Student Opportunity Act Plan

Northbridge

# 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

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As noted throughout our strategic plan, Northbridge Public Schools (NPS) is dedicated to ensuring that ALL students have access to a high-quality, student-centered and inclusive educational experience, Per our core values, "we believe all students are capable of achieving personal greatness." However, the reality is that our students with disabilities continue to be an underperforming subgroup, particularly at our high school level, with less and less students scoring proficient/meeting expectations or above on MCAS.

 Our SWD students at the high school level have shown a decreasing trend in MCAS performance over the last several years, as evidenced by the chart below (2019 Next-Gen MCAS results showed similar trends, however, not included due to difference in score equivalents for first year implementation.),

We have also recognized a pattern of decreasing four-year graduation rates for our students with disabilities versus ALL students.

In 2018, our 4-year graduation rate for SWDs was 75.9% compared to 91.4% for ALL students. In 2017, the rate for SWDs was 73.9% compared to 93.5% for ALL students. And, in 2016, the rate for SWDs was 66.7% compared to 91.2% for ALL students. This data clearly indicates that we need to do more to meet the needs of these students to ensure they are able to achieve personal success.

Our district leadership team has discussed the growing achievement gap for our students with disabilities and have developed and begun implementing a plan to address some of the issues that may be contributing to this growing achievement gap.

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

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

The district administration team and the building administrators have worked together all year to create a budget that supports equity for all students across the district. This involved the reallocation of funds and staff across the district to provide the necessary supports for the different levels of student need at each building.

In addition, we have taken a close look at scheduling across the district and have implemented some non-negotiables for all buildings, including a required RTI block at every building, every day, for every student.

We have also taken a different approach to scheduling our SWDs for next year by reviewing the goals and needs of every student with an IEP in the district, creating goal and needs-based student cohorts, and then assigning co-teaching teams to the cohorts based on teacher strengths and the best fit for the students.

We have also adjusted schedules to ensure that students on IEPs are supported by co-teaching teams of two teachers, versus a teacher and a paraprofessional, in ALL ELA and math classes, and in some cases by two teachers AND a paraprofessional.

In developing this enhanced special education model, we realized that we needed an additional special education teacher at the high school in order to provide services as mentioned above, due to an increased # of students on IEPs in the incoming 9th grade class next year.

We also realized that we need to ensure that teachers across the district are fluent in the various co-teaching models, as well as the instructional strategies that will make these models successful. As such, we allocated funding to continue the professional development that we have started this year around these topics.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Additional Special Education teacher at HS level** | **60,000.00** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **2** | **Co-teaching professional development** | **2,200.00** | **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
* High School Completion: Four-year cohort graduation rate
* Custom District Metric 1: ELA and math quarterly module 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.*

This year, we have focused on providing multiple opportunities for families to come into the schools for workshops, activities and events related to student well-being, mental health and social-emotional learning. These workshops have been offered based on feedback from parent/family surveys that we administered both last year and this year around what the families need and would like to learn more about. We have also provided childcare at many of these workshops to ensure that parents with young children are still able to partake.

In addition, this spring we are planning a series of "Hop on the Bus" tours to provide access to some of our families without transportation or who have difficulty getting to the schools. We will have presenters and educators who will take a bus into some of our neighborhoods with concentrations of high needs students, and parents will "hop on the bus" for a workshop or presentation.

Our district also has a very strong SpEd PAC that provides monthly workshop and/or discussion opportunities for our parents of students with IEPs.

We will measure increases in family engagement based on attendance sheets and responses to follow-up surveys.

**Certifications**

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

The district solicited input from our site-based managers and district-wide directors at our two February leadership meetings. We also reached out to families and community through a district-wide survey which was available from February 20th - March 6th to solicit their input and recommendations for the focus of funding. In addition, we invited parents/community members to provide their feedback at our March 3rd School Committee meeting during public comment. The School Committee also provided their input at our March 10th School Committee meeting.

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

Date of Approval: 03/24/2020