Student Opportunity Act Plan

Shrewsbury

# 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.*

* High Needs students (defined as any student who is economically disadvantaged, has a disability, or is an English learner/former English learner)

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

The mission and core values of the Shrewsbury Public Schools reflect our determination that we will provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success, an appreciation of our democratic tradition and the desire to continue to learn throughout life. Further, the district is committed to ensuring all students achieve success. Shrewsbury engaged in creating a Portrait of a Graduate to commit to and communicate that vision more broadly to the community. Indeed, the final version of the vision document depicts well the skills and competencies we aspire to develop in the children that attend our schools.

In reviewing both state and local assessment data, however, we recognize that not all student groups are experiencing the same level of success. Specifically, a review of district data in 2018 showed that English learners and students with disabilities posted lower achievement and growth scores on MCAS. We also note the troubling fact that students within these specific subgroups, particularly students with disabilities, demonstrated more social emotional and mental health needs than neurotypical children. Accordingly, our strategic plan detailed the steps taken to better realize our vision. One specific priority- Learning Environments Where Everyone's Success Matters- is particularly relevant.

We are committing to intensive wo work to close achievement and opportunity gaps for student subgroups by outlining specific goals for the next two years. Our Student Opportunity plan dovetails well with those goals:

1. Strategic Goals:

* Create a common understanding of the benefits of inclusive schools and develop a shared, systematic approach to ensure that everyone has equitable access and opportunity for successful learning
* Ensure that all staff actively participate in professional development focused on inclusive and culturally proficient practices that improve learning and school cultures
* Analyze data related to academic performance and other indicators of success to identify existing gaps among populations; determine and implement action steps for improvement; and demonstrate success at closing these gaps
* Additionally, students in Shrewsbury do not yet have equal access to free full day kindergarten, which we know plays an important part in the development of both academic skills and social emotional competencies. We seek to make access universal.

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

Within the last few years, Shrewsbury Public Schools has begun to adopt strategies that focus on meeting the needs of our diverse student groups. Alongside several other improvement strategies detailed in our strategic plan, we intend to continue and deepen our work on two important initiatives already underway. These priorities include providing universal access to free full-day Kindergarten programming and sustaining inclusion / implementation of the co-taught model in Shrewsbury.

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

Inclusion for students with disabilities (SWD). An independent review of our special education services two years ago found that our district could make further progress in serving students with disabilities in a least restrictive environment. We have invested in hiring addition inclusion teachers and associated professional development with consultant Donna Simone as part of a Co-Teaching program in Grades K-8 to support the development of educators in delivering instruction in an inclusionary setting. We will ask our town to support the expansion of this program into Shrewsbury High School in the coming years. Our Co-Teaching classrooms enable all students to access inclusive programming, including students of color, English learners, and low-income students.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the**  **$ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Professional Development for SPS Co-Teachers & District Leaders** | **36,450** | **Professional Development** |
| **2** | **Expanding Kindergarten Programming** | **149,760** | **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.*

* Custom District Metric 1: Results of feedback discussions using a non-evaluative walkthrough tool from the DESE's Inclusive Guidebook
* Custom District Metric 2: SPS Placement documents
* Custom District Metric 3: Formative assessment results

**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.*

Our district mission statement purposefully names the role parents play as partners. 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. Therefore, in addition to ongoing PTO meetings and monthly School Council gatherings at each school, we are also committing to engaging parents of students with disabilities with regular in person meetings of the Parent Advisory group as well as more informal check ins by Special Education liaisons assigned to co-taught classrooms.

**Certifications**

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

Shrewsbury Public Schools partnered with Thoughtexchange, a Canadian company, to lead our community engagement efforts related to the development of our strategic plan, with the goal of ensuring broad and demographically representative participation. In that process we engaged the following groups: focus group of parents/guardians including School Council members from each school, focus group of educators, focus group of students, focus group of local non-profits, special education parent advisory council, and the Shrewsbury Education Association, our local teachers’ union.

More recently we used a district survey to poll the parent community about our Student Opportunity Act Plan. Further, individuals and groups were invited to communicate by email and/or to speak during public comment during School Committee meetings in June prior to the Board vote. A primary concern for families was that inclusive practices continue to meet the diverse needs of all learners; a second was the need for more educators/maintaining low class sizes.

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

Date of Approval: 06/24/2020