Student Opportunity Act Plan

Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical

# 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.*

* English learners and former English learners

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

The Student Opportunities Act (SOA) requires each district to create a three-year, evidence-based plan for the Commissioner's review. The Department has asked us to create a plan that addresses how we plan to close opportunity and achievement gaps among student subgroups. The plan must be developed by the superintendent in consultation with the school committee and shall consider input and recommendations from parents/guardians and other relevant community stakeholders. The district is required to certify that the School Committee voted on our Student Opportunity Plan.

As noted in our District Improvement Plan, Montachusett Regional Vocational School (Monty Tech) is committed to ensuring all of our students achieve success in school and after graduation. However, we recognize that not all student groups have experienced the same level of success to date. Based on a review of our district data, our English Language Learner students are not experiencing the same level of success on state testing as their peers.

According to data provided by EDWIN, a data resource provided by the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, the results of the spring 2018 ACCESS for ELLs showed only 22% of EL students made progress toward English proficiency. The results of the spring 2019 ACCESS for ELLs showed only 36% of EL students made progress. As a whole, we are pleased that these EL students made progress from spring 2018 to spring 2019, at 14%; however, we acknowledge that this progress is low.

In addition, despite the hard working efforts of the teachers of EL students and the students themselves, the results of the spring 2019 Next Generation MCAS showed only 33% of EL students earned a proficiency score of "Meeting Expectations" in ELA and Math, respectively. Although it is clear the data indicates that individual student performance has significantly improved compared to the 8th grade MCAS performance of these EL students, we believe there can be further improvement. As a result, we are committing to intensive work to close opportunity and achievement gaps for this student subgroup and recognize that this important work includes the efforts of district and school staff, in coordination with families and our community partners.

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

Within the last few years, Monty Tech has begun to adopt strategies that focus on meeting the needs of our diverse student groups. Alongside several other improvement strategies detailed in our school improvement plans, we intend to continue our work to strengthen and expand our English Language Education program.

The 2019 ELE Program Evaluation cited a significant increase in the number of EL students enrolled in our district. In fact, the total enrollment in our ELE program has increased by more than 500%. Most notably, there has been an increase in the number of students who have been assessed at English proficiency levels of 1 and 2 (WIDA). While student performance on ACCESS testing and Next Generation MCAS has improved, it has not been significant. As a result, Monty Tech has concluded that we could make further progress in serving our EL population. We plan to expand the current ESL teacher position from part time to full time. We also plan to further invest in associated PD to support the development of educators in sheltered instruction to improve access to content knowledge, language proficiency, and academic skills. As part of the budget process, we will ask our 18 cities/towns to support the expansion of this program in the coming years. All EL students will have access to this ESL teacher, including students of color and low-income students.

## Focus Area 1: Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners (D and/or E)

Inclusion for students with disabilities and English learners

In inclusive settings, educators representing general education, special education and English learner education work closely together to create instructional plans that are rigorous and purposeful and meet the needs of all students. The goal of this collaboration is to intentionally design, develop, and deliver instruction and supports matched to student needs. Inclusion is supported by inclusive practice, focused on universal design, with an emphasis on access and equity within the academic, social/emotional, and behavioral domains.

While evidence on the effectiveness of inclusion remains an emerging area of study, key studies indicate certain positive outcomes associated with this model of instruction. For example, Schifter (2016) found that students with disabilities who were fully included were more likely to graduate from high school than similar students who were educated in self-contained settings. Schifter emphasizes the importance of this finding since students with disabilities who earn a high school diploma tend to experience greater rates of employment and college admission than those who do not. Moreover, researchers such as Alquraini and Gut (2012) have documented the positive impact inclusion can have on student academic learning, communication, and socialization.

Intentionally designed instructional practices in inclusive classrooms is vital in order to ensure that inclusion is effective for all learners. For example, Le Paz and Sherman (2013) showed that when a cohort of students who are English learners (some with disabilities) in inclusive settings were taught specific writing strategies, those students were able to incorporate those strategies and improve the overall quality of their writing. This emphasizes the need for explicit, systematic instruction within general education settings to ensure the success of all students.

Accommodations and Adaptations

Educators may benefit from being supplied with customized and adapted curriculum materials in order to provide a wide variety of students full access to grade level content and standards. Educators likely need time to plan for instructional accommodations and adaptations so they can be delivered seamlessly within the inclusive classroom.

Targeted Instructional Strategies

The evidence base for specific instructional strategies, such as universal design for learning, explicit instruction, and cooperative learning continues to grow, and teams of teachers representing general education, special education and English learner education should jointly engage in professional development to gain an understanding of those strategies. Professional development related to instructional strategies that promote inclusion should be incorporated into coaching, team-based goal setting, and progress monitoring.

Assistive Technology

When many students with disabilities are provided with appropriate forms of assistive technology and aided and augmentative communication, their access to general education settings increases substantively. School may need support in purchasing technical devices as well as investing in professional learning opportunities so that all team members, including parents, can confidently use and implement these highly effective learning solutions.

Collaboration among Educators and Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals are highly engaged in supporting students in inclusive settings and can improve the quality of their supports when provided opportunities to collaborate with educators and other service providers. In many cases, extending their hours or creating scheduling solutions may be necessary for this collaboration to occur.

Part II: High-Quality Summer Learning Program Components

High-quality summer programs provide students additional opportunities to master grade level standards and accelerate their learning. Research has shown these programs to have positive outcomes for students who attend compared to their peers who do not attend. According to a multi-year study commissioned by the Rand Corporation that focused on summer learning programs in five urban districts, the following guidelines improve the effectiveness of summer programs:

* Offer programs for at least five weeks.
* Create schedules that protect instructional time.
* Track and maximize attendance rates.
* Invest in instructional quality.
* Minimize costs by considering probable no-show and attendance ra

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **ESL Teacher** | **45,000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **2** | **ESL Paraprofessional** | **30,000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **3** | **ESL Teacher: Summer Academy** | **5,000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **4** | **SPED Co-Teacher** | **80,000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **5** | **Instructional Technologist** | **55,000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **6** | **PD** | **15,320** | **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
* 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).
* Custom District Metric 1: English Language Education Annual Parent Survey
* Custom District Metric 2: Student Engagement (measured by a newly developed district-wide student survey)
* Custom District Metric 3: Common assessments designed by the district and/or WIDA to assess English Language proficiency

**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.*

Monty Tech recognizes that family engagement is critical to ensuring successful outcomes for all students. Given our focus on student subgroups, it is particularly important that we find ways to effectively engage families of EL students.

We recognize that existing family engagement opportunities at Monty Tech may not be effective in reaching all families. Therefore, in addition to our ongoing Parents' Nights and Informational Meetings, we are also planning to expand our current half time ESL position to a full time position. This will help us to provide more direct instructional support to EL students as well as more time for the ESL teacher to communicate to parents and families of EL students. It will also provide an opportunity to increase collaboration between teachers and parents of more EL students.

In addition, these efforts will enhance our plan to hire an ESL teacher for our MCAS Summer Academy. As a result, it will provide EL students an opportunity to gain a better understanding of ELA, math, and science concepts (for rising 9th graders and rising 10th graders) – to better prepare for the Next Generation MCAS.

We will measure the engagement of families through the annual ELE Parent Survey. We will also track the EL students' performance on ACCESS testing and Next Generation MCAS, each year, and share this information in the annual ELE Program Evaluation. We will also explore the use of a newly developed student survey.

**Certifications**

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

Monty Tech engaged the following groups: school council, school committee, teachers, staff, parents and families, and the local teachers' union. A consistent concern for teachers and families of EL students has been the need to improve student performance in the classroom and on statewide assessments.

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

Date of Approval: 04/15/2020