

## **Student Opportunity Act Plans 2021-2023**

### **Belmont Public Schools**

#### **Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups**

Which student subgroups will require focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life?

It is the top priority of the district Strategic Plan to improve the student experience and learning outcomes for our African American and Black students. We have focused all of our contractually required professional development time to work on equity since September 2017 as noted in the linked [summary document](#). We have many instances of district data that shows are black and brown students are not achieving at the same level as their peers, and also that they do not experience school in the same positive way as their peers. We believe these two are linked, and as such we have focused our work on ensuring that all the educators understand that they must be culturally responsive. We see evidence of disparate learning outcomes in our MCAS data, district assessment and progress monitoring data, course grades, course level at the high school (college prep, honors, advanced placement). We see evidence of disparate student experiences in our VOCAL social-emotional/school culture survey data and discipline data.

At the district and school level, we must examine our policies and structures to ensure that do not serve as barriers to our students of color; we must also examine our curricula, curricular materials, and that they see themselves represented in them; and we must improve our hiring practices to diversify our workforce, which includes updating our website and public messaging so that it is evident to the public that we are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are in the process of hiring a vendor to conduct an equity audit to help the district determine priorities and action steps.

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

What evidenced-based programs will your district adopt, deepen, or continue to best support the closure of achievement gaps? What resources will you allocate to these programs?

For the last three years, the district has focused resources (contractually required professional development time and funding) to

- Acknowledge that we have an achievement gap
- Recognize that we all have a responsibility to address the achievement gap
- Create an environment where people can feel curious and courageous to address our African-American/Black students' experiences in our classes and schools and the impact they have on their learning
- Develop a common language to describe culture and race

- Recognize the impact that culture and racial identity formation have on us as educators and on our students as learners
- Improve the climate in our schools for our African-American/Black students and others by confronting bias and recognizing student assets
- Broaden our interpretation of culturally and linguistically diverse learning behaviors
- Understand the differences between independent and dependent learning
- Identify instructional practices in our classrooms that develop independent learners

We will deepen and expand our work in the following ways.

1. **Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum (E, F).** This includes, first and foremost, training educators to be culturally responsive so that all students, especially black and brown students, feel a strong sense of belonging and feel valued and validated for the whole selves they bring to school each day. It also includes continuing to review and revise our curricula and curricular materials to better represent all learners’ racial and cultural experience. Additionally, it includes hiring a district Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to lead this work.

<b>FY21 Budget Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Foundation Category</b>
Culturally responsive PD	\$5,000	Professional Development
Evidenced-based program identified by DESE:		Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned, and culturally responsive curriculum
SOA program categories?		E (increased professional development)

<b>FY22 and FY23 Budget Items</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Foundation Category</b>
Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	\$90,000	Administration, Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges
Culturally responsive PD	\$100,000	Professional Development
Curriculum materials	\$100,000	Instructional materials
Evidenced-based program identified by DESE:		Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned, and culturally responsive curriculum
SOA program categories?		D (hiring school personnel), E (increased professional development), F (purchase of curriculum materials)

**2. Improving the district and school culture through**

**a. Diversifying our educator workforce**

**b. Reviewing district and school policies and structures identified in equity audit**

The educator workforce in the Belmont Public Schools is predominantly white and does not represent our student population. While we have and will continue to provide professional development to white educators to become more culturally responsive to better meet the needs of our black and brown students, we also know that it is very important that we diversify our educator workforce. The work we are doing to improve the culture for our students will also create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for educators of color. Additionally, we need to include on our website information that represents our commitment to creating a culture where all are valued and all belong. We will conduct an equity audit to help us identify district and school policies and practices that create barriers and/or make black and brown students feel less welcome. The audit will highlight areas for improvement and action steps to take to make changes.

<b>FY21 Budget Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Foundation Category</b>
Equity Audit, phase 1	\$20,000	Operations
Evidenced-based program identified by DESE:		Equity audit of district and school policies and structures to identify areas to improve
SOA program categories?		D (hiring school personnel), E (increased professional development), F (purchase of curriculum materials)

<b>FY22 and FY23 Budget Items</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Foundation Category</b>
Equity Audit, continued	\$75,000	Operations
Communication, website development	\$50,000	Operations
Recruitment/hiring	\$30,000	Operations
Evidenced-based program identified by DESE:		Diversifying our educator workforce and revising district and school policies and structures identified in equity audit
SOA program categories?		D (hiring school personnel), E (increased professional development), F (purchase of curriculum materials)

### **Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets:**

What metrics will your district use to monitor success in reducing disparities in achievement among student subgroups? Select from the list of DESE metrics or provide your own.

- 1) DESE outcome metrics:
  - ELA mean SGP
  - Mathematics mean SGP
  - VOCAL survey data
- 2) District outcome metrics:
  - Percentage of educators of color

### **Commitment 4: Engaging All Families**

How will your district ensure that all families, particularly those representing the student subgroups most in need of support, have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the district regarding their students' needs?

We are committed to engaging with all families. Current practices for family engagement include forums, advisory committees, school advisory councils, coffee/conversation groups, and parent/guardian surveys. We will focus especially on engagement and outreach with our families of color to ensure that they have a voice in our work and channels for providing feedback.

### **Certifications:**

**By checking here, I certify that our district has engaged stakeholders in accordance with the SOA. Please summarize your stakeholder engagement process, including specific groups that were engaged:**

The Assistant Superintendent developed a presentation on our Student Opportunity Act plan, which was presented at the School Committee meeting on March 10, 2020. Principals and other district leaders used the same presentation to share information and gather feedback from the following stakeholder groups: all school advisory councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, English Learner Parent Advisory Council, METCO Parent Group, the district Leadership Council, and the Belmont Education Association.

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

- **Date of vote:** January 12, 2021
- **Outcome:** Unanimously approved, 6-0