Student Opportunity Act Plan

Newton

# 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)
* Hispanic or Latinx students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

These are our chronically underperforming subgroups. We have made some progress over time, but multiple indicators continue to show that disparities in student outcomes - both academic and social emotional - persist.

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

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

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Social Emotional Learning

We have increased the number of mental health and counseling personnel over the past six years, begun the use of Signs of Suicide (SOS) for secondary students, and provided professional development in Social Emotional Learning for all elementary and Middle School staff. All students benefit from this program

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Salaries: Psych, Guidance, Social Workers, Medical** | **12,421,444** | **Guidance and Psychological** |
| **2** | **Responsive classroom training FY 21** | **2,000** | **Professional Development** |
| **3** | **Responsive classroom training FY 22, 23** | **20,000** | **Professional Development** |

## Focus Area 2: Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades (E, F, and G)

We have selected the iReady assessment for reading proficiency in Grades 4 - 8. We propose to expand use to grades K-3 as a screening tool and a resource for focused instruction as needed in all elementary schools. THis program has substantial professional development embedded, and will provide additional opportunities for NPS Literacy staff to work with teachers to improve their capacity to provide targeted literacy instruction.

This assessment was selected because it includes areas that we currently don't have good measures for including vocabulary and has an additional dyslexia screener that includes rapid naming, and letter, word, and passage-reading fluency. In addition to being a screening tool, the reports provide diagnostic information that is valuable for classroom-teachers in providing targeted instruction. Since we also use the i-Ready diagnostic at middle-school (and upper elementary) and it will provide longitudinal information on students across grades and schools.

Use of this tool will enable NPS to identify the specific needs of those students who are not reaching proficiency benchmarks in reading and supply explicitly targeted intervention and instruction. Many students in our identified subgroups will benefit from this additional screening and intervention.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **iReady Grades 4 - 8 currently in place (Textbooks and Instructional Materials)** | **20,000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **2** | **IReady K - 3 proposed 2021-22 (Textbooks and Instrucitonal Materials)** | **17,000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |

## Focus Area 3: Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners (D and/or E)

NPS has a long history of inclusion and co-teaching for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. In our ELL Program we have been gradually shifting from a teacher and paraprofessional model to a predominantly teacher model. Similarly, as we can, we are shifting to assigning more certified special educators to provide direct instruction for students with disabilities.

In addition, we are incorporating more elements of universal design for learning and SEI practices in the general education classrooms through professional development and coaching.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
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| **1** | **Salaries - Special Education Teachers** | **13,085,563** | **Pupil Services** |
| **2** | **Salaries - ELL** | **37,36,711** | **Pupil Services** |
| **3** | **Professional Development** | **426,500** | **Professional Development** |

## Focus Area 4: Diversifying the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention (D and/or H)

NPS is initiating a district supported Affinity Group for teachers of color.

Our Human Resources Department has initiated specific training for administrators on diversity hiring and allocated significant staff time and budget for recruiting.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Diversity recruiting** | **15,000** | **Administration** |
| **2** | **Affinity Groups - BIPOC** | **15,000** | **Administration** |
| **3** | **Salaries:Human Resource Specialist 0.5** | **50,000** | **Administration** |

**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).
* Additional Indicators: Percentage of 11th and 12th graders completing at least one DESE-identified advanced coursework
* Custom District Metric 1: iReady Scores

**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.*

NPS has long had a vibrant SEPAC. We began to develop an ELPAC two years ago, and this year leaders have emerged and begun to plan meetings and recruit members. In addition, our METCO families are more involved than ever in school-based and district-wide events. All groups are involved in planning and evaluation of programs.

Recently, Newton residents have formed a new group - Families Organizing for Racial Justice - or FORJ. We hired a new Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion who is working closely with families.

Our communication efforts have increased substantially and all of our materials are translated. We have also surveyed parents more frequently than ever.

We have also set up meal distribution sites and done extensive outreach. I would also note the significant technology distribution we have done, with a focus on low income families.

**Certifications**

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

Each of the Items in Commitment 2 have been thoroughly discussed in various stakeholder groups for the past year or more. Our typical procedures have been somewhat disrupted by the pandemic.

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

Date of Approval: Pending