Student Opportunity Act Plan

Weston

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

*The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.*

As noted in our district's strategic plan, Weston Public Schools' core values are:

* The individualized development of each student's academic potential
* The development of the whole child, including extracurricular pursuits, emotional intelligence and resilience, and physical well-being
* The development of strong citizens who can engage with others in a mutually respectful manner

A number of data sources, including MCAS scores, attendance records, grades, placement in upper-level classes, and student surveys, show that some subgroups -- particularly African-American students and students with disabilities -- have not experienced the same levels of success as other students. Based on these multiple measures, achievement and opportunity gaps are currently significant and it is our aim to close them. We are committed to intensive work to close the 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**

Adopting strategies that focus on meeting the needs of our diverse student groups is a big part of Weston Public Schools' District Improvement Plan. Alongside several other improvement strategies, we intend to continue and deepen our work on three important initiatives already underway:

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

Our English Language Arts program review three years ago found that our district could make further progress in developing standardized reading, writing and phonics curricula for the elementary grades. While curriculum was available, there was much latitude among teachers as to what and how to teach; thus, essential reading and writing instruction varied from teacher to teacher. This, in turn, exacerbated achievement gaps as all students did not have access to the same enacted literacy curriculum. In FY21, the district has successfully rolled out Lucy Calkins Writing Units of Study and Wilson Fundations for grades K-5. The Lucy Calkins Reading Units of Study are currently being adopted and implemented and will be completely rolled out for grades K-5 next year. Additionally, we are in the process of integrating the workshop model from the Units of Study with a more direct instructional model with Fundations. Finally, we will be working on integrating the elementary social studies and science curriculum with the literacy curriculum so that students can engage in interdisciplinary learning more frequently.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount: enter number, do not use the $ character** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Lucy Calkins Reading Units of Study** | **18,277** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **2** | **Enhancement of Classroom Libraries** | **8,925** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **3** | **Elementary Literacy Summer Workshops** | **7,200** | **Professional Development** |

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

Coherent Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for academic and social-emotional learning for students at all grade levels

We are currently in the process of enhancing our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for all of our schools. One goal is for all schools to have the same system of teams -- data teams, classroom support teams, and instructional/behavioral support teams -- to work synchronously with one another. Data teams will employ the DataWise cycle to both identify individual students who need Tier I and II and look at student performance in the aggregate and in subgroups to inform improvements needed in curriculum and instruction. Classroom support teams will focus on supporting teachers' instructional practice so that teachers can meet the academic and SEL needs of individual students. Instructional/behavioral support teams can focus on providing additional supports if Tier I and in-classroom Tier II instruction isn't adequate. The data that we regularly use includes universal screening data, standardized testing, attendance, discipline referrals, nurse and guidance visits, report cards, and teacher reports.

In addition to teams using data, we are focusing on developing best practices in our Tier I instruction to meet the needs of all students, particularly those from historically disadvantaged subgroups. The two sets of practices that we are blending together are from Responsive Classroom and Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain. This is the focus of school-based professional development last year, this year, and next year. By the end of the sequence, all teachers will have at least 40 hours of training. With that context, teachers in departments and teams will specifically identify best practices and we will work to scale these practices up through instructional coaching, supervision, and professional collaboration. In the end, we anticipate a greater percentage of successful students and fewer students identified with disabilities.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Elementary MTSS Support Personnel** | **99,792** | **Other Teaching Services** |
| **2** | **Teaching for Equity and Inclusivity Summer Workshops** | **29,400** | **Professional Development** |
| **3** | **Culturally Responsive Teaching Summer Workshop** | **13,200** | **Professional Development** |
| **4** | **Panorama** | **6,250** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |
| **5** | **STAR Suite (Literacy and Math)** | **11,000** | **Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology** |

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

Diversification of our educator workforce

Our workforce does not mirror our student population, a fact which we believe lowers the engagement and academic success of our students of color. First, we have stepped up our recruiting efforts to attract minority candidates to Weston. Second, we are adjusting our hiring processes to ensure that applicants from historically marginalized subgroups receive consideration in a systematic manner. Third, we are focusing on promoting our more diverse group of learning assistants and support staff into professional roles. Finally, we are mentoring and supporting the new educators of color that we have hired. We expect to significantly increase the number of African-American, Latinx, and Asian-American educators in our workforce over the next three to five years.

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|  | **FY21 budget item** | **Amount (enter number, do not use the $ character)** | **Foundation Category** |
| **1** | **Mentor Teachers / Administrators** | **13,500** | **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 Growth: ELA mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* Student Growth: Mathematics mean student growth percentile (SGP)
* High School Completion: Four-year cohort graduation rate
* English Language Proficiency: Progress made by students towards attaining English proficiency (percentage of students meeting annual targets calculated to attain English proficiency in six years).
* Additional Indicators: Chronic absenteeism (percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership)
* Custom District Metric 1: STAR Early literacy and math assessments
* Custom District Metric 2: Panorama SEL survey scores
* Custom District Metric 3: Number of non-white professional staff members, broken down by subgroup

**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.*

Weston Public Schools 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. While we have strong channels of communication and collaboration, both on individual and on a community levels, we recognize that developing family engagement opportunities is something that we can continue to improve upon. Some strengths we can build upon are our strong partnering organizations: the Weston PTO, the Boston Weston METCO Parent Organization (BWMPO), the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), the Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee (WEEFC), and boosters for athletics and the arts. Additionally, we have been focusing on increasing the frequency of individual interactions between teachers and families, especially in this time of COVID. We have doubled the number of conference days at the elementary and middle schools this year. Finally, we have formed a diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) committee composed of educators, students, parents, and community members. The committee is considering further community engagement initiatives that can facilitate even closer partnerships among schools and families.

**Certifications**

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

Weston Public Schools is in the process of assessing the current District Improvement Plan and creating a new District Improvement Plan for the next three to five years. The district goals outlined in the Student Opportunity Act are a small but significant part of the current District Improvement Plan. We have engaged in conversations with the following organizations: the School Committee, School Site Councils, the Weston PTO, the BWMPO, SEPAC, WEEFC, and the Weston Educators' Association. We have worked closely with the DEI committee, whose work will inform the committee charged with creating the new District Improvement Plan. We plan to continue to have discussions with all the mentioned groups and stakeholders throughout the District Improvement Plan process.

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

Date of Approval: 01/22/2021