**Student Opportunity Act Plan SY 2021-2023**

**Prospect Hill Academy Charter School**

# Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups

“We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children to read. We already have reams of research, hundreds of successful programs, and thousands of effective schools to show us the way. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven’t so far.” Elaine McEwan, 1998

Prospect Hill Academy (PHA) has focused its Student Opportunity Plan on our multi-layered and strategic overhaul of our early childhood literacy model aligning to the body of research on the science of reading with a laser focus on early foundational literacy practices and acquisition. PHA has prioritized its Grades K-3 early literacy model over the next 3 years to equip all teachers with the knowledge, skills and expertise to ensure all students acquire grade level literacy skills by the end of third grade to achieve college, career and life success. The reasons for the so-called achievement gap are multifaceted and complex. Reading failure is a prevalent factor across this country for many students, and in particular for students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners and students of color. The root cause of this failure is in our systems, not in our students. The recent reading research highlights the dire need for increased professional development for teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators in understanding the science of reading and dismantling ineffective practices. It is our belief that ensuring that every child learns to read is an instructional and civil rights imperative; while we need to raise proficiency levels for all students, our subgroups are currently not meeting success at the same rate as their peers.

PHA serves a dynamic culturally and linguistically diverse community, with a growing population of English learners. From 2015 to 2019 the number of home languages represented by our students more than doubled from nine to nineteen. Additionally, the number of students entering at the foundational level has grown more than threefold from 12% of the English learner population to 32% over this same time span. As the needs of English learners have increased, performance of this sub-group at the K-8 level on the ELA MCAS dropped from 19% meeting expectations in 2017 to 10% in 2019. The need is further emphasized by the fact that 50% of their non-EL peers were meeting or exceeding expectations on this assessment in 2019.

Our students with disabilities also continue to perform below their non-disabled peers. In 2019, 14% of students with disabilities met expectations on the ELA MCAS as compared to the 55% of their non-disabled peers meeting or exceeding expectations on the same assessment. This trend has persisted over the past three years with students with disabilities earning an average scaled score 22.3 points lower and a median SGP that averaged 13.7 points below their non-disabled peers.

Other subgroups also underperformed their peers in ELA. In 2019, 37% of economically disadvantaged students met or exceeded expectations while 56% of their non-disadvantaged peers were able to do so. Black and Hispanic/Latinx students also scored below their White and Asian peers on the assessment. On the last ELA MCAS (2019), 40% of Black students and 43% of Hispanic/Latinx students met or exceeded expectations compared with 58% of White students and 70% of Asian students.

As we embark on these strategic actions to address these outcome and performance differences, we will continue to monitor the performance of our student subgroups, the effectiveness of our efforts to improve their performance, and use lessons learned to continue to implement innovative and successful practices and programs to improve outcomes and close gaps.

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

1. Research-Based Early Literacy Programs

In FY20, PHA embarked on a strategic effort to shift all curriculum and literacy practices away from a balanced literacy approach which is not supported by the research to align with the body of research evidence on the science of reading with regards to reading development, instruction, and intervention that comes from the fields of education, developmental and cognitive psychology, linguistics, and neuroscience. While we are looking at ensuring reading proficiency in all K-12 students, we have a laser focus on the development of deep and robust foundational literacy expertise and practices K-3, utilizing the Orton Gillingham approach across all grades and for all students. In addition, to continue our efforts to close outcome gaps and raise achievement for all students, Prospect Hill Academy Charter School will continue its work to support educators to implement high-quality aligned curriculum (evidence-based practice #4). These efforts include:

* + In FY21, teachers will receive professional development in Orton-Gillingham through the *Institute for Multi-Sensory Education,* 30 hour K-3 Certification Course.
  + Kindergarten and First Grade teachers will receive ongoing 1:1 and grade level

coaching with an expert consultant in Early Literacy and Orton Gillingham.

* + In FY 21, K-2 teachers will begin implementing the EL curriculum, a high-quality aligned curriculum (evidence-based practice #4). In FY21 all K-2 teachers will participate in ongoing professional development on the EL Curriculum,
  + In FY 21, we purchased the Amplify M-Class program to support our use of the DIBELS literacy data and to ensure ongoing and comprehensive progress monitoring and customized and differentiated instruction.
  + To support and sustain best practice implementation and the development of

teachers and leaders in our literacy work, we added a K-6 ELA curriculum coach in FY 21.

* + These braided and targeted initiatives will address all high needs subgroups

through our focus on improving foundational literacy practices and teaching, the quality of lessons, materials, engagement and differentiation for all learners.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| 1 FTE ELA Curriculum Coach | $70,000 | Classroom & Specialist Teachers |
| PD: Orton-Gillingham IMSE Institute | $25,000 | Professional Development |
| PD: Consultant Orton-Gillingham and Early Literacy Expert Consultant: 1:1 and small group OG Coaching | $15,000 | Professional Development |
| Amplify M-Class DIBELS | $ 11,500 | Instructional Supplies |
| **Evidence-based programs identified by DESE** | Research-based Early Literacy Programs (E, F & G).  Support educators to implement high-quality aligned curriculum (E&F). | |
| **SOA Program categories** | ***SOA Program Category D: Hiring school personnel that best support improved performance and E: Professional Development*** | |

1. Expanded Access to full-day, high quality pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds.

In FY21, PHA is embarking on the design and development of an integrated Pre-K program that will open in the fall of 2021. The Pre-K program is designed around best practices in early childhood with a rich play-based developmental curriculum with infused language and literacy development, tailored to the diverse linguistic and cultural heritages of our students and families. PHA is engaging with an expert consultant in early childhood and early childhood literacy development as part of our Pre-K design and development process.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| Early Childhood Consultant | $30,000 | Professional Development |
| **Evidence-based programs identified by DESE** | Expanded Access to full-day high-quality pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds | |
| **SOA Program categories** | ***SOA Program Category D: Hiring school personnel that best support improved performance.***  ***Expanded early education and***  ***pre-kindergarten programming within the district in consultation or in partnership with community-based organizations*** | |

# Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets

Prospect Hill Academy will continue to utilize the state accountability measures to monitor its success with the above programs along with other measures.

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| **DESE Outcome Metrics** | **Custom District Metrics** |
| * **ELA Achievement** for Students who are ELs, Students with Disabilities, Students who are Economically Disadvantaged and Students who identify as Black and Hispanic/Latinx. * **ELA Growth** for Students who are ELs, Students with Disabilities, Students who are Economically Disadvantaged and Students who identify as Black and Hispanic/Latinx. * **Graduation Rates** for Students who are ELs, Students with Disabilities, Students who are Economically Disadvantaged and Students who identify as Black and Hispanic/Latinx. | * DIBELS Data Beginning, Middle and End of Year Assessment Data * PAST Data (Phonological Awareness Skills Test) |

# Commitment 4: Engaging All Families

***We must listen to the stories of our families—their narratives matter most. We must seek to fully understand them; our purpose is to serve their needs and those of their children.***

**- Lorena Lopera, Executive Director of Massachusetts Latinos for Education**

At PHA, we believe that both school and home contribute to students’ academic, intellectual, and social success. We value and are deeply committed to a home and school partnership, based on mutual trust and respect. Further, we recognize that the responsibility for building home and school partnerships rests primarily with school staff, especially our leadership. With this in mind, PHA provides structures to facilitate and support families in contributing productively to the PHA culture and student learning.

PHA uses a variety of methods to engage stakeholders including but not limited to gathering family input for decision-making, sharing information about curriculum and programming, and helping families better understand and support their children’s learning and development. To engage stakeholders in the SOA plan, the SOA was discussed at family engagement meetings in the spring of 2020 and at the Family Engagement Board Committee Meetings on 5/7/20 and on 1/12/21. In the spring, we reviewed school-wide data and discussed possible research-based improvement strategies, as well as different priorities and strategies.

PHA has an ongoing and robust family engagement structure, led by a full-time Family Engagement Coordinator, who is also a PHA parent, that supports home and school partnerships throughout the school year. Additional Family Engagement work at PHA includes:

Each campus has a **Family Advisory Board (FAB)**, a representative body of PHA parents/guardians who are invested in the mission of the school and committed to ongoing improvement. The FABs serve as the institutional backbone for the PHA Family Engagement Pledge and meet regularly to discuss matters of import to the broader PHA family community. During COVID, K-12 FAB meetings have been held twice a week to engage and support families.

Each campus also has a **Campus Family Ambassador (CFA)**, a parent hired to support family initiatives at the campus level and link campus-level needs and activities to K-12 family engagement efforts. CFAs collaborate with and work alongside Family Advisory Boards, as well as campus administration. CFAs sit on the FEBC (see below).

Our Early Childhood campus has a **Family Engagement Team (FET)** which brings together teachers, specialists, principals, and parent and family members to plan, implement, and evaluate family involvement strategies and programs such as Family Learning Walks. Families are engaged in the literacy work both through these walks and through ongoing home-school engagement and adult learning.

The **Family Engagement Board Committee (FEBC)** is a committee made of Board of Trustee members and parent/family leaders who serve as a vehicle for two-way communication between family leaders and school leaders with an emphasis on family education and home-school communication policy. This includes leads from PHA’s SEPAC.

**Family Liaisons** provide vital communication and outreach to our families who speak Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole at home. They attend conferences and events and help build relationships across potential language barriers. Each year, we evaluate and renew our commitment to our Family Engagement Program with parents and families, staff and faculty.

# Certifications

**☒ By checking here, I certify that our district has engaged stakeholders in accordance with the SOA.**

**☒ By checking here, I certify that the Prospect Hill Academy Charter School Board of Trustees voted on our Student Opportunity Act Plan articulated herein.** 

**Date of vote: February 23, 2021 Outcome of vote: Unanimous Approval**