Student Opportunity Act Plan

Somerset

# 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.*

* 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)

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

The mission of the Somerset Public Schools is to ensure that ALL students and teachers pursue excellence, achieve their full potential, and cherish learning as students prepare to be high school, college, career, and life ready. Our core values are perseverance, respect, innovation, dedication to the community, and excellence. Despite this mission, not all students are achieving at the same rates. Based on a review of our district data, Somerset students with disabilities and high needs students are not experiencing the outcomes on MCAS. For instance, whereas 51% of all students met or exceeded the expectations in English Language Arts, only 8% of students with disabilities and 28% of high needs students did so. Likewise, on the 2019 Mathematics MCAS exams, 51% of all students met or exceeded the standard and only 8% did not whereas 13% of students with disabilities met or exceeded the standard while 38% did not.

The new chapter 70 funds will be used to close these achievement gaps among our students with disabilities and high needs subgroups and to provide more college and career readiness opportunities for all students.

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

The Somerset Public Schools expanded its use of inclusion in FY20 through the addition of a special education teacher and added another elementary special education inclusion teacher in FY21. We intend to continue and deepen our work in this area by maintaining these positions and adding another inclusion teacher in FY22. Similarly, we are proposing to add another district-wide reading specialist to work with high needs students and students with dyslexia. We are providing professional development to all paraprofessionals on areas such as data collection, differentiated instruction, and inclusion practices.

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

SPS added a special education inclusion teacher in FY20 and will be sustaining that position in FY21 and adding another inclusion position despite significant budgetary challenges. We have contracted with an outside consultant to provide 30 hours of professional development to our 49 paraprofessionals to support the inclusion teaching model we have adopted and implemented in Somerset. Additionally, we have created two elementary level instructional coaching positions to provide in- class supports and training to teachers in areas that represent best instructional practices.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Inclusion Teachers (2)** | **200,000** | **Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges** |
| **2** | **Instructional Coaches (2)** | **200,000** | **Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges** |
| **3** | **Paraprofessional Training** | **5,000** | **Professional Development** |

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

The Somerset Public Schools, in response to students' growing social and emotional learning needs, has expanded its counseling staff in recent years from having 0.5 FTE adjustment counselors just a few years ago to 4.0 FTE now, including a new position that was created in FY21. This new position allows Somerset to have a full-time adjustment counselor assigned to each of its four schools**.**

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Adjustment Counselor** | **100,000** | **Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges** |

**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 Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Student Growth: Mathematics mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Custom District Metric 1: SEL-related survey data
* Custom District Metric 2: STAR Reading assessment data

**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.*

Stakeholder engagement is critically important in Somerset to ensure we are on the right path to achieve successful outcomes for all students. On January 25, 2020, a group of approximately fifty-five school community members gathered to begin developing the joint vision of both the Somerset Public Schools and the Somerset Berkley Regional School District graduate and the next district strategic plans. This group of individuals consisted of parents, students, teachers, administrators, school committee members, local business leaders, and other members of the community. This group included special education parents, teachers, and administrators. This event allowed participants to discuss what things we are doing well, what things we need to improve upon, and what things we need to begin doing that are currently not happening.

This plan was also presented to the school community at a public hearing on February 24, 2020 at which time public comments were heard.

**Certifications**

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

Faculty and staff were engaged through school-level discussions and through a strategic planning community event on January 25, 2020.

Parents and other community members were asked for input at a public hearing in February, 2020 and at the January 25, 2020 community event.

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

Date of Approval: 02/24/2020