Student Opportunity Act Plan

Pittsfield

# 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
* Hispanic or Latinx students
* Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic/Non-Latinx students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As noted in our District Improvement Plan, Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) is committed to ensuring that all of our students achieve success and are provided with equitable opportunities to achieve this educational excellence. When developing the District Improvement Plan, the team determined the district's current state by analyzing a number of data points including (but not limited to): student academic data (such as MCAS and nationally normed assessments), survey data (such as student, staff and families), and student behavior data (such as discipline and attendance). Based on this review of district data, our students with disabilities, African American/Black students, Hispanic/Latino students and English learners are not experiencing the same assessment outcomes as their peers. The data also indicates that students within these specific subgroups access to honors/intervention classes in middle school is disproportionate. Additionally, our educator workforce does not mirror our student population: Just 7.5 percent of our entire staff are of color, compared to 39.4 percent of our students.

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

Over the past few years PPS has implemented an assessment system that has provided benchmark data on student performance. Administrators have received extensive professional development in analyzing this data and creating student-oriented action plans. This work resulted in piloting and implementing new curricula and focusing on high-leverage instructional practices. As PPS continues with this work, there are two areas of focus for the 20-21 school year that will be deepened in upcoming years.

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

Inclusion for students with disabilities (SWD). We have invested in two additional inclusion teachers and associated professional development as part of a pilot program to support the development of educators in delivering instruction in an inclusionary setting at Stearns Elementary School. This pilot includes two grades and will increase by two grades each year at the school until there are inclusion classes at every level. We will generate a budget to support the expansion of this program throughout Stearns in the coming years, as well as to other schools in the district. To prepare for this the district has formed an Inclusion Team and an Equity Team who will author the plan for this transition. Our inclusion pilot program is available to all SWD, including students of color, English learners, and low-income students.

Student Impact: FY21 40 students; FY22 additional 40 students; FY23 additional 40 students

## Focus Area 2: Diversifying the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention (D and/or H)

Diversifying our educator workforce and continuing to diversify our curriculum. Our workforce does not mirror our student population, a fact which we believe lowers the engagement and academic success of our students of color. We have contracted with an executive search firm in order to expand a search for a Human Resources Director (new title Human Resource and Diversity Development Director) who has a strong background in diversity, equity, and inclusion. A partnership has been formed with a local college in order to develop strategic standards-based curriculum through novel studies aligned with the core programs (Into Reading and Into Literature, both green ratings in Ed Reports). Educators have opportunities for collaborative planning and professional development in implementing the new reading curriculum, Into Reading, through the lens of matching and scaffolding the curriculum for all students. Administrators and teachers will participate in extensive professional development in understanding early literacy instruction. To further support an inclusive environment and promote high achievement and engagement for all our students, we will continue to offer culturally responsive PD for all educators.

The district will also contract with an outside agency to conduct a comprehensive equity audit in order to author and plan implementation of a multi-year equity plan.

Student Impact: There is no direct student number alignment, but the goal is this will ultimately impact the entire student body approximately 5,000 students.

**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 Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Custom District Metric 1: 100% of students in grades K - 2 will complete at least 90 topics in iRead
* Custom District Metric 2: 100% of students in 3-10 will achieve at least 41% growth in the ELA Illuminate Measure from January to June
* Custom District Metric 3: Baseline and follow-up data from a Panorama student and staff voice survey administered twice throughout the school year will demonstrate a 20% improvement in student (Grades 3-12) and staff perceptions that PPS classrooms are academically engaging spaces to learn.

**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.*

Pittsfield Public Schools recognizes that family engagement is critical to ensuring successful outcomes for all students. Given our focus on student subgroups, it is particularly important that we find ways to effectively engage our families of students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, EL students and students with disabilities.

We recognize that existing family engagement opportunities at our schools may not be effective in reaching all families, especially during the remote and hybrid models of instruction. As a result, we have hired a Remote Family Engagement Coordinator who is charged to perform the following essential functions:

* Meets with students' parents/guardians and other stakeholders to ensure response to data leads to developed strategies for increased attendance with an emphasis on intervention plans, accommodations, and/or modifications for effectiveness & adjust plans as needed.
* Provides technical assistance to parents in developing the skills needed to function effectively in a working relationship among home, school and community.
* Contributes to PPS vision that 'all children can achieve success' by improving school attendance.
* Works with vulnerable families to ensure that support is available.

**Certifications**

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

District Parent/Guardian Advisory Council provided feedback and approved the plan. Administrators, Educators, and School Councils collaborated in the School Improvement and Sustainable Improvement Plans which are directly aligned with the District Improvement Plan. This Student Opportunity Plan supports the DIP.

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

Date of Approval: 01/13/2021