Student Opportunity Act Plan

Salem

# 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

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

Salem Public Schools has focused its Student Opportunity Plan on the ongoing work to "reimagine the high school experience" for our students born out of the district's 2017 strategic plan. Since then, the district has pursued three related goals:

1) redesign instruction to embrace student-centered learning that better prepares students for college and career in the 21st century;

2) expand student voice and leadership both in and out of school; and

3) create a college and career going culture. This work is the district's top priority as it's been widely acknowledged that our high school currently serves some students well, but leaves far too many behind.

Salem has three high schools. Two are smaller, specialized high schools (one alternative innovation school serving approximately 50 students and one therapeutic day program serving approximately 20 students). Salem High School has 886 students this year (dropping from an enrollment of almost 950 five years ago) and serves the vast majority of students in our city. In addition to the enrollment decline, the student population at Salem High School has become increasingly diverse and economically disadvantaged over the course of the last five years (from 46% to 40% White and from 41% to 47.4% economically disadvantaged). Although some academic progress was made in the past year (moving up from the 9th to the 14th accountability percentile and showing "substantial progress toward targets" earning 58% in 2019 (up from 44% in 2018), largely driven by improved performance among the school's lowest performing students, much more work is still needed, especially in terms of the EL, SWD, and economically disadvantaged student populations at the school. Achievement gaps persist in each of these areas, across all subjects (In ELA ED students perform 15 points below the school-wide average, EL and SWD students both score 37 points below. Gaps for Math and science are similar). Indeed, it is increasingly clear that the traditional structures supporting quality education at Salem High School, while they may continue to benefit some, no longer serve the changing needs of the current student population. This must change if Salem High School is going to serve all students in the future.

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

Over the last three years, Salem Public Schools has taken several steps to redesign its high school. Several initiatives that began in response to the SPS Strategic Plan are taking root at the school, including:

* Redesign of the school's guidance department to a more modernized "College and Career Center" with several facilities upgrades
* Introduction of standards-based instruction and grading practices which is helping teachers to prioritize content standards and identify measures of proficiency
* Launch and expansion of project-based learning across multiple disciplines
* Creation of internship opportunities for more than 75 students
* Creation of new, cooperative learning experiences within the school's Career Technical Education program
* Launch of the Early College program involving 50 students through partnerships with Salem State University and LEAP for Education with courses aligned to health care and technology careers
* Integration of technology through a 1:1 chromebook digital learning program
* Introduction of a co-teaching model for EL newcomer students
* Implementation of targeted interventions and Saturday supports to help prepare struggling students for MCAS assessments
* Rollout of a school-wide professional development (in partnership with TNTP) focused on helping teachers form better relationships with students and to be trauma-informed

Last year, a thoughtful, comprehensive school improvement plan was collaboratively developed that provides a solid framework for continuing the redesign work. This plan outlines four "Redesign Practices" around which all work within the high school is now focused. These include:

Redesign Practice #1: Leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration

Redesign Practice #2: Intentional practices for improving instruction

Redesign Practice #3: Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students

This work continues in earnest, each year, even as the school has experienced leadership turnover. While the high school saw improvement in the last year, more progress is needed to ensure that all students have the same opportunities for success. Our goal is to ensure that all Salem students graduate ready for success in college, work, and life.

Ensuring access, opportunity, and engagement for Salem students who consistently lack access to the most beneficial opportunities and who consistently perform below their peers is the core driver for the high school's improvement plan and as such, nearly all of its strategies align to the evidence based programs outlined in the Student Opportunities Act (SOA).

Although the additional aide that Salem will receive through SOA ($135,000) does not keep pace with the district's increased fixed costs ($2.1m), and therefore does not really translate into "new, additional resources" for the district, Salem has identified the priority areas around which our SOA plan will focus. To that end, Salem intends to continue and deepen our ongoing work in several areas identified as "evidence based programs" by DESE, all of which are outlined in the Appendix.\* Out of this full body of work, Salem has identified the following three initiatives for its Student Opportunities Plan. Each of these initiatives will be implemented at Salem High School:

\*NOTE: Appendix A and Appendix B are not available in this version of Salem’s SOA Plan. Please see plan posted on Salem Public Schools website.

## Focus Area 1: Community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services (C)

Launch its implementation of the BARR+ Model (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) program. BARR is a strengths-based model that provides schools with a comprehensive approach to meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students. Schools within the BARR Network harness the power of relationships and data to become more equitable, ensure that no student is invisible, and remove both academic and non-academic barriers to learning. BARR has been proven to create statistically significant impacts in 19 areas of academic performance outcomes for students, teachers, and schools, including especially powerful results narrowing opportunity gaps for students of color and students from low-income families. Salem has successfully implemented a similar program, known as City Connects, district-wide in its K-8 schools. The BARR+ program and support through SOA will allow Salem to prioritize implementation at the high school grades, expanding the kind of supports to meet the social and emotional needs of all of our students and especially those who face multiple challenges such as our EL, SWD, and low-income populations. More information about the details of implementation for Years 1 through Year 3 can be found in Appendix B.

\*NOTE: Appendix A and Appendix B are not available in this version of Salem’s SOA Plan. Please see plan posted on Salem Public Schools website.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Year 1 implementation cost for the BARR+ program** | **53,000** | **Pupil Services** |
| **2** | **.5 FTE BARR Coordinator** | **40,000** | **Pupil Services** |

## Focus Area 2: Early College programs focused primarily on students under-represented in higher education (I)

Continue implementation and refinement of the Charlotte Forten Early College Program. During the third year of Salem High School's implementation of its Early College program, Salem High School plans to deepen its work to continue targeting and recruiting students who are traditionally underserved in higher education. Specifically, the school plans to expand the capacity of the program to 100 students and begin to integrate programming in the 9th and 10th grades to increase awareness about the Early College program and its opportunities for students. This will help improve our ability to target traditionally underserved students. Beginning recruitment efforts earlier in the year as well as in 9th and 10th grades will help build the expectation of participation in the Early College track among a broader spectrum of students. Further, ensuring that career alignment information is shared more widely to show how a college education will enhance their ability to be successful in their chosen career. Finally, ensuring that all SHS staff have an increased awareness of the opportunity and are able to counsel students appropriately. In addition, providing the support of a writing tutor will help remove one of the identified barriers to participation. Salem was just notified of its award of $60,000 for the Early College program. While many of the costs associated with the program will be covered through this grant, resources through SOA will help ensure we are able to offer the level of transportation that will be needed to ensure it is not a barrier to participation, especially for our EL, SWD, and low-income populations.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Early College program** | **60,000** | **Other Teaching Services** |
| **2** | **Student transportation** | **10,000** | **Other Teaching Services** |

Focus Area 3: Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners (D and/or E)

Maintain and continue a co-teaching model for EL newcomers. Beginning in 2019-20, the district launched a co-teaching model for its beginner EL students (students who are at a WIDA Level 1.0 to 2.9). There are a total of 24 beginner ELs currently enrolled who benefit from this model. This has helped provide additional linguistic scaffolds to these students which helps prevent failure and dropout and boosts academic achievement among the students. SHS plans to maintain its current level of co-teaching (with one co-teacher at the high school) and hopes to add more in the future.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **1 FTE (Co-Teacher) for EL Newcomers** | **70,000** | **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
* Student Achievement: Mathematics achievement as measured by average scaled scores on MCAS
* Student Achievement: Science achievement as measured by average scaled scores (or CPI, depending on grade level) on MCAS
* Student Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Student Growth: Mathematics mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* High School Completion: Four-year cohort graduation rate
* High School Completion: Extended engagement rate (5-year cohort grad rate plus percentage of students who are still enrolled)
* High School Completion: Annual dropout rate
* English Language Proficiency: Progress made by students towards attaining English proficiency (percentage of students meeting annual targets calculated to attain English proficiency in six years).
* Additional Indicators: Chronic absenteeism (percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership)
* Additional Indicators: Percentage of 11th and 12th graders completing at least one DESE-identified advanced coursework

**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.*

Salem Public Schools recognizes that family engagement is an essential element to our eventual success, especially in terms of engaging those families who have been traditionally more challenging to reach. Our family engagement plan includes the continuation of engagement strategies underway this year along with those proposed in our school improvement plan. These include:

* Continuation of work teams focused on different aspects of the high school redesign efforts that involve staff, parents/guardians, students, and members of the community
* Continuation of the "High School Redesign Monitoring" team consisting of 18-24 students, parents, and community stakeholders who are monitoring the implementation of the school's improvement plan
* Continuation of the bi-annual convenings (one in the fall and one in the spring) focused on engaging the broader community in the conversation of high school redesign
* Continuation of monthly open forums that engage parents and community members in topics of interest related to the high school redesign work
* Continuation of plans to launch the Panorama Parent School Culture Survey

With nearly three years of high school redesign now underway, the staff at Salem High School and the district have begun to identify additional outreach strategies to engage members of the community who may be more difficult to reach. One strategy that has been successful is to hold some of the above-mentioned forums in different locations throughout the community.

Salem High School and district staff will identify at least three or four such opportunities throughout the year and work to ensure that these forums and conversations take place in Spanish to better serve the district's Spanish speaking population. Offering child care at these meetings is another way that we have seen increased turnout. Other strategies include: advertising the forums in churches, grocery stores, and other community-based locations, featuring a "headlining" speaker or other presentation of interest along with the conversation about high school redesign, piggy-backing the conversation on other community events, offering live translation services.

Finally, as Salem High School continues this work, the school plans to engage more teachers and staff members in making more frequent, direct contact with all families, either over the phone, or in person. As they do so, efforts will be made to engage these family members in key conversations about the redesign strategies as well as their student's individual progress.

Increased parent engagement in these opportunities will be measured by tracking participation at each event and comparing the numbers of those engaged with those who have participated in the last two years.

**Certifications**

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

While we still have a long way to go, the development of the strategic planning priority to redesign the high school as well as the high school turnaround plan involved a high level of engagement and collaboration over the past few years. Over 400 people from across the district participated in a series of forums and meetings leading to the strategic plan. In 2018-19 a series of more focused meetings involving multiple stakeholders within the high school leading to the school's current improvement plan. Parent surveys focused on their views with regard to the hiring of a school leader affirm the content and focus of the school's plan. A recent parent and community survey focused on the type of leadership needed for the future (as Salem High School currently has an Interim Principal and is currently in the process of hiring a permanent one) reinforced the strategies described in this plan. As Salem became clearer on the district's intended focus for the Student Opportunities Act, the district engaged had planned two community forums to seek feedback from the broader community on the evenings of Monday, March 16th (scheduled at the high school) and Tuesday March 17th (scheduled in the community), however, those convenings were canceled as a result of the coronavirus-related school closure. In lieu of this in-person forum, the district instead shared a draft copy of the plan with the following groups and invited participants to share their feedback online. The following groups received a draft copy of the district's SOA plan:

* Salem High School Staff
* Salem High School parent community, including the PTO Salem High School students
* All Salem Public Schools parents and community members SEPAC
* The Salem Latino Leadership Coalition
* And other groups as identified

In addition, the district's SOA plan was discussed at the following School Committee Meetings: February 24, March 3, and March 23. On March 23, the School Committee formally voted to adopt this SOA plan.

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

Date of Approval: 03/23/2020