Student Opportunity Act Plan

Wellesley

# 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.*

* 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.*

The Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) exist to provide a high quality, comprehensive educational experience that supports each student's academic, social, and emotional development and prepares them to be global citizens who are college, career, and life ready. In support of this mission, WPS values the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) state accountability system as a monitor of success in meeting student needs.

In 2019, the District met or exceeded targets for nearly every indicator. However, the data reveal opportunity gaps. Specifically, WPS seeks to better address the needs of its African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities in ELA and math achievement. Further, students within these groups have reported school climate barriers as measured by VOCAL.

Thus, Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) will focus support on these four subgroups who persistently score at lower levels than their white peers on standardized measures of achievement (e.g. MCAS, SAT/ACT, AP exams): 1) Black/African American, 2) Hispanic or Latino, 3) economically disadvantaged students, and 4) students with disabilities.

**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)

Strengthened implementation of a PreK-5 comprehensive literacy program. Currently WPS utilizes a balanced literacy approach in grades PreK-5. As part of that comprehensive literacy model, the district recommends all students in grades PreK-2 receive phonics instruction. This recommendation will be deepened over the next three years with teachers receiving additional professional development on phonics instruction and explicit guidance for when and how systematic phonics fits within the weekly ELA teaching block.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Phonics Program/Materials** | **5000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **2** | **Phonics Program/ Teacher Training** | **5000** | **Professional Development** |

## Focus Area 2: Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum (E and F)

Support educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum that adheres to universal design for learning (UDL) principles. Over the next three years, WPS will focus its professional development efforts on teaching and learning practices aligned with Massachusetts frameworks and UDL. This work will be informed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's multi-tiered systems support (MTSS) framework. A WPS district team attended the MTSS two-day seminar in February 2020.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **UDL Professional Development** | **10000** | **Professional Development** |
| **2** | **Culturally Relevant Teaching Practices Professional Development** | **10000** | **Professional Development** |

## Focus Area 3: Diversifying the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention (D and/or H)

Diversify educator workforce. WPS is striving to develop a workforce that reflects the diversity of its students and the broader global community. With this in mind, the district has established a goal that 20 percent of new hires should be individuals of color. WPS is a member of the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education and continues to engage in targeted recruitment efforts for high quality candidates of color for open positions. To attain this goal, WPS attends 5 targeted diversity job fairs per year and continuously advertises in newspapers marketed to a diverse audience. Annually, administrators are trained on cultural proficient and diversity hiring. Similarly, the district is also focused on ensuring the retention of staff of color through efforts such as new teacher mentoring, the Diversity Equity & Inclusion Leadership Council, a diversity webpage on the WPS website, and through the establishment of staff affinity groups. A Wellesley Education Foundation grant has been established to fund the cost of MTEL preparation courses and MTELs; thereby, enabling a pipeline for teaching assistants to promote to educator positions.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Recruitment Efforts** | **7500** | **Other** |
| **2** | **Support. for Affinity Groups/Substitutes** | **15000** | **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 Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Student Growth: Mathematics mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Additional Indicators: Percentage of 11th and 12th graders completing at least one DESE-identified advanced coursework
* Custom District Metric 1: VOCAL Data
* Custom District Metric 2: WPS Early Literacy Screening Data (DIBELS)
* Custom District Metric 3: UDL Participation Rate/Completion
* Custom District Metric 4: Diversity Data (Mentoring Survey, affinity group participation, % educators of color

**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.*

Schools in WPS will continue to welcome and engage all families through special events and their local Parent Teacher Organizations. School and PTO leadership will be supported in their work to ensure that all families - particularly those who are part of our identified subgroups -- feel welcomed. Additionally, WPS will continue to engage its active Special Education Parent Advisory Council through regular meetings and coffees. Finally, WPS will initiate annual conversations (e.g. coffees, evening meetings) for our Black/African, Latino families, and our Asian American families in order to ensure a safe space for engaging with school and district leaders about their students' needs.

**Certifications**

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

The District has sustained stakeholder engagement in each of our commitment areas in multiple ways. This has included conducting an equity audit that assessed the climate of race and diversity among students, teachers, and parents; engaging educators through our Achievement Gap Task Force; regular internal and public reporting of achievement data; engagement of parents through our PTOs and METCO program; and the work of the District's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership Council, comprised of staff from throughout the district and led by our new Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director.

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

Date of Approval: 03/24/2020