STUDENT OPPORTUNITY ACT PLAN
Berlin-Boylston Regional School District
2023-2024

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Berlin Memorial School, Berlin, MA
Boylston Elementary School, Boylston, MA
Tahanto Regional Middle High School, Boylston, MA

Section 1: Summary of District Plan:

Berlin-Boylston Regional School District is committed to developing and enhancing the following evidence-based programs to address the high needs sub groups' (identified as our group to focus on) disparities in performance on middle school MCAS scores and growth as well chronic absenteeism in all three schools.

1. **Increased opportunity for common planning time for teachers/staff** through work done in our scheduling committee and through an Early Release Days for Professional Development in Massachusetts Districts Study.
2. **Increased and/or improved Professional Development** with new staffing positions for curriculum development and professional development collaboration in both the elementary and secondary levels, and a newly revamped Professional Development Committee.
3. **Developing additional pathways to strengthen college and career readiness** by developing a "Portrait of a Graduate" initiative, as well as a Job Shadow and Internship program for Juniors and Seniors.

These three evidence-based initiatives will promote engagement for students, collaboration of staff, and focus on training for all staff resulting in a.) a decrease in chronic absenteeism; b.) increased academic performance on assessments such as MCAS in our middle school area, and c.) the implementation of additional Tier Two targeted intervention skills and strategies integrated into instructional practices at all grade levels.

The financial investments for the next three years are as follows:
$ 73,935.01 for Professional Development committee, coaching, training and instructor costs, instructional materials i.e. manipulatives, supplemental texts, and instructional software
$ 105,000.00 for direct services to students through Title I and general tutoring

$ 30,000.00 for consultation services and meeting expenses associated with our Portrait of a Graduate Initiative and the next phase, which is the development of a strategic plan.

Section 2: Data Analysis and Findings

After analysis of data from the comparison tool and also from data collected from Edwin, Berlin-Boylston Regional Schools has identified students in the "High Needs" category to be the focus of our support efforts. Students categorized as "English Learners" (EL), "Students with disabilities" (SWD) and those identified as "low income/economically disadvantaged students" (LIS) are subgroups of the "High Needs" group and are all included in this area and are in need of support.

The rationale for this identification is our changing demographics which are contributing to higher levels of students in these categories and their subsequent academic struggles in MCAS testing. This group also has the highest percentages of chronic absenteeism compared to other groups in the district.

EL(English Learners): For example, according to DESE statistics, for the 2023-2024 school year, we have 2.8% of EL students in the district compared to 2.5% of students in this category for the last two school years. EL had a 20% chronic absenteeism rate for 2023 as compared to 12.1% rate for "all students".

SWD (Students with Disabilities): According to DESE statistics, for the 2023-2024 school year, we have 18.2% of SWD students in the district compared to 17.0% and 16.9%% of students in this category for the last two school years. SWD had a 19.6% chronic absenteeism rate for 2023 as compared to 12.1% for "all students".

LIS (Low Income Students): We have 17.4 % in the 2023-2024 school year compared to 16.3 % in 2022-2023. LIS had a 20% chronic absenteeism rate for 2023 as compared to 12.1% for "all students".

HN (High Needs): According to DESE statistics, for the 2023-2024 school year, we have 32.2% of HN students in the district compared to 30.4% and 31.3% of students in this category for the last two school years. The overall percentage of chronic absenteeism for this category however was slightly lower this year with a rate of 31.2% chronically absent more than 10% or more in 2021-2022 compared to a decreased percentage of 21.0 for 2022-2023.

Family/Caregiver Engagement:

We at Berlin-Boylston Regional School District feel that engaging families is essential to student success, especially for those students identified in this report as being in need of additional support. We regularly reach out to families and the community, particularly for those students who struggle academically, social/emotionally, and financially to communicate either by email, phone call, zoom, or in person when concerns arise. We hold school councils and student advisories in each of our schools that include parents and community members as committee members. We collaborate with our local School Committee, local SEPAC, PTO, and Boosters clubs and we invite stakeholders to certain committees such as our "Wellness Committee" for inclusion for example. We send out information in the format of weekly newsletters from both the school and administrative levels, email families about concerns and/or celebrations, and invite families in for several informative meetings about Title I services, Scheduling, athletics, Back to School Nights, and fall and spring conferences at all levels. We also send home communications regarding interim grades, quarterly report cards, MCAS results and AIMSweb data results and information is also listed on our website: bbrsd.org.

The next level of engagement will be a commitment to language translations in communication at all levels, including correspondence related to these committees and councils, and from our school administrators and teachers. In all of these steps, translations would occur within all levels of this plan.

Evidence-Based Programs and Strategies to Address Disparities in Achievement

Strategic Objectives: The following is a description of strategies we will be using as recommended evidence-based programs by MA DESE.

Focus Area 1: Increased opportunities for common planning time for teachers at our middle/high school.

Evidence-Based Program: *Collaborative Teaching models:*
Tahanto Regional Middle/High School is in the process of making adjustments to our schedule format to increase the amount of Tier Two/response to intervention time for students by adding intervention blocks to the overall schedule to be used as guided studies, more one on one or small group instruction time with students in need and also to find more time for teachers to meet to collect and analyze data as well as to inform remediation and instruction moving forward. The opportunity to change scheduling will also benefit our developing Job Shadow and Internship program, and allow for more offerings for students. An example of this is that we are developing a schedule model that will allow middle school teams to rearrange team time for interventions and team activities when needed without impacting the entire school since we share "elective" staff between our middle and high school.

We have proposed a budget increase in math teaching staff at Tahanto. This will lead to opportunities for more pathway courses as well as improve student-to-teacher ratios for improvements towards MCAS results. Students who wish to study humanities vs. STEM careers will benefit from more varied math curriculum offerings that will be more specific to their career goals.

We created a transitional program, called STAAG, established in the winter of 2022 to help students who have been absent due to chronic illness or school avoidance. The *STAG* program, as it is called, permits students to return to school with supports available and will continue to run. Students return to school attending STAAG, having the support of a Paraprofessional to serve as a liaison between the student and their teachers and will support the student as they slowly return to their regular schedule to prevent students from feeling overwhelmed upon their return to school.

Suggested Monitoring Metrics 1) Evidence of survey data regarding staff interest in scheduling changes, 2) MCAS , IXL and AIMSweb data results, 3) Increase in the number of students *meeting or exceeding* in Middle School MCAS scores, 4) Improved student to teacher ratios, 5) Enrollment and assessment data for students recommended for the STAAG program.

Focus Area 2: Increased or Improved Professional Development Time for the entire district

Evidence-Based Programs *High Leverage Practices for students with disabilities;*
Between potential increased time for staff to collaborate in their daily schedules as well as planning for additional professional development time worked into our 2024-2025 school calendar after a study of comparable school districts and the amount of professional development they have is completed and analyzed, we are developing ways to increase professional development time.

The professional development in our district is now being managed by two individuals rather than the previous one for more collaboration (with principals) on more meaningful and impactful professional development content such as scaffolding, language structure, science and math in the classrooms across all grades, AI for educators and the new IEP form as well as explicit instruction, and adapting curriculum based on students' specific learning goals. We are revamping our Professional Development Committee at the middle high school level to brainstorm ideas for next year and also plan to incorporate more vertical alignment between the elementary and middle/high school core subject departments in the entire district and will be meeting monthly in regards to data analysis, curriculum review, and professional development.

Several faculty members at our middle/high school have worked on school wide goals together with the intent of improving academics for students in the high needs category. These goals are described as over the next three years to create and implement a targeted plan to ensure that all students have equitable access to differentiated strategies and assessments tailored to their unique learning needs, styles, and preferences. Teachers will create and implement at least one strategy per quarter to support high needs students in accessing the curriculum. Action steps include teachers participating in district/school professional development or consult with special educators, our ELL teacher, and/or school counselors to understand the needs of students in their classrooms, Review MCAS, AIMSweb, WIDA and IXL scores and classroom data to help identify the needs of our students, create and implement at least one target strategy per quarter focused to support the specific learning needs identified in their classrooms and to share practices through a google form distributed by administration each quarter or share during professional development.

We have and will continue Title I support services for students identified as being in need.

Suggested Monitoring Metrics

a)Survey data regarding professional development offerings, b)Professional Development Committee meeting minutes, c) Survey data regarding interest in scheduling changes, d) Staff Goal evidence and e) Professional Development offerings in the SmartEdu catalog/letters to staff as well as data collected from sign in sheets/ staff attendance records. and f) MCAS, IXL, and AIMSweb scores.

Focus Area 3
Developing Additional Pathways to Strengthen college and career readiness

Evidence-Based Programs Although our attendance policies are in tact and included in our student handbooks and communicated to students and parents at the beginning of the year meetings and "Back to School" nights, due to increased concern about chronic absenteeism in the state and resulting stricter targets forthcoming, we plan to work together as an administrative team to update our policies as a team for consistency and also to communicate this out in newsletters and emails home.

We hired an additional assistant principal at our middle high school so that the middle and high school can each be supported by one administrator rather than one administrator sharing both responsibilities. Assistant principals at Tahanto are responsible for student and staff attendance policies and enforcement.

Our superintendent has started a "Portrait of a Graduate" initiative to help create and produce more pathways for students' post secondary life. The scheduling committee will work to ensure that there is a wide variety of pathways for students to pursue in their high school career so that they may choose between college, military, trade school, apprenticeships or the workforce upon completion of graduation requirements.

The Portrait of a Graduate Committee meets monthly and is composed of members of administration, faculty and staff, students, and community members as well as alumni. We are exploring where we feel we can take this, creating goals, and are meeting with alumni and college admissions representatives to gather information on what characteristics today's colleges are seeking in applicants so that we can ensure that we are teaching students 21st Century skills to allow them to take any path of interest. These efforts will also inform us as we develop a strategic plan that focuses on the needs outlined in this plan.

We are developing and starting this spring a "Job Shadow" program for Juniors so they may explore different career interests prior to college and also an internship program to begin next year for seniors to give students experiences in various careers before they pursue them. The Director of Curriculum and the Grades 11-12 School counselor have been collaborating on these efforts and plan to bring this to our school committee for approval on 2/27/24. We are also developing an Internship program for our seniors to begin starting next year and will also propose this to our School committee on 2/27/24.

Continued collaboration with DESE STEM leaders and committees to improve pathway opportunities for gender equality.

Suggested Monitoring Metrics
a) attendance data, b)decrease in discipline rates associated with tardy and excessive unexcused absences, and c)increase in percentage of high needs students scoring in the

meeting or exceeding areas of MCAS testing.

The contents of this plan have been reviewed and approved upon by the Berlin-Boylston Regional School District School Committee on: _____March, 2024_____.