Student Opportunity Act Plan

Holyoke

# 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.*

* First language not English students
* 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)
* African American/Black students
* Hispanic or Latinx students
* Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic/Non-Latinx students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As an urban Gateway school district in the Commonwealth, the Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) is among the lowest performing districts in Massachusetts and was placed under state receivership for low academic outcomes in 2015. The HPS student population is 81% Hispanic/Latino (vs 22% for MA), 14% White (vs 60% for MA), and 3% African American/Black (vs 9% in MA). 40% of students' first language is not English, 21% of students are English Learners (ELs), 28% of students have a documented disability (SWD), 78% of students are economically disadvantaged (EcoDis) and 9% of students are homeless, with this population concentrated in certain neighborhood schools.

In SY18-19, the district's math and ELA MCAS data (grades 3-8) reflects low achievement and lower growth in all four subgroups identified above (SWD, EL, EcoDis, Hispanic/Latino). 18% of students met or exceeded expectations in ELA, and 12% in math, with SWD and EL populations showing lower proficiency and making marginal gains. Across all grades EL students consistently had < 5% meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA and math. Diving deeper, middle school grades demonstrated lower overall proficiency in math than elementary grades with only 8% of grade 6, 7% of grade 7, and 11% of grade 8 meeting or exceeding expectations and demonstrating lower overall SGP. Finally, 27% of non-high school students and 10.4% of high school students made progress towards gaining English proficiency in 2019, which were lower percentages than the prior year.

Several trends in the chronic absenteeism and suspension data can be noted. Chronic absenteeism remains high at both the non-high school (20%) and high school level (33%). Subgroups like EL and SWD students experience higher chronic absenteeism, 25% respectively at the non-high school level and 43% and 44% at the HS level. Although it has improved over prior years, the district's out-of-school suspension rate is significantly higher than the state average (9% vs 3%), with SWD students having a higher rate (13%). In SY19, 50% of students grades 3-5 and 38% of students grades 6-12 reported that the behavior of other students hurt their learning some or a tremendous amount on our annual Panorama culture climate survey. 57% of students grades 3-5 and 67% of students grades 6-12 reported feeling safe in hallways, lunchrooms, and bathrooms at school.

At the high school level, EcoDis, Hispanic/Latino, and SWD populations experience less access to higher education. Last year, 40% of students completed FAFSAs: 65 EcoDis, 1 EL, 0 SWD, 91 Hispanic/Latino, and 33 Caucasian. In 2018, 53% enrolled in post-secondary education within 16 months of graduation. To address this, HPS has increased access to early college (EC) programs, especially for students who are underrepresented in higher education. HPS has 190 students enrolled in its two EC programs, with 50 more students in dual enrollment only, and the demographic make-up of students in the programs is more representative of the district's demographic distribution.

An area of notable growth can be seen among the Pre-K and early elementary grades. Since pre-receivership, Pre-K enrollment has nearly doubled (288 in SY15 to 522 in SY20, although many are half day slots), and now includes dual- language classrooms which integrate ELs as peers. Full and half-day slots were added to serve more students with individual education plans (IEPs). Increasing access to high-quality preschool for 4-year-olds has resulted in greater kindergarten readiness (46% of HPS preschool students meet the district's kindergarten readiness benchmark compared to only 21% of students who have not attended HPS for preschool) and higher attendance. Additionally, a bright spot in our data is that by 3rd grade, students enrolled in dual language programs demonstrated higher proficiency in ELA and math MCAS than the state average.

Holyoke experiences high teacher turnover annually, last year retaining 67% of teachers (compared to the state average of 88%). About a third of our teachers are new teachers with less three years experience. We have begun to address many of the trends above through our professional development work with teachers which also aims to increase teacher retention. This year, we have seen an 11-point increase in teachers reporting that professional development opportunities are valuable to them (46% positive).

After reviewing this data, we summarize the following conclusions: (a) The data reflects equity gaps in student performance among student subgroups as early as third grade; (b) The district's EL population is not progressing, and in-fact decreasing in English proficiency; (c) The district has a high percentage of ELs who are dually identified as students with disabilities; (d) The district has a need to provide intensive social-emotional and behavioral supports to some students; (e) Adding post- secondary pathways gives students greater access to college, especially populations who historically have been marginalized, like low-income students and/or Hispanic/Latino students; (f) Full-day pre-kindergarten increases student readiness and performance; (g) Teachers need further professional development and coaching to meet the needs of all their students.

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

The Student Opportunity Act (SOA) offers an opportunity for HPS to commit to additional evidence-based programs to close opportunity and achievement gaps among our student subgroups. HPS intends to use its SOA funds to adopt or deepen five program areas and intend to make multi-year, sustained commitments to these priority areas. The numbers are connected to the evidence-based program examples identified by DESE.

1. Expanded access to full day, high-quality pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds, including collaboration with local providers

3. Early College programs focused primarily on students under-represented in higher education

6. Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs, focusing on the BRYT program and content-based coaching.

7. Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English Learners and expansion of the dual language program

12. Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers

## Focus Area 1: Expanded access to full-day, high-quality pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds, including potential collaboration with other local providers (D, F, and G)

Students impacted: In SY20-21 (Year 1), approximately 510 (full-time equivalent of 347) students (ages 3 and 4) will be impacted through the strengthening of our Pre-K programs through stronger professional development, with an additional 15 4-year-old students without IEPs and 25 4-year-old students with IEPs having access to full-day programming. By SY22-23 (Year 3), approximately 550 (full-time equivalent of 410) students (ages 3 and 4) will be impacted through the strengthening of our Pre-K programs.

Expanding access to full-day Pre-K programs is a key component of the district's turnaround plan. HPS has nearly doubled the number of Pre-K seats for 4-year-old children since 2015. Students in full-day programs have higher attendance rates than those in half-day programs (+6 points) and are more than twice as prepared for kindergarten than those students who do not attend HPS preschool based on end of year STAR exams. Given this, the district still has a large unmet demand, particularly for full-day programs. Currently, students on IEPs are over-represented in half-day programs, as compared to full- day programs, and HPS is working towards more equitable access to full-day programs. Accordingly, over the next four years, HPS plans to:

Modify the Pre-K lottery process to set aside more seats in full-day programs for students who have an IEP (Years 1 focus) Convert four half-day integrated programs to full-day programs (Convert one half-day classroom in Year 1, convert two in Year 2, convert one in Year 3)

Open an additional five full-day programs (Add one in Year 2, add two in Year 3, add two in Year 4, which we acknowledge is beyond the time period of this initial SOA application)

Strengthen professional development (PD) and coaching for all Pre-K teachers, particularly around supporting students with an IEP (Years 1-3 focus)

Increase collaboration with community-based programs, through how we provide access to preschool across the community and through connected professional learning. Year 1 will be used as a planning year with implementation in Year 2.

Subsequent years will focus on continued partnership to strengthen all programming and professional learning for staff. HPS currently partners with Valley Opportunity Council (VOC) to operate four of our HPS Pre-K classes. We look forward to exploring options for expanding this partnership and/or exploring partnerships through collaboration with other providers.

Specifically, HPS will strengthen the quality of its Pre-K programs through expanded PD and coaching. Through the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) grant, the district hired a Coach/Inclusion Specialist that supports VOC and HPS Pre-K and kindergarten teachers and provides feedback to teachers based on district PD. Providing coaching support to both VOC partner teachers and HPS teachers strengthens program cohesion and improves teacher practices across all classrooms.

Preschool teachers participated in an evidenced-based program called Literacy Lab's Sensitivity Encouragement Education Development of Skills (SEEDS) during SY19-20. HPS will continue this PD and support for Pre-K teachers, which prepares educators and parents to help children develop the social, emotional, language and literacy skills they need for kindergarten readiness. The coach also conducts individual coaching sessions with teachers, based on their professional goals and including a focus on Tiers 1 and 2 interventions.

To support the inclusion of students who have IEPs, the Director of Early Childhood Learning (DECL) and Special Education Coordinator (SEC) will work with the Educational Team Leaders at schools to design PD for teachers to better support students who have IEPs. HPS is also hiring a special education teacher to provide services for students with IEPs at our partner early education centers (Head Start and our CPPI classrooms with VOC). The Special Education teacher will work in classrooms to build relationships with the classroom teachers and provide services to students on IEPs. The teacher will model strategies that will benefit all students throughout the day.

Finally, HPS will also enhance the work of the Holyoke Early Learning Initiative (HELI), which engages about 30 community partners to align high-quality services for children, birth to third grade.

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

Students impacted: In SY20-21 (Year 1), 270 students will be in an early college, with an estimated 40-50 students in dual enrollment as well. In SY22-23 (Year 3), 290 students will be in an early college, with an estimated 40-50 students in dual enrollment as well.

The HPS vision is "a pathway for every student," which has informed its high school redesign plan where students enroll in a theme-based academy or a career vocational technical education (CVTE) program. Although HPS supports all advanced coursework opportunities for students, it has particularly focused on increasing access to dual enrollment and early college programming. As cited in the Evidenced-Based Program Examples provided by DESE, early college programs have been shown to improve high school graduation, college enrollment and persistence and degree attainment rates, including a significant narrowing of opportunity gaps for traditionally underserved students (Song and Zeiser, 2019). In addition to the aforementioned reasons, passing early college courses is a more certain way to earn college credit as opposed to taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses, which requires passing an additional exam.

Prior to SY15-16, students only had access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and the majority (58%) of the students who were enrolled in AP classes were white, although the high school student body was mostly Hispanic (80%). In SY19-20, enrollment in advanced coursework has nearly doubled (from 186 students in SY14-15 to 345 students in SY19-20), with 52 students in AP-only, 114 students in dual enrollment only, 86 students in early college only and 93 students in more than one advanced coursework opportunity. Additionally, the racial diversity of students in advanced coursework (68% Hispanic, 28% White) more closely resembles the district's student population (80% Hispanic, 16% White, 4% other). This work has been made possible through partnerships with Holyoke Community College (HCC) and Westfield State University (WSU). (In SY19- 20, 145 students are enrolled in early college programming at HCC, with an additional 100 students in dual enrollment at HCC. 45 students are enrolled in early college programming at WSU.)

HPS' early college programs at HCC and WSU have achieved the early college designation by the Commonwealth, in part due to following these five guiding principles.

Equitable access. As previously mentioned, HPS has expanded access to advanced coursework, particularly for students of color. The district will continue to pursue these efforts by 1) leveraging upperclassmen to actively recruit underclassmen, 2) asking teacher to identify and recruit underclassmen, 3) providing intense coaching and tutoring to ensure students are eligible for and can access content, and 4) hosting multiple family and community events and conversations. Holyoke High School (HHS) has begun to offer dual enrollment courses taught by HCC faculty on its Dean CVTE campus, bringing dual enrollment to that campus for the first time in its history, an initiative HPS remains committed to for the future. Finally, HHS will continue to manage, provide and expand transportation support for students, and to tailor students' high school course schedules to support their success at HCC and WSU.

Guided academic pathways. The school's redesign plan has created three linked learning academies (Performing and Media Arts, Community and Global Studies, Environment and Life Studies) which students select in their freshman year and begin in their sophomore year. Each academy features core classes aligned to the theme and technical courses that allow students to explore that theme more directly. The HCC Early College courses lineup with each of the academy themes. This system creates a far more cohesive and self-directed pathway than the previous system of open choice dual enrollment. In addition, HPS will continue the AVID program in 10th grade, which prepares students to be ready for college courses by teaching them essential study and organization skills.

Enhanced student supports. HPS will hire a College and Career Counselor, Early College Success Coach and course- specific tutors for the sophomore classes at HCC to ensure that students successfully navigate the college experience and access the high school and college supports to ensure their success. The Westfield Promise model of co-taught, on-campus courses will continue to provide students with the challenge of a course led by college professors with the support of a high school teacher as the co-teacher who works with students on non-class days.

Relevant connection to career. As noted previously, the HCC dual enrollment courses are explicitly connected to linked learning academies, and thus serves the dual purposes of college experience and career exploration. We are also strengthening our CVTE programs and adding some additional staff.

Robust partnerships. HPS will fund a Program Coordinator to manage the early college program, which is currently funded on a temporary private grant. The coordinator would be charged with recruiting students and families, managing the academic and social collaboration between colleges and HHS, supporting HHS teachers who work with the colleges, organizing program logistics like transportation, and coordinating all early college work with the HHS academic program and staff.

## Focus Area 3: Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs (C and/or D)

Students impacted: Up to 180 students (about 30 per school at 6 schools) will be directly impacted through the BRYT program each year. All students at these 6 schools (estimated at 2,800 students) will indirectly benefit from the BRYT program since the BRYT program contributes to a more positive environment for all students. An additional 1,300 students will be impacted through the expansion and strengthening of content-based coaching in SY20-21 (Year 1); this will increase to 100% of students (~5,400) by SY22-23 (Year 3).

The BRYT Program

Although it has improved over prior years, the district's out-of-school suspension rate is significantly higher than the state average (9% vs 3%), with SWD students having a higher rate (13%). In SY19, 50% of students grades 3-5 and 38% of students grades 6-12 reported that the behavior of other students hurt their learning some or a tremendous amount on our annual Panorama culture climate survey. 57% of students grades 3-5 and 67% of students grades 6-12 reported feeling safe in hallways, lunchrooms, and bathrooms at school.

In the continuing effort to further develop a comprehensive multi-tiered system of supports, HPS will fully implement a program, BRYT (Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition, pronounced 'bright'), to provide supportive services for the approximatel*y* 5% of our students who need Tier 3 behavioral and social emotional supports.

The middle and high school grade BRYT programs at Peck and Holyoke High School - North Campus began part way through SY19-20 due to grant funding. It is designed to support students who have experienced extensive absences due to medical and/or mental health issues to successfully reintegrate back into school; the goal is to improve access to learning and decrease dropout rates. HPS is working to open elementary programs at Kelly, Lawrence, Morgan and Sullivan schools, which is designed to support students who present with behavioral, social or emotional challenges that result in them being unable to access or stay on-track with learning.

The BRYT program design is intended to include a maximum snapshot caseload of 3-5 students for a duration of 4-6 weeks, with the ability to support an average of 30 unduplicated students per school per year. This design will allow for a lower staff- to-student ratio while ensuring that the intervention is truly a bridge for the student and not a long-term alternative placement.

Further, BRYT supports are tailored to the specific school community. They are designed to wrap around the student and family and to work collaboratively with teachers and outside providers in order to optimize a child's chances for success in school. The supports include an appealing learning space, additional supportive services and specialized services. The program is usually staffed by a Trauma Counselor and an Academic Support paraprofessional. The structure encourages supportive inclusion but offers flexibility based on the immediate need(s) of the student.

The BRYT program is expected to have a direct impact on the climate and culture of the schools implementing the model as evidenced through decreases in office discipline referrals, exclusionary time-outs, suspensions, chronic absenteeism, and school climate survey data.

Veritas Prep is also adding a Dean of Culture to support the overall culture and climate of the school as it continues to expand.

Content-Based Coaching

HPS is strengthening and expanding content-based coaching for grades Pre-K to 12 over the next three years with the goal of improving student learning outcomes and increasing teacher retention rates. More specifically, HPS will do this by ensuring teachers at every school have access to high-quality instructional coaching in ELA, Math, Science, and ESL. Instructional Coaching has long been proven as having the greatest impact on improving teacher competency as well as positively impacting student achievement. Studies have shown that embedded PD, through instructional coaching, is more effective than the traditional workshop model of PD. Furthermore, many HPS teachers are within their first three years of teaching (36%), many have less experience in Holyoke (annual retention rate is ~67%), and many need more support in order to improve student outcomes (which have been among the lowest in the state for more than a decade). HPS students deserve the most highly skilled teachers in order to accelerate their learning, achievement and future success. Additionally, Master Teacher/Instructional Coaches provide tailored instruction to students who are struggling. To do so, HPS plans to do the following:

* SY20-21 (Year 1): transition all current instructional coaches to a master teacher role, which is an elevated position within the district. The master teacher role has a longer work year, which will enable master teachers to receive more professional development to improve their practice, as well as allow them to be more intimately involved with planning with the school leaders. It transitions them to a higher point on our pay scale, which will increase their retention and make this role more attractive to internal and external candidates. HPS will have an additional 3 master teachers/coaches, as well as an additional Education Team Leader/Inclusion Coach at Veritas, as compared to the SY19-20 budget.
* SY21-22 (Year 2): Add three elementary/middle school coaching positions in ELA and/or Math and transition 1 of the 5 high school coaches from private funding to district funding.
* SY22-23 (Year 3): Add an additional coaching position in ELA or Math, such that every school has access to ELA and Math coaching support, as well as district-wide science and EL support. Transition the remaining high school coaches from private funding to district funding, as these positions are critical to ensuring the continued improvement at the high school level.

## Focus Area 4: Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners (D and/or E)

Students impacted. In Years 1-3, 2,130 students (484 who are dual identified as students with disabilities and English Learners, 687 who are identified as English Learners only, 959 who are identified as SWD only) will benefit due to stronger teaching, which is supported by stronger professional development and hiring more EL and special education (SPED) teachers. About 10% of our ELs (110) will benefit from the expansion of the dual language program in SY20-21, growing to 17% (187) by SY22-23. In SY20-21, about 520 students (~10% of district enrollment) will benefit from dual language programming, growing to about 800 students (~15% of district enrollment) by SY22-23.

Overall, there continues to be a significant achievement gap for English Learners (ELs) in Holyoke, as MCAS and ACCESS scores over the past few years indicate. In the last three years ACCESS and MCAS growth has declined in Holyoke (29% in SY16-17, 27% in SY17-18, 22% in SY18-19). In SY19, 1% of all ELs (vs. 24% of non-ELs) in grades 3-8 scored meeting or exceeding expectations on ELA MCAS; in math, this is 2% (vs. 15% of non-ELs). Our data clearly calls for strong action in order to significantly improve academic achievement for ELs. Furthermore, 41% of ELs are also identified as Students With Disabilities (SWD). 4% of all SWD in grades 3-8 scored meeting or exceeding expectations on ELA MCAS (vs 23% of non- SWD) and 3% on math (vs 15% of non-SWD). We estimate that dually identified students have a lower achievement level than ELs and SWD alone. HPS will better support all 1,100 ELs across all schools through increasing the number of ESL teachers (especially at Sullivan, Peck and Donahue, where we have the highest percent of ELs who are also identified as SWD), strengthening coaching and Professional Development to ESL/SEI staff, and increasing access to dual language education.

Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English Learners

In an effort to better support strong instructional models for ELs and SWD, especially students who are dual-identified, HPS is taking important steps to create a more inclusionary co-teaching model in Holyoke across grades K-12. As compared to the SY19-20 budget, HPS has added 3 inclusion teachers, 6 ESL teachers, 2 paras and 2 teachers for students who have recently arrived to the mainland USA for SY20-21. The focus of adding ESL teachers is primarily at school where we have many dual identified (EL/SWD) students. Veritas is also adding a teacher and two paraprofessionals for students who are dually identified. By adding additional support staff with expertise in these areas, our adult to student ratios improved such that students will receive more targeted and individualized instruction. At the same time, it will afford increased opportunities for classroom teachers to truly co-teach with these special service providers thereby developing the knowledge base of all educators, ensuring that students are receiving specialized instruction in core academic classrooms (rather than pull-out) and shifting the mindset about the value of inclusionary practices across our schools.

We need to ensure that staff is trained well in order to implement effective co-teaching. HPS is strengthening professional development (PD) and coaching for all EL and grade level, content and special education teachers through full-day district- wide professional development, school-based professional development and collaboration, and coaching. We will also offer after-school courses, including at least two SEI courses free of charge to all educators in Holyoke.

Additionally, the district is supporting PreK and ESL teacher collaboration across schools to ensure language acquisition and development begin in the early years of learning.

Expansion of the dual language program

Dual language (DL) programs allow students to receive academic instruction in English and Spanish and develop proficiency in two languages. These programs result in strong student outcomes, especially for students who are not native English speakers. Children who study a second language during the primary grade levels:

* learn and excel in a second language at a faster pace (Krashen, 1982)
* show greater cognitive development (Kauta, 1990).
* have increased listening skills, memory, and a greater understanding of their native language (Lapkin, 1990)
* have an improved self-concept and sense of achievement in school (Caine & Caine, 1997).

The success of our current DL school sites support the need to increase access to more students across Holyoke. Across all grades, DL classrooms demonstrate higher achievement levels in Early literacy and Reading than their non-DL counterparts. In particular, at Metcalf on MCAS the 3rd grade in 2019-2020 performed above the state average in ELA.

Accordingly, the HPS dual language is in high demand by families. However, the district does not have a program located in the Flats, a heavily populated neighborhood where many Spanish-speaking families live. To close this gap, HPS will open a program at Kelly School (located in the Flats), which serves 33% ELs. More specifically, HPS will start with one DL kindergarten class in SY20-21 and then two DL kindergarten classes in SY21-22 and beyond. hps may also open a DL Pre-K class at Kelly in SY22-23. Finally, HPS will expand DL by continuing to grow a grade per year:

Metcalf School

* grade 6 in SY20-21
* grade 7 in SY21-22
* grade 8 in SY22-23

E.N. White

* grade 3 in SY20-21
* grade 4 in SY21-22
* grade 5 in SY22-23

## Focus Area 5: Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers (B and D)

Students impacted: In SY20-21, 600 students will be impacted by the addition of enrichment teachers. By SY22-23, nearly 100% of HPS elementary and middle school students (3,500) will have access to arts and music during the school day, with nearly 100% of high school students (1,5000) with access to arts, music, STEM and other learning opportunities connected to their theme-based academies or CVTE program.

Last fall, HPS launched an Arts task force, comprised of K-12 educators, higher education partners, community partners, elected officials, funders and members from the creative arts field. The task force's commitment is to create a foundational system that ensures that all HPS students have equitable access to high quality, culturally celebratory arts programs as part of an enriching K- 12 experience. The task force has made a series of recommendations to improve equitable access to high quality programming for all students over the next three years. Some of the highest leverage investments surfaced by this stakeholder group include the following:

(a) Hire a Director of Visual and Performing Arts (part-time or full time depending on resources) who will play a key role in hiring, supervising, evaluating and advocating for all arts education teachers in HPS and will be responsible for building, engaging and maintaining relationships with area artists, partner organizations, colleges and universities, and appropriate state and city agencies.

(b) Ensure that every HPS elementary and middle school offer students weekly music/dance and visual arts instruction during the school day, with even greater access in high school. In SY20-21, Veritas will add a music teacher and equipment, Morgan will add an arts educator and STEM will add a visual arts educator. More arts and enrichment teachers will also provide time for core content teachers to plan and collaborate.

(c) Begin to develop a plan to institutionalize and create budget lines for extracurricular visual and performing arts programs, activities, clubs, and summer programs that have historically been driven by a specific arts educator.

As mentioned previously, HPS high school students enroll in a theme-based academy (Performing and Media Arts, Community and Global Studies, Environment and Life Studies) or a career vocational technical education (CVTE) program, where they experience extended learning opportunities within and beyond the school setting.

**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)
* 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).
* Additional Indicators: Percentage of 11th and 12th graders completing at least one DESE-identified advanced coursework
* Custom District Metric 1: STAR Early Literacy- Kindergarten readiness benchmark
* Custom District Metric 2: Feelings of Safety as measured on Panorama (grades 3-12)
* Custom District Metric 3: Reduction of out-school-suspension rates
* Custom District Metric 4: Opportunities that meet student interests and needs (gr. 6-12) as measured on Panorama culture and climate survey

**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.*

Family engagement is one of the Holyoke Public Schools' four key priorities. More specifically, we believe that all families should feel empowered and equipped to partner with schools to meet the needs of their children. Schools have focused their efforts on ensuring that there is strong two-way communication with families about how they can best support their child's learning at home. We think that this will be best accomplished in four distinct ways: (1) Hosting interactive family events at each school where parents learn alongside their children and leave with activities that they can consistently utilize with their child at home. (2) Ensuring that families and educators communicate regularly about student progress (beyond the biannual report card conference) about a child's academic and social/emotional strengths and areas for improvement. This can be accomplished via email, text, phone, classroom communication app or face-to-face meetings with teachers at home, school or in the community. (3) The Holyoke Public Schools will continue to work closely with our Special Education PAC and EL PAC to host regular gatherings, for parents, led by parents. We currently have a thriving SPED PAC and an emerging EL PAC who meet consistently throughout the school year. Holyoke Public Schools is committed to partnering with these organizations to empower them with information about their rights as parents and how to collaborate effectively with our schools to best support students. (4) We must continue our efforts to make all essential educational materials and interactions with parents accessible in a family's native language. We are committed to continuing our investment in our translation and interpretation services so that language does not become a barrier for any parent or guardian in the Holyoke Public Schools.

We will measure the success of these efforts on the annual Family Panorama Survey, as part of our quarterly school reviews throughout the 20-21 year as well as the data we monitor from our translation and interpretation department.

**Certifications**

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

In February and March, the Holyoke Public Schools solicited input from multiple stakeholders through the community. In each case, we- presented an overview of the Student Opportunity Act, shared our FY2021 budget context, reviewed our District's strategic priorities, asked the audience to brainstorm a list of needs in HPS, requested that the audience connect their ideas to at least one of the 17 evidence-based suggestions and finally, to breakout in smaller groups to establish agreement on no more than 3 key priorities as a group. Our stakeholder engagement process consisted of opportunities for the following six groups to offer their perspective on the best use of the Student Opportunity Act funds.

* February 8, 2020- As part of our school committee retreat, school committee members provided their thoughts on what HPS should prioritize.
* February 11, 2020- Our Parent Advisory Committee collected feedback from their respective school communities and shared their findings with the superintendent/receiver at their monthly meeting.
* February 13, 2020- Our Teacher Advisory Group brought ideas from their schools to shape recommendations at their monthly meeting with the superintendent.
* February 24, 2020- HPS hosted an open forum for only staff where they were able to voice their opinions on the best use of the new funding.
* March 3, 2020- HPS hosted a public SOA session that was attended by staff, families, community members and school partners.
* March 10, 2020- The superintendent's Student Advisory Group offered their ideas about how HPS can best spend their resources over the next 3 years.

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

Date of Approval: 03/30/2020