Student Opportunity Act Plan

Melrose

# 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.*

* High Needs students (defined as any student who is economically disadvantaged, has a disability, or is an English learner/former English learner)
* Students with behavioral challenges

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

In Melrose, our high need students continue to have variable success with closing the opportunity gap. Over the past years we have slowly added specialized programs and services for students both with and without disabilities who need flexibility and scaffolded supports that may vary in intensity and frequency over the course of the year. However, an increase in enrollment and the diversity of our student body has proven challenging without more staffing. In particular we are seeking to adding mental health and behavioral staff, expand related services such as ABA and counseling, and add specialized programs that support inclusion but provide a safe space as needed.

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

Melrose is experiencing growing enrollment. Data collected on the demographics of our students plus data from special education, chronic absenteeism, and discipline are indicative of a student population with more significant special education needs (e.g., ASD, Down's, multi handicapped) as well as students both with and without disabilities with anxiety, depression, and other serious mental health illnesses. We need to ensure that every building has skilled and trained personnel and specialists that can support our students, families and staff so students have every opportunity to succeed academically and personally.

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

Melrose has developed inclusion based social emotional programs at the secondary level. Over the past several years, we have developed a need to provide a similar program at the elementary level. We are seeing an increase in students at the elementary level who do not have the social emotional skills to be successful in school. We believe if we attend to these issues early in the child's career, the child will have a greater chance to succeed. This need is combined with the increase we are seeing in children with severe special needs who need a higher level of related services. Lastly, we are seeing an uptick at the high school level with students who develop mental health issues.

We intend to take several steps in this program.

First, we will create a pull out SEL program at one elementary school The program requires the addition of a special education teacher and paraprofessional for a pull out program at one elementary school.

Second, we will add three social workers, two at the elementary level and one at the middle school level, so that we may now have a social worker at each school in the district to support students with behavioral health challenges.

Third, two ago we contracted with Wedieko Services to help us develop a system to responding to the growing needs of our ASD students throughout the district. In particular, we were seeing ASD students with concomitant behavioral health issues that required more services. We now need to replicate this system at other schools and add another BCBA for the district.

Fourth, we will increase the FTEs for related service providers to meet the increase in demand for services due to the increase in enrollment and the increase in complexity of student needs.

Lastly, we will add a special education teacher at the high school as we revise our inclusion model to promote more equity and access in the ninth grade by unleveling grade nine courses.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **2 Special Education teachers** | **118394.32** | **Pupil Services** |
| **2** | **1.0 Special Education paraprof.** | **19687.00** | **Pupil Services** |
| **3** | **1.0 BCBA** | **59197.16** | **Pupil Services** |
| **4** | **1.0 Related Service Providers** | **59197.16** | **Pupil Services** |
| **5** | **3.0 Social worker** | **177591.48** | **Pupil Services** |

## Focus Area 2: Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers

Melrose Public Schools is committed to providing strong programs in the arts, music, library and digital media, and wellness. To ensure that every student has an equitable experience, we need to add FTEs in these areas to the elementary school level. Moreover, it is during specialist times that general education teachers can have common planning time and engage in data analysis and planning Tier I and Tier II interventions.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **1.0 FTE specialty teachers** | **59197.16** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |

## ***Focus Area 3:*** Other district identified evidence-based program-Deepening inclusive practices, including accessibility, equity, and cultural awareness.

Melrose Public Schools' Strategic Overview provides a three year plan to grow the district's inclusive practices, including accessibility, equity, and cultural awareness. To this end we are developing systems for equity assessments, reviews of curriculum materials, and professional development in the areas of equity, inclusive instructional practices, cultural awareness and personalization. We expect our district leadership to implement these practices, model best practices, and hold staff and students accountable in an effort to create safe and supportive schools for a diverse population of both students and adults. We provide opportunities both in house and through community and regional partners for professional development in universal design for learning, inclusive practices, PBIS, MTSS, cultural awareness and responsiveness, and trauma informed instruction.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Professional development** | **19769.06** | **Professional Development** |
| **2** | **Personalize Learning coach** | **59197.16** | **Professional Development** |

**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 Achievement: Science achievement as measured by average scaled scores (or CPI, depending on grade level) on MCAS
* Additional Indicators: Chronic absenteeism (percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership)

**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.*

Melrose Public Schools has a Special Education Parent Advisory Council, an English Language Learners Parents Council, and a METCO Parent Advisory Council, all of which meet on a regular basis with administration.

In addition, the three Councils also hold meetings open to the general public at which they provide both educational programs

and access to members of the district leadership team, including the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Assistant Principals, and Directors.

In addition, School Committee members and district leadership have regular meetings with community groups actively engaged in the LBGTQ community and human rights issues within the city.

The district also administers the YRBS to students every other year and in between administers the PRIDE survey to parents. Both surveys inform decision making and program design within the district, including concerns around social emotional health, bullying, safety, and acceptance.

Furthermore, Melrose Public Schools has a strong model for School Site Councils in which they design a two-year improvement plan for each of their buildings.

Lastly, all principals in Melrose have as a practice of regular morning coffees open to any parent.

**Certifications**

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

The Superintendent and/or School Committee Chair discussed the SOA with the following groups between November 2019 and February 2020:

* Melrose City Council
* School Committee meetings that included opportunities for public comment City Wide PTO
* SEPAC Board
* Union President and Leadership, including the MTA Field Rep District Labor-Management Committee
* District Leadership Team
* Principals and Assistant Superintendents discussed the SOA with the following groups: Special Education Coordinators
* Each School Site Council Each school's PTO
* Each school's Building level Labor-Management Committee

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

Date of Approval: 04/28/2020