Student Opportunity Act Plan

Norwell

# 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)
* African American/Black students
* Asian students
* Hispanic or Latinx students
* Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic/Non-Latinx students
* American Indian or Alaskan Native students
* Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students
* White students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As noted in our strategic plan, Norwell Public Schools is committed to providing excellence in education in a challenging and supportive environment empowering students to be versatile, innovative and responsible citizens.

Based on our data, we recognize that there is room for improvement in English language arts achievement and growth at our K-5 elementary school level. Our internal metrics, as well as MCAS data, indicate a need to support our K-3 students with more targeted literacy instruction. In conjunction with this, the need to provide services and personnel at the kindergarten level that support the holistic needs of students in order to maximize their readiness to access the curriculum has been identified.

Additionally, based on our data, we recognize that students at our high school level have limited access to a music curriculum. Access to the arts contributes significantly to the versatility we hope to instill in our students. At the high school level, we currently employ the equivalent of one music teacher for nearly seven hundred students.

We are committed to supporting our educators in improving the literacy skills of our students in the early elementary grades and providing opportunities for high school students to engage in expanded music-related coursework. A research-based literacy program for grades K-3, increased personnel in the kindergarten classrooms, and additional staff in the high school music department will support our efforts to improve performance and opportunity for all students.

**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)

Research-based early literacy programs in the early elementary grades. We have researched programs and engaged our elementary principals and reading and literacy specialists in determining a program that would support our K-3 teachers in delivering high-quality, differentiated literacy instruction for Tier 1, 2, and 3 students. Teachers will be provided with on-going PD aligned for the adopted program. This is in keeping with one of the strategies in our on-going strategic plan - We will review, modify, and assess curriculum cyclically for a balance of content and process, methodology, developmental appropriateness, effectiveness, and authenticity. It is expected that there will be an increase in grade 3 ELA MCAS performance in the 2022-2023 school year for all students and subgroups.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Research-based program materials** | **39,000.00** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **2** | **Program based PD** | **18,500.00** | **Professional Development** |

## Focus Area 2: Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs (C and/or D)

Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs. The district does not currently provide aides in its kindergarten classrooms. In order to support our teachers and maximize the inclusive nature of our kindergarten classrooms and promote high, appropriate student engagement and learning, we recognize the importance of increasing our personnel and services in this area. All students, including subgroups, will benefit from this additional resource. It is expected that this increased personnel will help support the expectations identified in program #1. It is also expected that there will be a decrease in the percentage of kindergarten students requiring intense intervention (Does Not Meet Expectations) on an end of year assessment as measured by Benchmark Assessment System data.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Kindergarten Aides (4)** | **40,000** | **Other Teaching Services** |

Focus Area 3: Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers (B and D)

Increased staffing to expand student access to the arts. Our high school music program currently has the equivalent of one teacher for nearly seven hundred students. For the past ten years, the district's Congress of Councils has recognized that this is an area in need of attention and has advocated for growth in the music program. To support students with a well-rounded curriculum experience and opportunity to access the arts, increasing personnel in this specific area is expected to expand the current access to music instruction for all students. It is expected that the number of student learning experiences in music will increase over the next three years.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Music Teacher (1)** | **66,500** | **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
* Custom District Metric 1: Decreased percentage of kindergarten students requiring intense intervention on an end of year assessment (measured by Benchmark Assessment System data)
* Custom District Metric 2: Student engagement (measured by numbers of HS students engaged in a music course)

**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.*

Norwell Public Schools is a fully inclusive community, as such all families are invited to be partners in their students' learning. Norwell Public Schools has a comprehensive strategic plan. This plan, crafted with significant input from all of our stakeholder groups, articulates our vision for all students and is the roadmap for our decision making. All district decisions are anchored on the premise that Norwell Public Schools is committed to providing excellence in education in a challenging and supportive environment empowering students to be versatile, innovative and responsible citizens.

Norwell Public Schools recognizes that family and community engagement is crucial to ensuring successful outcomes for all students. We have and will continue to openly communicate our strategies for improving student learning and opportunity. With the identified focus areas on early literacy and holistic student needs in our elementary schools, and expanding opportunities in the arts for all students in our high school, it is important that our families are aware of our commitment to improving the educational experiences for all. Building principals and teachers will regularly communicate with parents on the progress of their students and the opportunities available to them. The district uses Schoology as a learning management system and teachers provide weekly communications, lessons and calendars to all students. Parents can access information electronically or be provided hard copies. All groups of stakeholders - Congress of Councils, PTOs, the town's Advisory Board, a Strategic Planning committee, special education parent council, Norwell Education Foundation - will continue to collaborate with district administration at regularly scheduled meetings about the needs of the students in our schools.

Summary of stakeholder engagement process:

The Student Opportunity Act was explained and student opportunity commitments were identified and discussed in district and community-wide School Committee budget workshops and regularly scheduled meetings. Budget workshop invitations are extended to all school PTOs, SEPAC, School Councils, faculty, interested members of a variety of town boards, and the community. A finalized budget was created based on stakeholder feedback and presented to the town advisory board. The School Committee will approve the school budget at an open meeting on April 6th, 2020.

**Certifications**

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

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

Date of Approval: April 6, 2020