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

***Libertas Academy 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?**

As stated in our mission, Libertas is committed to “preparing all students to succeed within the college of their choice and to be positive, engaged members of their communities.” In order to prepare all students in our diverse population, we must ensure that all students have equitable access to their civil right to an education. A key mechanism for doing this is maximizing time spent in class. Discipline policies and practices directly affect the time students spend in class. In analyzing our discipline data, we found that **boys** and **students with disabilities** have higher rates of suspension (both in- and out-of-school). We intend to focus on these two subgroups to directly address these differences.

In 2019-2020, 2.5% of LACS students were suspended in-school and 8.5% of students were suspended out-of-school. However, these percentages were higher for the two subgroups in question:

* 2.1% of boys were suspended in-school and 11.6% of boys were suspended out-of-school
* 17.9% of students with disabilities were suspended in-school (a rate 5.6 times higher than that of the full student population) and 13.6% of students with disabilities were suspended out-of-school (2 times as often as the full student population.

We believe that by addressing disparities in suspension, we will also address gaps in performance on statewide standardized assessments.

→ **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?**

LACS is committed addressing gaps between boys and girls and students with and without disabilities. We believe that increasing personnel that can proactively support the needs of students will help us close this gap.

1. **Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs.**

**Director of Student Support**. Included in this role’s job description are the following:

* 1. “Support principals with the implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports [MTSS]”
	2. “Provide professional development to faculty on the MTSS process, including awareness of SST [Student Support Team], its purpose, and the process for requesting help”
	3. “Maintain systems to monitor the progress of students and the effectiveness of interventions over multiple meetings”

Tiered supports are categorized into *academic, behavioral,* and *social-emotional*. Behavioral supports are aimed at helping students build self-discipline and other habits critical for success in school. This, in turn, allows LACS to use less exclusionary discipline as staff are pre-emptively identifying students who may need additional support and actively working with them to develop individual strategies that help them remain in the classroom.

LACS also increased its mental health counseling staff in Fall 2020, adding 1.0 FTE. We have found that this increased staffing helps us to hold more counseling groups (including those specifically aimed at boys), and also allows counselors to devote more time and resources to our students with disabilities. Counselors are even able to work with special educators, inserting social-emotional support into our pull-out Learning Lab classes that most students with disabilities attend 1-2 times a week. Over the next two years, our expanded counseling staff will continue to look for ways to target supports toward boys and students with disabilities, recognizing that social-emotional supports often are highly effective in addressing behavior issues.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category[[1]](#footnote-1)** |
| Additional counseling staff | $70,000 (salary + benefits) | Guidance and Psychological; Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges |
| Director of Student Support | $95,000 (salary + benefits) | Administration; 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) |

→ **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:**
	* Decreased MCAS ELA achievement gaps for boys, SwD
	* Decreased MCAS Mathematics achievement gaps for boys, SwD
 |  **2) Custom metrics (must include targets as well):*** + Overall in-school suspension rate <1%
	+ Overall out-of-school suspension rate <4%
	+ Ratio of suspensions for boys:all students and SwD:all students <1.1
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→ **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?**

LACS engages families in many ways, including:

* Monthly newsletters, translated into families’ home languages
* Use of a text messaging service, Talking Points, which translates texts automatically and allows families to respond in their chosen language
* Quarterly meetings of the Special Education PAC
* Frequent surveys

We track family participation at events and will continue to measure participation rates, disaggregated by demographics of students..

**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:**

Families were engaged in the following ways:

* Family members participated in our Behavior Working Group, the group that researched Restorative Justice practices and, in the end, recommended that the school adopt RJ.
* Family members helped interview potential staff when we were increasing our counseling FTE.
* Families were surveyed about their students’ needs, particularly social-emotional and behavioral needs, as well as their views on our disciplinary practices. These surveys are the first place that a widespread concern about suspension rates arose.
* At a biweekly Coffee with the Principals meeting, families were introduced to a draft SOA plan and asked to provide feedback.
* Families also received a draft SOA plan in a weekly Head of School Memo and were asked to provide feedback.

Staff were introduced to our SOA plan when it was in draft form and asked to provide feedback. In addition, several staff members served on our Behavior Working Group (described above) and participated in interviews for new counseling staff.

**☐X By checking here, I certify that the Libertas Academy Board of Trustees voted on our Student Opportunity Act Plan.**

**Date of vote: January 25, 2021 Outcome of vote: Approved**

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)