Student Opportunity Act Plan

Wareham

# 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.*

* Low income/economically disadvantaged students

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

Wareham Public Schools will focus on early education for economically challenged students. The long-standing problem was diagnosed using data and indicated that our youngest students were reading at 50-60% below the national norm, according to the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST). Due to this persistent problem, as students moved through the system, never able to gain the necessary literacy skills, all future learning was compromised. The disparity of Wareham students, when measured against the norm, created substantial inequity. Students that had the skills moved on to higher-level learning opportunities while students that did not have the skills floundered. Predictably, the same disparity that existed in Kindergarten remained through high school, representing 50-60% of Wareham's students. Success on the MCAS test seems predicated on the attainment of early literacy skills.

PreK-2 attend the John W. Decas Elementary School. According to the FY 20 Title I workbook, the district is 79.7% low- income. It is imperative that students have the fundamental literacy skills early (we have data tracking students' literacy and math skills for the last five years), and we believe we have found answers to mitigate this issue. We have data to indicate that current practices are correcting the inequities.

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

Focus Area 1: Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades (E, F, and G)

The District will enhance core instruction by continuing to implement research-based early literacy programs (processes) in PreK-2. The evidence-based process our District has adopted to deepen and best support the achievement gap uses a neurological approach. By integrating movement that connects the left and right hemispheres of the brain, our students have made significant, sustained skill acquisition. As indicated in, Building the Brains "Air Traffic Control" System: How Early Experiences Shape the development of Executive Function (Center on Developing Child, Harvard University, 2016);"The same neuroplasticity that leaves executive functioning skills vulnerable to genetic and environmental disruption also presents the possibility of actively promoting the successful development of these skills" (p. 8).

Interventions that include an explicit focus on executive function skills do not need to be implemented separately from those focused on instruction in early literacy and math abilities". Children who experienced a curriculum that combined support for executive function skills also performed better than their 'usual practice' peers on tests of early literacy abilities, as well as on measures of emotional understanding and social problem-solving (p. 10).

The funding will assist students by providing them the extra support needed during flexible grouping time. We identify strengths and challenges in all students using triangulated data. We flexibly group all grade level students based on need and move students readily once they have attained the necessary skills determined through data collection. The idea is to offer ALL students the essential fundamental skills that become part of who they are, and then they can equitably participate in enhancing their academic lives.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Paraprofessionals** | **53,795** | **Other Teaching Services** |
| **2** | **Retirement Contribution** | **13,364** | **Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges** |
| **3** | **Training** | **4800** | **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.*

* Custom District Metric 1: DESE Outcome Metrics
* Custom District Metric 2: Custom District Metrics
* Custom District Metric 3: Company created metrics

**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.*

A number of metrics are used:

* Grade PreK Teacher Administered: Letter Sound, Letter Sound Fluency, Phonological Awareness, Concepts of print, Eye tracking, and Motor Skills
* Grades K and 1: NWEA (Oral Reading Fluency-computer-based) first year implementing as this assists with strong and efficient data connected to Florida Reading Research Institute and a teacher-friendly dashboard. Prior to this measure, we used FAST and this was administered by a team, not the classroom teacher, as a way to mitigate bias. Teacher administered: Letter Sound, Letter Sound Fluency (one minute timed mixed upper and lower case, High-Frequency Words and some Phonological Awareness, and Developmental Reading Inventory (DRA).
* Grade 2: FAST (computer-based); Teacher administered: Phonological Awareness for those that need it, High-Frequency Words, and DRA.
* Lexia is used to support students as well and formative data is retrieved by teachers and used to inform instruction.
* A 'Data Wall' is used to record and monitor the various data collected.

We have been tracking students since we began this work and will use 3rd and 4th-grade MCAS results to contribute to effective practices in grades PreK-2. Although improved from 2018-2019, Wareham still has work to do to present students as equitable when comparing those to other Commonwealth schools.

Indirectly affected and measured are:

* Suspension and discipline data
* Special Education Referrals
* Professional Staff Survey (4 years of data)
* Parent Survey (4 years of data)
* NWEA, FAST and DRA measures are prescribed at defined times and given three times a year.

**Certifications**

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

The below groups were involved in this process:

* District leadership team
* Faculty
* PTA
* School Council
* School Committee
* School Committee Constituents

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

Date of Approval: 05/07/2020