Student Opportunity Act Plan

Newburyport

# 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.*

* Low income/economically disadvantaged students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

Newburyport Public Schools' mission states "to ensure each student achieves intellectual and personal excellence and is equipped or life experiences through a system distinguished by students, staff, and community who: practice kindness and perseverance; celebrate each unique individual; value creativity, experiential, rigorous educational opportunities; scholarly pursuits; and life-long learning; provide the nurturing environments for emotional, social, and physical growth, understand and embrace their role of global citizens." In monitoring the data over the past five years and after conducting a root-cause analysis, it has become evident that there has been less growth in our economically disadvantaged population than other subgroups and in the aggregate. Therefore, NPS is committed to addressing the needs of this population, especially our youngest learners. Prevention of future reading difficulties is prioritized at the earliest grades.

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

## Focus Area 1: Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades (E, F, and G)

Newburyport Schools is devoted to strengthening work in early literacy with the goal to achieve 90% of students reading at grade level. Work thus far has focused on professional development for leaders and teachers on the science of reading while strengthening a data-feedback cycle on student achievement. Upon receipt of the additional funds from the City of Newburyport, the funds will be used to expand the positions of reading coach, reading interventionist, and sustain the bilingual instructional assistant/ family community liaison to better support these early literacy efforts.

Work in 2019-2020 included:

* Data Analysis: The district moved from using DIBELS Next to DIBELS 8th edition. This included training for all teachers. Grade level teams increased data analysis meetings to better progress monitor. The district partnered with Hill for Literacy to use a refined data meeting protocol. Teachers of the most struggling students participated in case studies with guidance from a literacy consultant.
* Professional Development: The district partnered with independent consultants, Dr. Stephanie Gottwald and Hill for Literacy to conduct multiple grade-level workshops on the science of reading and research-based instructional methods for literacy.
* Coaching: literacy consultants modeled and co-taught in classrooms to connect with PD. In addition, the district hired a part- time reading coach in 2020-2021.
* Supervision: The leadership team for early elementary participated in regional Northshore Literacy Leadership seminars on the science of reading and leadership for literacy.
* Word Study: The district conducted a curriculum review to select a new word study program based in research
* Remote learning: the district conducted professional development to help teachers transition to teaching literacy remote.
* Research Partnership: Newburyport committed to a research partnership with the University of Connecticut to analyze PD in literacy and PBIS. This partnership increases the literacy consultation the district will receive on the topics of science-based reading instruction.

During our 2020-2021 school year, the district is focusing on reaching the needs of students in a hybrid and remote setting and maintaining learning gains. The district has continued to focus on data analysis and research-based instruction. While implementation of a new word study program and launching the research with University of Connecticut have paused due to the pandemic, reading coaching for teachers has increased. The early literacy work will continue to focus on a prevention model, prioritizing specific benchmarks for students to meet at each grade level by strengthening our tiered model of supports. We plan to strengthen our Tier I by enhancing the word study resources and increasing supports and professional development in its implementation of evidence-based practices. We plan to strengthen Tiers II and III through literacy consultation, case studies, and professional development on the continuum of literacy learning needs.

By enhancing intervention capacity, we can reach more students in the Tier II level. By increasing the FTE of the literacy coach position, that individual can provide embedded professional development for elementary teachers when implementing literacy best practices. The increased FTE for literacy interventionist will allow us to expand the number of students in which we can provide Tier II literacy interventions and the bilingual IA/homeschool liaison allows us to better meet the needs of our English Learners and connect them and their families to the broader school community. Therefore, we can enhance language enrichment at home and at school.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Intervention Teacher** | **32,000.00** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **2** | **Literacy Coach** | **70,000.00** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **3** | **Bilingual IA/Family & Community Liaison** | **20,000.00** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |

**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 Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Custom District Metric 1: DIBELS

**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.*

EL, Title I, and school-wide meetings for parents focus on literacy. To take away stigma, the schools have been fully inclusive, building relationships between staff and families. These meetings also allow community resources to be readily available.

Some of these events include pop-up farmer's markets to reduce food insecurity. This year, we added remote parent open houses, conferences, and technical support. Because our teachers are coming into the homes of their students virtually this year, it has allowed for more organic relationship building with the students' families. Learning to provide remote meetings has also allowed more parents to attend who may have previously had transportation or childcare conflicts in the past. In addition, the district will add outreach sessions to EL and economically disadvantaged families by providing informational sessions about Newburyport's early childhood programs. The district will also collaborate with Newburyport Youth Services to expand learning centers in the community in high need areas

**Certifications**

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

Key stakeholders at the leadership level were engaged in discussions to direct the goals and narrative of this plan. This included: superintendent, assistant superintendent, elementary principals, literacy coordinator, finance and HR manager, director of pupil services and city finance manager.

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

Date of Approval: February 21, 2021