. In addition, HCCS uses Class Dojo across all grade-levels, a program that allows teachers to provide real-time updates of class performance, instruction, and homework via smartphone or email.

Further, HCCS ensures that parents are integral members of the school community and are partners in the education of their children through the school’s *Parent Connection* organization. The mission of the *Parent Connection* is to create an inviting school environment for all of the students, staff, families, and visitors. All parents are members of the *Parent Connection,* but the level of their participation is at their discretion. This group serves as an advocate for having the school and parents work cooperatively in order to make HCCS a success. *Parent Connection* meetings are held monthly at the school. The *Parent Connection* also raises money through a variety of fundraisers. The money raised is used to purchase supplies, provide incentives, and offer free family events and activities.

In order to target parents of SWD and ELs, the school has an English Learners Parent Advisory Council (EL PAC) and a separate Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SPED PAC). Both PACs meet on a regular basis and parents hold elected positions. Through these PAC meetings, parents are able to advise the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students; meet regularly with school officials; and participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district’s Special Education and English Learner Education programs.

Annually, before the end of the academic year, HCCS administrators will host a joined meeting of the EL-PAC and SPED-PAC. At this meeting the school administration will present the summer learning program to parents with SOA evidence-based practices. HCCS will measure the engagement of families by tracking attendance of EL and SWD parents at this joint EL-PAC and SPED-PAC meeting and conducting a follow-up survey.

**Certifications:**

**By checking here, I certify that our charter school has engaged stakeholders in our community in accordance with the Student Opportunity Act**

**Please summarize your stakeholder engagement process, including specific groups that were engaged:**

The school director tasked the school administration to identify which student groups at HCCS will require focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life. School administrators engaged teachers and school staff in this data-driven identification process. The school administrators presented the identified target groups to both SPED-PAC and EL-PAC and allowed for parents to share their input on the identified evidence-based initiatives.

**By checking here, I certify that the Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees voted on our Student Opportunity Act Plan.**

**Date of vote: January 27, 2021 Outcome of vote: Unanimous Approval**

1. The foundation categories are: Administration; Instructional Leadership; Classroom & Specialist Teachers; Other Teaching Services; Professional Development; Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology; Guidance and Psychological; Pupil Services; Operations and Maintenance; Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges; and Special Education Tuition. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)