Student Opportunity Act Plan

Southern Berkshire

# 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
* Asian students
* Hispanic or Latinx students
* Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic/Non-Latinx students
* American Indian or Alaskan Native students
* Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students
* White students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As noted in our District Strategies for Continuous Improvement, Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) is committed to ensuring a rigorous educational environment that prepares and inspires all students to be resilient, curious, and ethical global citizens who embrace the challenges of an ever-changing world through a commitment to our core values of opportunity, excellence, character, and community. However, we recognize that not all student groups have experienced the same level of success to date. Based on a review of our district data, our economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities are not experiencing the same level of MCAS outcomes and graduation rates as their peers. We also note the troubling fact that students within these specific subgroups, particularly economically disadvantaged students, are reported as having lower engagement in school as measured by teacher feedback, attendance data, and student surveys. Additionally, alumni data indicate a concerning but similar experience to the national data, regarding trends of student matriculation to higher education institutions, and two and four-year completion rates which are much lower than anticipated with high school graduation rates over 90+ percent annually. We are committing to intensive work to close achievement and opportunity gaps for these student subgroups and recognize that this important work will take not just the efforts of district staff, but also our families and community.

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

Within the last few years, SBRSD 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.

## Focus Area 1: Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum (E and F)

Supporting educators to implement a high-quality, aligned curriculum. Access to high-quality, standards-aligned curricular materials is a critical component of the student learning experience, with growing evidence that curricular materials matter particularly for those students experiencing opportunity and performance gaps. A recent study of student assignments revealed that students spent the bulk of their time in school completing assignments that were not grade-appropriate, the result of materials that were not standards-aligned, and expectations that were too low to all SWD, including students of color, English learners, and low-income students. SBRSD will continue to:

* Develop common, well-defined learning outcomes, with a focus on depth and critical thinking skills.
* Develop, review, and maintain grade level, subject-based curriculum maps that are vertically and horizontally aligned to instruction, assessment, and MA State Standards
* Develop and implement differentiated, innovative, and student-centered instructional practices consistently throughout the District.
* Rollout a Benchmark Assessment System to assess student progress and social-emotional status, collect data and make timely instructional changes to instruction and supports.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the**  **$ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Curriculum Writing Rate and Stipends** | **40000** | **Classroom & Specialist Teachers** |
| **2** | **Technology for Data Teams and 1:1 Initiative** | **65000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **3** | **FASTBridge Benchmark Assessment System** | **20000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **4** | **FASTBridge Training** | **15000** | **Professional Development** |
| **5** | **Inclusion PD** | **10000** | **Professional Development** |

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

Innovation Pathways and Early College Initiatives. Acknowledging the unique advantages and challenges of sustaining a small district, SBRSD will continue to create a variety of pathways for our students based on interests and in an effort to prepare them for success in a college or career setting. The District is looking to apply to the next round of the Innovations Pathways Grant Program if available in partnership with the state but will continue to deepen the work begun independently. SBRSD will go on to build effective community relationships to foster engagement in redesigning the internship program in an effort to provide students with opportunities to develop critical skills as well as potential certifications or prospective credits. We will continue to invest in professional development to build teacher capacity around personalized and blended learning as well as program innovation and design.

SBRSD will also continue partnerships with local colleges to build on the Early College program initiative funded locally. Early College programs have been shown to improve high school graduation, college enrollment and persistence, and degree attainment rates. In particular, these models can significantly narrow – or even close – opportunity gaps for traditionally underserved students, including those from low-income backgrounds. Students were able to earn college credits at no cost to them during the day.

High-Quality Innovation Pathways Program Components Key Innovation Pathway program features include:

* Equitable Access: Prioritizing students underrepresented in higher education and high skill/high demand industries
* Guided Academic Pathways: At least two technical courses and two college-level courses
* Enhanced Student Supports: Wraparound services to promote success and completion
* Connection to Career: Exposure to targeted pathway opportunities intended to lead to a career and a 100-hour internship or capstone with related quality indicators
* Effective Partnerships: At least one public secondary school and/or district, a MassHire board, and at least one employer from the relevant industry that guides program development and implementation

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Stipend to Bard College for 3 Courses taught at SBRSD** | **21000** | **Other Teaching Services** |
| **2** | **Stipends for educator leaders** | **33000** | **Professional Development** |
| **3** | **Culturally responsive PD** | **26000** | **Professional Development** |

**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
* 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
* Custom District Metric 1: student and alumni surveys

**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.*

SBRSD 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. Therefore, in addition to our ongoing family potluck dinners and monthly PTO meetings at each school, we will continue our home visiting programs in District specifically targeted to families of students of color, EL students, students with disabilities, and those from low-income backgrounds. In this model, educators make visits to families at their homes to engage in a two- way dialogue about shared goals for their students. We will measure the engagement of families who receive a home visit through a follow-up survey and track the number of and demographics of families reached through home visiting each year. SBRSD will continue to develop the Student Match Program which ensures that each student has at least one adult in the District that they have a relationship with, and that faculty and staff member can be a point of contact for the student and family. We will continue to enhance our social media engagement and communications to student homes to ensure they are translated to reach all as well as to keep our families engaged and informed with important dates and information on what is happening in the schools**.**

**Certifications**

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

SBRSD engaged the following groups: task force of parents/guardians including PTO representatives and community stakeholder volunteers, focus groups of educators, special education parent advisory council, EL parent advisory council, and the local teachers’ union. The information was shared at the November School Committee meeting, and individuals and groups had the opportunity to talk about it during public comment. We shared the plan in various settings including the Superintendent's Regional Roundtable Meeting, and in faculty and staff meetings. It is posted on the website and is referred to in the work on a regular basis. There is an opportunity to give feedback via the Ask the Superintendent feature on the website.

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

Date of Approval: 01/17/2021