

Bedford Public Schools

Student Opportunity Plan:

SY 2024-2027

Student Opportunity Act Plans Background

The Student Opportunity Act (SOA) was enacted in 2019, injecting significant new funding into the Commonwealth's educational system, with a focus on providing funding to districts serving students with the greatest needs. The law also included a critical provision that requires every district to set clear targets for improving disparities in achievement among student groups and develop a three-year plan to implement evidence-based strategies to meet their targets.

The two primary components the legislation uses to address and support equitable outcomes are 1) fiscal changes to Chapter 70 funding and 2) policy updates that set expectations for the state and districts to focus on addressing disparities in learning, experiences and outcomes for student groups that are least well served.

Every district in the Commonwealth is expected to develop and implement an SOA plan whether it receives no additional Chapter 70 aid at all, a small amount of additional aid, or large amounts of additional aid. The SOA plan is not intended to describe how additional Chapter 70 funds will be used the way a grant allocation would be.

BPS Student Opportunity Act

→ Summarize Your District's Plan:

The Bedford Public Schools is focusing our SOA Plan on specifically improving Literacy achievement for all students K-5, and specifically the following targeted student groups: African American/Black students, students with disabilities, and low-income students.

Based on several years of ELA MCAS data from grades 3-8, students in those subgroups show a great disparity in achievement when compared to students in other groups, including white, Asian, multi-race, non low-income and non-disabled students. The district has and will continue to improve and implement strategies and programs in grades 3-8 that have been measurably impactful with students at the grade 10 level, which include: a focus on co-teaching, utilizing common writing

assessments, and using reading assessments.

The specific focus on our SOA Plan will be on implementing a new literacy program K-5 (with adjustments in grade 6 also). The new literacy program will be a program that is rated "meeting expectations" by CURATE, which includes being a product that is considered a High Quality Instructional Material (HQIM) program. The program will also be based on the Science of Reading.

The district is also participating in professional development for all teachers K-5 in the Science of Reading (SOR). The SOR courses will be taught by experts from the Hill for Literacy (a literacy consulting firm) which includes 10 modules for teachers, and 10 modules for administrators.

The selection of a new literacy program K-5 will be conducted through a core program review. The core program review consists of forming a District Administrative Team (principals, district administrators, and K-5 ELA curriculum coordinator), and specifically forming a District Literacy Leadership Team (teachers, administrators, and parents) which will review programs during the next few months, and recommend a new program to purchase in May of 2024. All of this is in collaboration with the Hill for Literacy.

We are investing significant time in the district which includes the time and effort of teachers, administrators, and parents in selecting the new program, and learning more about the science of reading. We are also investing in a new core literacy program that will address the needs of all of our students. The new program will be a HQIM program and based on the science of reading to teach students explicitly in the area of literacy-to improve our targeted groups achievement, which include our African American/Black students, students with disabilities, and low-income students.

→ **Analyze Your Data and Select Student Groups for Focused Support:**

Bedford Public Schools is a suburban district in the Commonwealth that serves 2559 students. Our student population is 56.8% white, 21.2% Asian, 7.9% Hispanic, 7.3% African American, 6.8% Multi-Race non Hispanic. In addition, 33.3% of our students are High Needs, 18.8% First Language not English, 18.7% students with disabilities, 13.3% low-income and 5.6% English learners. Based on our district's data described below, Bedford Public Schools needs to work on multiple fronts to effectively address the needs of all students.

Examining progress on MCAS achievement over the past few years, it is clear that there are improvements for students at the 10th grade level in ELA, specifically our African American/Black students and students with disabilities, we see disparities in ELA for students in grades 3-8, in the

following grades and subgroups: grade 3, African American/black students, grade 4 low-income students and students with disabilities, grade 5 students with disabilities, grade 6 students with disabilities, grade 7 African/black students, students with disabilities and low-income students. Grade 8, students with disabilities.

Delving deeper into the data, we identify disparities in performance between student groups emerging as early as third grade-especially in ELA. The disparities are somewhat consistent throughout the grades until students reach 10th grade, where the disparities are greatly narrowed. MCAS data, and local data including Track My Progress, STAR Reading Assessments outline over time that ELA achievement for specific groups, which would include African American/black students, low-income students and students with disabilities have seen great disparities between those groups, and white, Asian, multi-race, non-low income, non-disabled groups which achieve consistently at much higher rates.

Due to the most recent increase in student achievement at the grade 10 level with respect to ELA MCAS data, there a few very clear improvements that have been implemented to yield this improvement in particular they are:

- Improvements in co-teaching at the high school level. This would include effective and comprehensive professional development and coaching. Teams specifically matched to meet the needs of students.

- The implementation of common writing assessments at both grade 9 and 10, three times a year, (beginning of year, middle of year and end of year). The creation and collaboration among the high school teaching team has been beneficial, as they collaborate in creating the common assessments and the scoring rubrics. They also have improved the way they calibrate their scoring as a team. They have also strategically used their assessment information to inform their instruction and change their instructional practices, and improved curricular alignment with the state standards.

- We have implemented a new assessment, STAR, which does not take as much time away from instructional time, but provides a more detailed and reliable form of data to inform instruction.

At the 3-5 level we are utilizing many of the strategies that have been effective at grades 9 and 10 and we are implementing a few others:

- We continue to improve upon co-teaching, we are currently providing professional development with experts both this spring and next year.

-Common writing assessments are being implemented three times a year in grades 3-8. This work will continue and be improved as we learn from the implementation at those grade levels, and from the 9/10 teachers.

-We have also implemented a new assessment in grades 3-8, STAR reading.

While we have been implementing co-teaching and providing professional development on co-teaching, and we've implemented common writing assessments in grades 3-10, which we will continue to do both of those things, i.e. focus on co-teaching and common writing assessments, our SOA Plan specifically will be addressing the main focus within our district which is that BPS is reviewing core literacy programs at the K-5 level based on High Quality Instructional Materials, and the Science of Reading.

→ **Set Ambitious Three-Year Targets for Improving Student Achievement**

We will adopt the three-year improvement targets established by DESE for the "Lowest Performing Students" groups as our district's SOA plan improvement targets. The three-year improvement targets established by DESE include the following for each of the identified subgroups:

-African American/Black non high school students 2024 ELA achievement target 488.9 (Path Forward).

-Low Income non high school students 2024 ELA achievement target 494.2 (Recovery Path)

-Student with Disabilities non high students 2024 ELA achievement target 486.9 (Recovery Path)

→ **Engage Families/Caregivers and other Stakeholders**

We are focusing on family engagement and professional learning, by providing professional development for families, in particular with regards to our plan, we provide information for families on early literacy, and how students learn to read. We provide informational sessions throughout the year, at both the school level, presented by our literacy specialists, and we also provide it at the district level, with presentations to the SEPAC and ELPAC throughout the year.

We make sure to include all family voices in the information we are sharing, and also to make sure that all families have a chance to ask questions, and to provide information, generally through

surveys or informational meetings to add their ideas, and questions.

We work with community based groups, through the Bedford Public School Foundation, the Parent Diversity Council, and each school has a School Advisory Council. Each of these groups-along with our school committee, which also includes non voting members from Hanscom Air Force Base, and from METCO-provides us with a diverse lens and perspectives on student needs.

This year, as we've done in the past and will continue to do-we will share assessment information with families, including MCAS, DIBELS and STAR assessment information. Families are provided with reports on how their students' are doing, so they are aware of their students' progress.

In the fall of 2023 a survey was sent out to families as part of the new superintendent's entry plan. Going forward, we will continue to conduct district-wide family surveys yearly to assess the impact of our curricular initiatives. We will do this to help us find out what families are concerned about, and how we can communicate more effectively-and address specific concerns.

As stated previously a survey was sent out in the fall of 2023 to find out what topics were of most concern to families. One of the largest areas of concern was literacy instruction. Families indicated that having a literacy program for grades K-5 that was based on High Quality Instructional Materials and the Science of Reading was extremely important to them. Families also communicated at a school committee meeting how important implementing a new program was.

Families were concerned about making sure that a literacy program was comprehensive, that it addressed specifically teaching students how to read and write with explicit instruction based on the Science of Reading and HQIM. These concerns were captured in our plan to conduct a core program review with the assistance of the Hill for Literacy, and with a totally inclusive group of 30 stakeholders including, teachers, administrators and parents to conduct a core program review, which in May 2024 this group will recommend to the school committee a program that meets all expectations on CURATE and that is based on the Science of Reading and considered HQIM.

→ **Select Evidence-Based Programs and Strategies to Address Disparities**

Focus Area 2.1 Select and skillfully implement high-quality and engaging instructional materials that support culturally and linguistically sustaining practices and foster deeper learning.

Evidence-Based Programs

EBP 2.1A Inclusive Curriculum Adoption Process: Implement a comprehensive and inclusive curriculum adoption process that engages multiple stakeholders in the exploration and assessment of potential instructional materials.

Inclusive Curriculum Adoption Process: As part of our BPS Literacy Plan, Goal 4 which is to implement a tier I core literacy program K-5, conducting a district-wide survey, presenting our Literacy Plan to all families in Bedford, we have created in collaboration with the Hill for Literacy the following:

- A District Administrative Team-this team is made up of administrators K-5, and district-wide administrators. This team works with the Hill for Literacy to make sure that there is collaboration between the Hill, and the District Literacy Leadership Team (DLLT) in conducting the core program review and implementing the Science of Reading courses.

- We have formed a District Literacy Leadership Team (DLLT) . This is a group made up of 30 teachers, administrators, and parents. The DLLT meets regularly led by the Hill for Literacy (as consultants) in a core program review process, where a High Quality Instructional Material literacy program based on the Science of Reading will be selected in May of 2024, and purchased by the district for full implementation starting in September 2024.

- Teachers and administrators K-5 are participating in a Science of Reading course. There is a ten module course for teachers, that they will complete by August 31, 2024. The administrators are also participating in a ten module course and that will be completed by June 2024.

EBP 2.1B Supporting Curriculum Implementation: Engage teachers in professional development linked directly to the curriculum and set up a process to regularly monitor the effectiveness of curriculum implementation.

We have a literacy program in place now that is not meeting the needs of students, based on data over time. The program does not explicitly teach reading based on the science of reading. The implementation of a new program, which will be selected with a collaborative committee led by the Hill for Literacy in May of 2024-this program will be implemented with all students K-5 in September 2024. There will be professional development in implementing the program both before implementation and coaching during the implementation. We are also participating as a district K-5 in the Science of Reading course taught by Hill for Literacy.

EBP 2.1C Comprehensive Approach to Early Literacy: Develop and implement a comprehensive approach to early literacy education that is supported by high-quality literacy core curriculum material that encompass foundational skills.

We have a literacy program in place now that is not meeting the needs of students, based on data over time, specifically our needs within early literacy. The program does not explicitly teach reading based on the science of reading. The implementation of a new program, which will be selected with a collaborative committee led by the Hill for Literacy in May of 2024-this program will be implemented with all students K (early literacy)-5 in September 2024. There will be professional development in implementing the program both before implementation and coaching during the implementation. We are also participating as a district K-5 in the Science of Reading course taught by Hill for Literacy.

Anticipated amount of funding that will be allowed to all of the EBPs for the next three years (FY25 + Fy 26 + FY 27), across all funding sources. Total is cumulative. (\$550,000)

Certifications:



By checking here, I certify that our district has engaged stakeholders in accordance with the SOA



By checking here, I certify that our district's school committee voted on our Student Opportunity Plan.

- **Date of vote:**
- **Outcome of vote:**