Student Opportunity Act Plan

North Middlesex

# 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.*

* 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)

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

Our DESE information shows that our high needs subgroup criterion-referenced target percentage was 36%, Economically disadvantaged 18% and students with disabilities 53%. In order to close achievement gaps in these areas, the district is targeting these subgroups as a top priority in this act.

**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)

Strong literacy skills are the cornerstones on which positive economic and health outcomes are built. In addition, reading skills measured in elementary school are highly predictive of future academic outcomes. Despite these findings, only 36 percent of students currently reach proficiency in reading by the fourth grade. Furthermore, gaps between strong and weak readers increase over time.

NMRSD has selected to utilize our SOA funds to implement EL Education literacy resources in our K-4 classes. The district has been vetting this resource as a pilot for the last two years and has made the decision that this curriculum resource would help close achievement gaps in early literacy for our targeted subgroups. EL Education's curriculum meets these challenges by addressing each of the five essential components of reading as defined by the National Reading Panel (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) as well as the three key ELA shifts outlined in the Common Core State Standards.

A large body of research has demonstrated that foundational skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency affect reading comprehension. Students receive explicit and systematic instruction through a structured phonics approach in the EL Education curriculum that is based on Dr. Linnea Ehri's four phases of reading and spelling development. Along with our current resource supported by Wilson reading system.

The EL Education curriculum was developed from the ground up for students that require various types of differentiation, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. To this end, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework was used to ensure that all materials and supports are accessible for all types of learners. Evidence-based scaffolds and various levels of support are present in each lesson to ensure all students are able to interact with complex grade-level text because differentiation that provides an appropriate level of challenge is a major driver of learning gains. English Language Learner needs are specifically targeted through supports that aid students in understanding and using complex language structures present in academic discourse. Importantly, the EL Education's curriculum infuses academic work with essential opportunities for students to "encounter, tinker, practice, choose and contribute" through active and reflective activities that build character and social-emotional learning skills. Therefore, the supports in place, the rigorous curriculum and the various scaffolds for our subgroups would be recommended as our targeted program.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **EL Language Arts student** | **26,391** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **2** | **EL Modules and skills** | **36,010** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **3** | **EL Professional Development** | **32,339** | **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 Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Custom District Metric 1: EL resource assessments

**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.*

All buildings have or will be meeting with their school councils and parent groups to explain and gather input around our intended direction. As this is an early literacy initiative and all schools are Title I schools, structures are in place for two-way communication around instruction and student need. These avenues will be reviewed and additional communication will be determined through our end of year parent surveys and meetings.

**Certifications**

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

All buildings have reached out to their school councils. Five of the six buildings have met with the last building meeting the week of April 13th.

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

Date of Approval: 04/06/2020