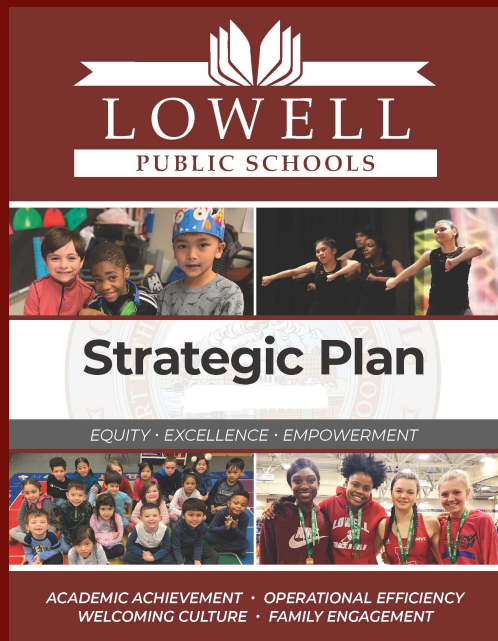


Student Opportunity Act Plan

*A Plan to Accelerate Learning through Increased
Support for Students and School Communities*





Our Core Beliefs

- **A high quality education is a fundamental civil right of every child we serve.**
- **Teaching and Learning are at the core of our work.** Everything we do must support what happens in the classroom.
- **Parents are our partners.** They are our students' first teachers in the home.
- **There is no silver bullet to improving our schools.** Sustainable school improvement requires hard and steady work over time.
- **Every adult in the system is accountable for the success of our students.** Putting every child on a path to college and career success is the responsibility of the entire community.



Guiding Principles for Student Opportunity Act Plan

1. **Strategic Alignment.** Overcoming gaps in student learning requires multiple years of support and intervention that can only be accomplished through intentional and strategic alignment of priorities with the District's overarching plan for systemic improvement.
2. **Research Based.** Achieving the maximum benefit of each investment requires a disciplined approach toward implementation of interventions that are supported by empirical evidence.
3. **Focus on Equity.** Resources will be targeted toward students and schools with the greatest needs.
4. **Community Involvement.** Input, thought-partnering and feedback-gathering from-parents, teachers, support staff and other stakeholders - is essential to building an effective plan.

Student Opportunity Act

Lowell Public Schools

The Student Opportunity Act provides an opportunity for Lowell Public Schools (LPS) to continue to allocate resources to evidence-based programs focused on improved outcomes for students. In using the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) student outcome comparison tool, along with other data, LPS has identified subgroups in need of targeted support.

LPS provides a comprehensive literacy approach that integrates phonics, phonemic awareness, interactive reading of grade-level texts, independent reading skills, and targeted writing instruction. LPS continues to move towards adopting DESE identified HQIM (High Quality Instruction Materials) for all grade levels and content areas. A review of ELA curriculum will begin for the 2024-2025 school year to enhance literacy strategies for all students and scaffolding for those in need. Programs will be prioritized that focuses on supports for low performing student groups. Moreover, targeted academic support and acceleration programming will be provided during and after school, employing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) approach to learning. LPS will prioritize expanding access to high-quality secondary pathways tailored to diverse student abilities and aspirations. These pathways, aligned with regional workforce demands, integrate in-school and out-of-school learning experiences. Efforts will continue to expand its focus on developing equitable access, guided academic progression, robust student support, career connections, and partnerships, ensuring comprehensive development for all students. Additionally, expansion of full-day, high-quality pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds, collaboration with community partners, and increased mental health support demonstrate the commitment to fostering holistic student growth and well-being. LPS will continue to invest in diversifying the workforce through improved recruitment and retention efforts.



Mental Health and SEL Supports for Students



Lowell Public Schools Student Opportunity Act Priority 1.1B Enhanced Support for SEL and Mental Health

Lowell Public Schools is in the initial stages of developing a five year comprehensive school mental health plan that values inclusivity and equity where every member, student, family, community partner, and staff collaborate to serve the best interests and needs of students and families. LPS is dedicated to educating the whole child, equal access to resources, and being responsive to the ever-changing needs within our diverse community.

The Department of Mental Health, Behavior and SEL is comprised of a Director of Mental Health, Behavior and SEL, a Coordinator of Social Emotional Learning and a District Support Specialist for Mental Health, Behavior and SEL. The comprehensive school mental health plan is in year one, which is a year of assessing the district's mental health needs. At the completion of the comprehensive school mental health plan, LPS will have a fully implemented comprehensive mental health plan with supports accessible to students, staff and families.



Comprehensive Approach to Early Learning



Lowell Public Schools Student Opportunity Act Priority 2.1C Comprehensive Approach to Early Literacy and 2.4A Expanded Access to Pre-Kindergarten

LPS provides a comprehensive approach to literacy focusing on a model that includes phonics, phonemic awareness, interactive reading of complex grade level texts, building independent reading skills and targeted writing instruction. LPS will begin the process of a review of ELA curriculum during the 2024-2025 school year to determine how to enhance our comprehensive literacy approach.

LPS will continue to provide targeted academic supports and acceleration during and after school. LPS will continue to support student growth through an MTSS approach to learning, providing targeted instruction and tiered interventions to meet the needs of students below grade level benchmarks. LPS is in year one and year two implementation of HQIM in math K-8 and science grades 6-8. Next school year, LPS will be implementing HQIM in math and ELA at grades 9 and 10. The following school year, LPS will implement the ELA materials identified through the ELA review. At the conclusion of the plan, LPS will have high quality instructional materials district wide with MTSS throughout to support all students.

Lowell Public Schools continues to focus on expanding access to full-day high-quality pre-kindergarten for 3 and 4-year-olds, including continued focus on collaboration with other local providers.



Increased Secondary Pathways and Programming for Students



Lowell Public Schools Student Opportunity Act Priority 2.3B High-Quality Pathways and Programs

The Lowell High School Pathway Programs are a coherent sequence of academic and pre-career experiences that bridge secondary and postsecondary learning. Pathways blend in-school and out-of-school learning experiences and provide academic and pre-career experiences aligned with regional workforce needs and growing career opportunities.

Students within LHS Pathways graduate with either (1) Early College Credit or (2) Career certifications or credentials. LPS Pathway Programs provide opportunities for all students and their different abilities, interests, and talents. Whether a student is planning to work immediately after high school, or will continue learning by attending a training program, a technical institute, or a college or university, there are courses in our Pathway Programs that are right for every student.

LPS Pathways continue to evolve alongside the professional world with an emphasis on human capabilities than manipulating machines. As such, our Pathways and our Portrait of a Graduate seek to develop both under the following guiding principles: Equitable Access, Guided Academic Pathways, Robust Student Support, Connections to Career, and High-Quality & Deep Partnerships. LPS will be expanding the pathway program to allow for greater access and equity for all students.



Pathways to Increase Diversity

Lowell Public Schools Student Opportunity Act Priority 3.1B Enhanced Pathways to Increase Diversity

Lowell Public Schools continues to work persistently on its strategies and initiatives on diversifying the workforce throughout the district. The Human Resources Department (HR) attends job fairs in partnership with MassHire at Middlesex Community College, the Lowell Senior Center, and virtual events through Zoom. In addition to our efforts in community outreach, Lowell Public Schools hosts job fairs, where administrative leaders, supporting staff, and the HR department worked collaboratively in interviewing and recruiting potential candidates.

The HR department with the Adult Education Program will be implementing mini job fairs during program hours in the morning and evening to attract. These mini workshops will highlight our open positions, qualifications, the application process, and additional resources on continuing education and licensure.

LPS will focus on local job fairs to take advantage of the diversity of Lowell. Within its population of 111,850 residents, the diversity rate falls at 45.7%, with 41.33% residents speaking another language other than English. Between the ages of 18-65 years old, the largest group of non-English languages spoken is Asian and Pacific Islanders at 40.26%, followed by Spanish at 28.62%, and other languages at 31.11%.

LPS, through the Lowell Teacher Academy (LTA), is partnering with Middlesex Community College (MCC), to launch a pathway for paraprofessionals, custodians, security guards, and cafeteria workers to earn an Associate's Degree. The LPS will be providing the opportunity to have Associate Degree credits transferred into a four-year bachelor's degree in education at a designated college/university yet to be determined. LPSD will sponsor eligible candidates to enter the Associate's Degree program at no cost, or at minimum, significantly reduced cost. Cohort I will begin the program this summer (2024), with additional cohorts added, i.e. fall (2024) and spring (2025).





Next Steps

- DESE has reviewed the proposed District plan and verified it meets the DESE guidance.
- School Committee Accepts the Student Opportunity Act Plan.
- Plan will be posted on DESE website for public viewing.