

2024 SOA PLAN

SECTION 1: SUMMARIZE YOUR DISTRICT'S PLAN

Please write 1-2 paragraphs summarizing your 3-year SOA plan.

The Mt. Greylock Regional School District's three-year Student Opportunity Act plan will focus on Multi-Lingual Learners (LEP students), students with disabilities, and low-income students in particular. While curriculum improvement and instructional improvement will be reinforced and continue growth on a foundation of becoming more culturally competent and reflective, we see attacking Chronic Absenteeism as being the most powerful focus area to help all students overcome historical achievement gaps.

Our three-year plan to address chronic absenteeism will include the following:

- Working to improve staff and student/family relationships and build a stronger, more unified school culture where all students know they belong, and where all students want to be. Our climate is the key to students wanting to be at school everyday the school is open.
- Instituting a pilot “check and connect” type of advisory program in our grades 7 and 8 to facilitate mentoring, and provide students with a more ready-made “go-to” educator in their building.
- Utilize fuller functionality of our family messaging system to make use of text messages and push notifications (with response capability) to build more communicative relationships with families, and share a sense of the urgency of daily attendance.
- Create an absenteeism work group in each school to continue to research, recommend, and implement science-based activities that will improve student attendance, particularly among our most impacted groups.

SECTION 2: ANALYZE YOUR DATA AND SELECT STUDENT GROUPS FOR FOCUSED SUPPORT

In conducting your data analysis, where did you observe the most significant disparities in student learning experiences and outcomes? On which measures and for which student groups?

In analyzing our local student data, we see a convergence of areas where we must serve our children, families, and communities better. Examining local data (grades, engagement surveys, etc.) we, like many districts, see a disparity in our High Needs Students and our students who do not hold that distinguishing status. Layering state-collected data like MCAS, we see the same trends that direct us to serve more thoroughly. This assessment of achievement and engagement data holds for the past year, and holds for the past several years, including through and before the years heavily impacted by the pandemic and the state of emergency.

Since the pandemic and the state of emergency, a striking piece of data that serves as a unifying point of a Venn diagram for our high-needs students and their overall performance is chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism has increasingly been a challenge during and through the state of emergency. While we have followed our previous SOA plan and done what we said we would do, the challenge of chronic absenteeism presents the problem that nothing we do matters if students are not present enough to benefit from interventions, improvements, and better-aligned materials.

Our overall level of Year-End Chronic Absenteeism (10% or more) is 18.4%. One of our district-level goals is to attack this number, as this is too high. However, even more worrisome to our team is the following data:

- High Needs Students: 29.1%
 - Low-Income Students: 31.9%
 - Multilingual Learners (LEP): 25.8%
 - Students with Disabilities: 30.9%
- African American/Black Students: 27.9%
- Asian Students: 25%

Where we have enough students to constitute a measurable group per the DESE, we know that several of the above student groups have the greatest challenges with MCAS, with discipline, and with local grades. Where we do not have enough students represented to constitute a DESE recognized group in individual schools and grade

levels, we certainly have local data and district-wide data that support that Chronic Absenteeism is among the culprits in holding some students back from greater growth, more efficient growth, and ultimately having the ability and background to fully pursue their own lofty aspirations.

Chronic absenteeism is a challenge that spans student groups and impacts students across categories of need. We believe this is an area of focus that will reduce various achievement gaps and serve many students well across a K-12 span in our 3 schools, including the students who most need and deserve our extra attention and focus.

SECTION 3: SET AMBITIOUS THREE-YEAR TARGETS FOR IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Confirm that your district will use DESE's three-year targets for increasing performance for the "Lowest Performing Students" group in ELA and math.

IF THIS IS OUR DECISION THEN WRITE:

Yes, 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.

If applicable, propose additional three-year targets for addressing persistent disparities in achievement for one or more student groups by subject matter and grade level.

ONLY DO THIS IF IT IS APPLICABLE TO US.

SECTION 4: ENGAGE FAMILIES/CAREGIVERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Describe the approaches your district uses to regularly engage with families/caregivers. In your response, please be sure to address what steps you will be taking to meaningfully engage with families/caregivers of student groups you are targeting for accelerated improvement as this plan is implemented. A brief narrative and/or a bulleted list are acceptable.

Our district utilizes tools from family newsletters at the school level, to a comprehensive website, to frequent individual calls and messages home, to group calls and messages home to in-person meetings to engage in two-way communication with our families and student caretakers. We have recently moved to parent Square for its powerful applications of two-way messaging, and easy-to-use translations for home language ease of use.

In the context of working to engage with our identified populations for accelerated improvement, we see two-way, frequent, transparent communications to be the absolute key to moving the needle on our data. Using some specialized groups such as our Parents Special Education Advisory Committee, to individual one-on-one communication (including face-to-face) with families and caregivers, early and frequent communication is the essential piece to improving chronic absenteeism. Changes in our approaches and practices that create a more positive and welcoming school climate are vital, as is communicating these changes.

Several specific steps we plan to explore for implementation are:

- Create a team comprised of district and school administrators that meets quarterly to review absentee data to look at ways to support building leaders, engage in districtwide root cause analysis of absenteeism, and assess our procedures to decide whether changes need to be made.
- Develop district procedures and notifications so that all schools are using similar methods of communication with students, caregivers, and teachers around addressing absences.
- Engage the local collective bargaining unit in conversations around what we know about research and best practices in addressing student chronic absenteeism and explore the possibility of creating stipended position(s) for social workers or teachers to do specific outreach based on research-supported best practices.

How do you plan to measure increased family engagement with parents/caregivers of students in targeted groups in your district over the next three years? A brief narrative and/or a bulleted list are acceptable.

- We will create a system to track family engagement. Our goal will first be to get a baseline of communication and engagement. Over time we will pay close attention to how our actions impact engagement.
- With the newly developed district team using the newly developed tracking system, we will look at data from principals regarding the number of meetings and response time with families.

Describe the ways in which you engaged different stakeholder groups in the development of your three-year SOA Plan. How have you integrated the perspectives of those groups into the three-year plan? How will you continue to engage stakeholders throughout the implementation of your plan? A brief narrative and/or a bulleted list are acceptable.

- Thinking of DESE as a stakeholder, the impetus for the focus of this plan has come as a district outgrowth of the self-assessment process in our Tiered Focus Monitoring process. Though we have not yet had the on-site review, we have come to realize that we need to develop processes

and procedures, notifications, and outreach plans that serve to reengage both students who are chronically absent and those at risk for drop-out at the high school level.

- Survey data of caregivers, students, and staff as well as direct information obtained from staff-caregiver meetings has also informed this plan.

THIS IS A CHECKBOX IN GEMS.

By checking this box, I affirm that my district engaged with the following stakeholder groups in the development of this plan as required by law: parents/caregivers, special education and English learner parent advisory councils, school improvement councils, and educators in the school district.

THIS IS A CHECKBOX IN GEMS.

By checking this box, I confirm that my district's school committee voted to approve the Student Opportunity Act Plan. Include date.

SECTION 5: SELECT EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES IN OUTCOMES

Select the Focus Area that your district will prioritize over the next three years to address the academic disparities identified in your data analysis.

THIS IS A CHECKLIST IN GEMS WHICH WILL OPEN UP THE QUESTIONS BELOW.

Which EBPs will your district implement within this Focus Area?

THIS IS A CHECKLIST IN GEMS WHICH WILL OPEN UP THE QUESTIONS BELOW.

Provide a short description of what your district has in place now related to this EBP and what you anticipate will be in place by the conclusion of the plan's implementation (by June 2027).

EBP 1.1C Positive School Environments

The Mount Greylock Regional School District has three new or newish buildings that were designed with student well-being and learning at the core. Within the past four years, we have also centralized the systems that oversee and organize consistent approaches to areas of the district such as food services, operations, academic technology, and curriculum. We have hired additional support staff so that all schools have social workers and specialized behavior support personnel. Lanesborough Elementary School and Williamstown Elementary School have created SEL specialist positions, and students participate in a social-emotional wellness class as a part of their weekly specialist rotation. The middle school also currently offers social teaching instruction using the Second Step curriculum as part of their approach to wellness for all students. Additionally, the middle school faculty has engaged in a yearlong partnership with the Association of Middle-Level Educators (AMLE) to do a book study and self-assessment. An outgrowth of this work has been the establishment of an advisory structure which will be built into next year's core schedule for all students in grades 7 and 8.

As we continue this work, we look to build upon the strong foundation we have at our center by engaging in the activities outlined below.

- We will continue to enlist the support of AMLE as we work to shape our middle school experience. We aspire to expand the advisory structure into the high school over the next several years.
- Led by our Director of Academic Technology, we have begun and will build upon a targeted multiyear digital wellness program that will engage students, staff, and caregivers around all

aspects of digital wellness. The approach will utilize powerful guest speakers, screenings of relevant and related films, classroom discussions, and evening opportunities for conversations with caregivers.

- Children Discovering Justice (CDJ) is a Massachusetts standards-based K-5 civics curriculum engaging students in topics such as community, rules, leadership, and equity while answering the essential question, what is justice and how do I use my voice to advocate for it? The curriculum provides students with the foundational knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be engaged, critical, compassionate, and active leaders of our democracy, and provides teachers with culturally responsive scaffolds, entry points, and tangibles to explore critical topics and conversations. As part of a pilot, during the "24-'25 school year the Children Discovering Justice (CDJ) curriculum will be used with grades K-2 with the intention of expanding it to grades 4 and 5 in subsequent years.
- Positive two-way communication is central to family engagement. Over the course of the coming three years we plan to offer professional development for all staff that provides them with strategies and tools (such as continuing our use of the Parent Square platform) focused on home-school communication and partnerships.
- This spring our district administrative team is working to develop a two to three-year plan that will grow the use of restorative justice practices throughout the District. The plan is in its infancy but will begin with in-depth training for administrators in Year 1 with training for faculty and staff in Year 2 and a full implementation in Year 3.

Which schools will be impacted by these efforts (answer can be district-wide)?

All three of our district's schools will be impacted by these efforts.

What is the anticipated amount of funding that will be allocated to this EBP for the next three years (FY25 + FY26 + FY27), across all funding sources? Total included should be cumulative.

\$220,000

Describe the anticipated allocation of funds to this EBP in more detail.

The Mt. Greylock Regional School District will be investing in the following ways each of the next three years to meet the aims outlined above:

- Approximately \$200,000 per year for personnel who will teach SEL courses in the elementary schools and to our middle-level middle and high schoolers.
- Spending approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year on whole-school and individualized professional development for staff
- Approximately \$10,000 per year to pilot and establish an advisory program for all 7th and 8th-grade students (our middle school grades) with hopes to expand into grades 9 and 10.

Which budget foundation categories (G.L. c. 70) will be included in this anticipated annual allocation?

THIS IS A CHECKLIST IN GEMS.

What metrics will your district use to monitor progress in this EBP?

To monitor our progress we will use the following metrics:

- Panorama
- Google surveys
- Grade reports
- MCAS data
- District-chosen benchmarking data (Fastbridge)
- Attendance reports
- Discipline data and office referrals
- CRA referrals

IF WE ARE CHOOSING MORE THAN ONE FOCUS AREA, REPEAT THE QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION.

Approved 04/09/2024