



Lynn Public Schools

**Student Opportunity
Act Plan 2021-23**



→ **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?**

The Lynn Public Schools (LPS) is the Commonwealth's fifth largest district, serving 16,728 scholars. Our 25 schools service a wonderfully racially and linguistically diverse student population. Our diversity is a point of pride. Our student population is 66 percent Latino, 16 percent white, 11 percent black, and 8 percent Asian. In addition, 30 percent of our students are English learners, 17 percent are students with disabilities, and 58 percent are low-income. Each year, the LPS teams do a deep data dive to identify trends in student outcomes to plan professional development, staffing, and to mobilize additional supports accordingly. The unfortunate reality is that some trends have become predictable, particularly relative to outcomes for specific subgroups. Based on our district's data described below, on multiple fronts there is a need to effectively address those of all students, and the historically underserved in particular.

Through analysis of progress by subgroups on overall MCAS achievement as well as the disparity in outcomes between these groups over the past three years, we see significant gaps between the achievement of "all students" and that of English Learners (ELs) and Special Education students. For example, over the past three years the gap between the average scaled score on ELA MCAS for all students in grades 3-8 and that for students with disabilities (SWDs) was 20 points on average (Fig 1). In math MCAS for grades 3-8 during the same period, the gap was 19 points (Fig 2). The gap was equally dramatic for ELs. In grades 3-8, the disparity in performance between this subgroup and the overall average in ELA and math over the past three years was 20 points and 15 points respectively. While the description here represents a catchment of the past three years, similar outcomes are apparent over the past 6 years where the data exists. What is more, clear in figures 1 and 2, these gaps represent the most dramatic ones among all subgroups.

MCAS is not the only accountability criterion by which there are pronounced outcome disparities. At 13.7% in 2019, the EL dropout rate in LPS is currently and has been over the past 3 years among the highest in the Commonwealth (Fig 3). The dropout rate for SWDs has declined over the past two years, but remains among the highest among LPS subgroups. There are similar concerns in the graduation realm. In 2018 the graduation rate for ELs and SWDs was 49% and 64% respectively. The "all students" rate was 74%.

Finally, ELs have not consistently grown according to expectation in progress toward English language proficiency. In 2018-19, LPS sought to improve the percentage of English learners progressing toward English proficiency as measured by the ACCESS assessment. Specifically, we sought to increase the percentage of English learners progressing toward English proficiency to match the state average of 52%. School year 2017-18 data featured 48% of LPS English Learners progressing toward English proficiency. School 2018-19 saw a dip in the percentage of ELs progressing toward English proficiency to 46%. These decreases in progress happened for both elementary and secondary school students.



The LPS strategic plan was finalized in the spring of 2019. In the fall of 2018, the leadership team, which was comprised of all principals, directors, and assistant directors, along with the inclusive planning team, which was comprised of students, teachers, parents, and partners from more than 20 community agencies, worked together in parallel fashion to dive deep on what was working well in the Lynn Public Schools and where we saw ourselves in the next five years. Among other things, addressing the persistent gaps involving ELs and SWDs was a focus of the strategic objectives identified in the final plan. The plan has led to a tight focus on elevating thinking on and strengthening services for these subgroups. We believe deeply that doing so will not only yield stronger outcomes for the subgroups, but all students. Strategies toward these ends have actualized in the following forms thus far:

- Districtwide professional development on meeting the needs of ELs school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020
- Increasing inclusion staff and related service providers in FY20
- Implementing the *Every Student Every Day* initiative – a clinical endeavor aimed at addressing attendance challenges at the root cause

We believe that these strategies and those planned in the coming years are portions of an approach to meeting the needs of all students, and ELs and SWDs in particular. Alone, however, the strategies are not enough. LPS simply does not have the human capital to meet state and Federal guidelines and alignment with clinical recommendations for caseload maximums, never mind staffing sufficient enough to effectuate the strategies.

In keeping with the LPS Strategic Plan, we believe we can leverage the proposed Student Opportunity Act funding to more effectively support ELs and SWDs by:

1. Better accommodating and responding to the social emotional needs of students
2. Improving special education supports by deepening the existing inclusion model, reducing caseloads and the provision of ongoing professional development particularly on Universal Design for Learning.
3. Improving services for ELs by building on the existing inclusion model, expanding social and emotional supports at the secondary level, maintaining EL student to English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher ratios (given projected increases), and the provision of focused, district-wide professional development.
4. Creating additional opportunities for enrichment for students, while also creating common planning time for teachers at the elementary level.



Figure 1

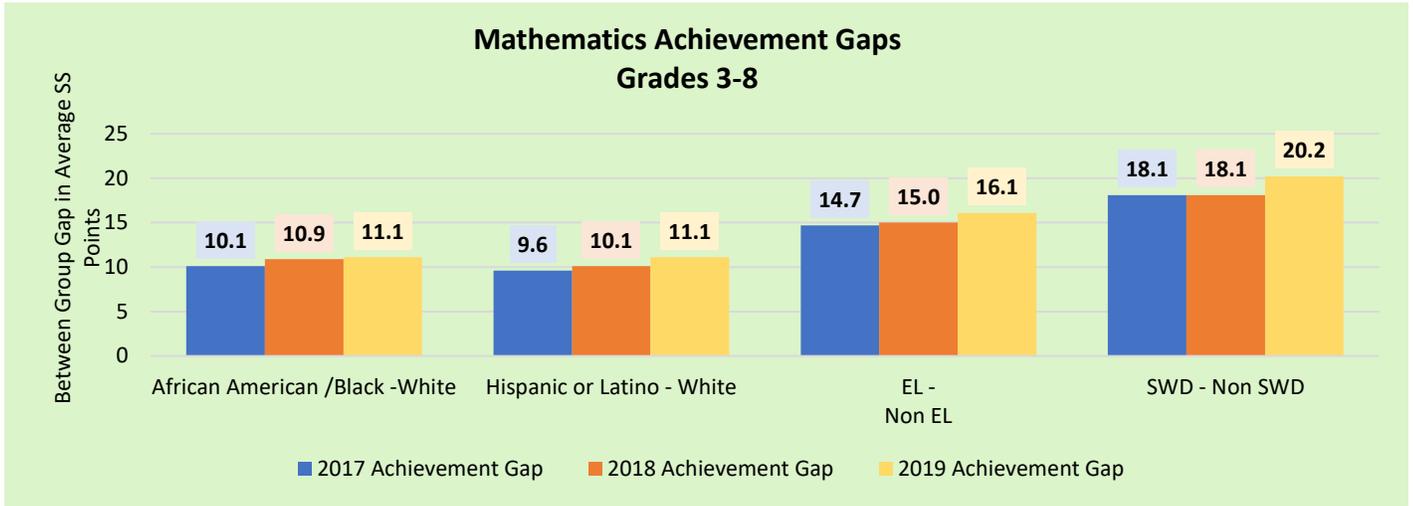


Figure 2

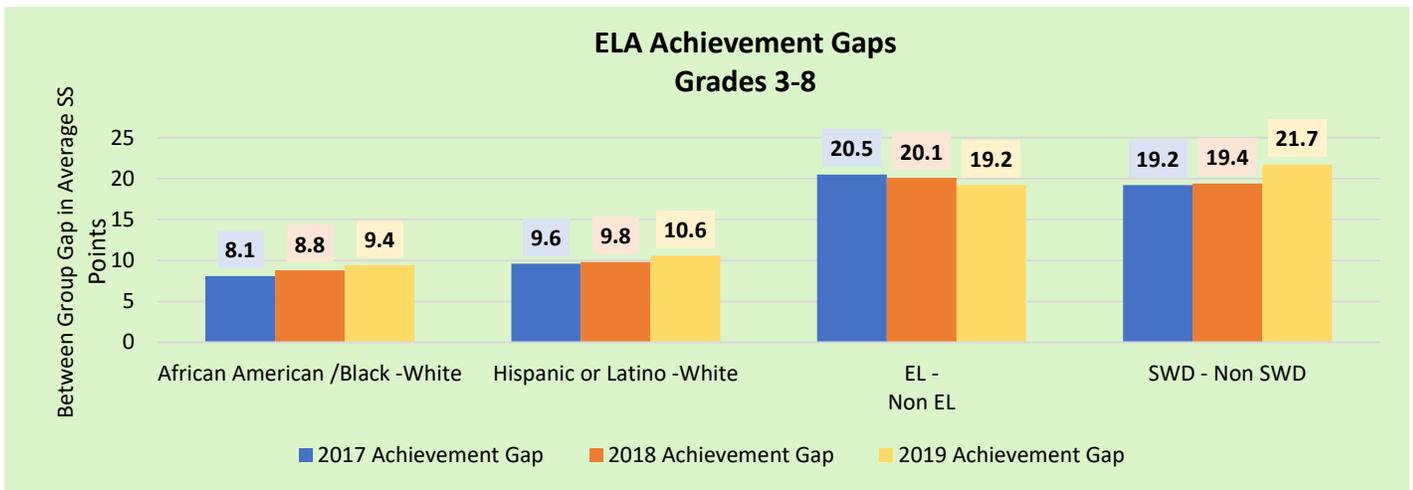
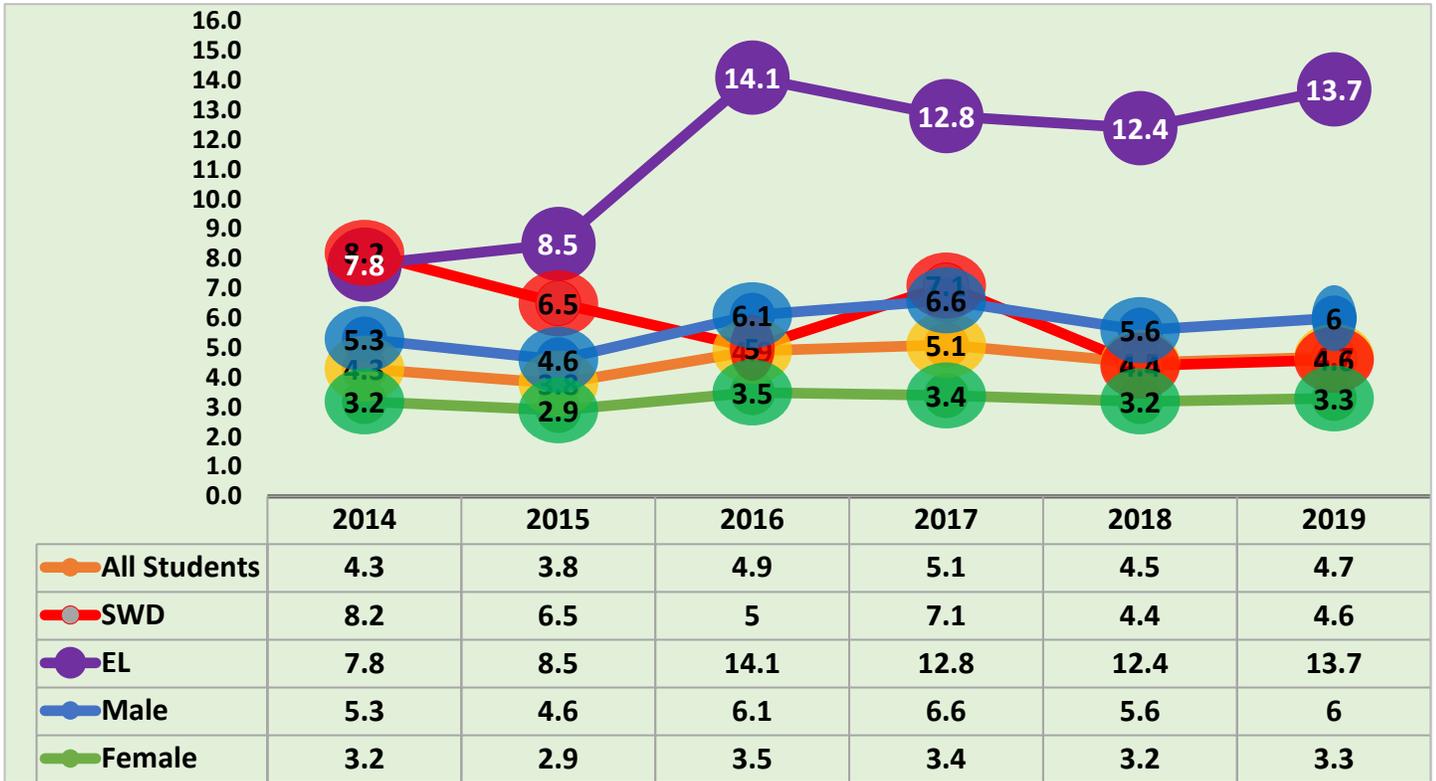


Figure 3



Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps What evidence-based programs will your district adopt, deepen, or continue to best support the closure of achievement and opportunity gaps? What resources will you allocate to these programs?

The Student Opportunity Act offers an historic opportunity for LPS to address long-standing service shortcomings by adding an evidence-based program and building upon existing ones. These programs will positively impact all students as well as directly target opportunity and achievement gaps among our EL and SWD student subgroups.

We intend to use our Student Opportunity Act funds to deepen existing programs, adopt a new one, and address physical plant issues. We intend to make a multi-year, sustained commitment to these four priority areas:

1. **Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs**
 - Aligned with LPS strategic objective #2
2. **Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners**
 - Aligned with LPS strategic Objective #1



3. Increased staffing to expand student access to enrichment and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers

- Aligned with LPS Strategic Objective #1

4. Facilities improvements to create healthy and safe school environments

- Aligned with LPS Strategic Objective #4

In addition to the narrative included in this proposal, the accompanying budget file provides a detailed FY21 budget for these programs (See Appendix A). These investments are summarized as follows:

DESE Evidence-Based Program	LPS Initiative	Proposed Expenditure
Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs	Development and implementation of a clinical support model (39 FTEs)	\$2,997,623
Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners	Build Upon Existing Inclusion Model (48 FTEs)	\$3,536,519
Increased staffing to expand student access to enrichment and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers	Addition of technology at the Elementary level to offer additional planning, collaboration, preparation time for teachers (16 FTEs)	\$1,310,876
Facilities Improvements to create healthy and safe school environments	In keeping with LPS Strategic Objective #4, leverage funding to maintain up-to-date, secure, safe, and equitable facilities that are conducive to active learning	\$5,000,000
Total:		\$12,845,018

#1 Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs

Students Impacted: All LPS Students. LPS will restructure its clinical model to one that focuses on tier 1 supports across the district and aligns social worker caseloads with the National Association of Social Workers recommendation of 1 social worker for every 250 students in a school.

There is long-standing agreement among researchers that learning is substantively disrupted when a student’s cognitive resources are consumed by the various forms of trauma and/or anxiety. Often, students who suffer from one or both are unsuccessful academically without the appropriate supports. The impact of trauma and anxiety also manifests through inconsistent attendance at



school. LPS has actively addressed related issues by providing trauma-informed professional development for teachers over the course of the past three years. That said, in cases where the trauma is severe, classroom strategies are insufficient in meeting student and family needs. An evidence-based approach to addressing the issue is to have a social worker on site to offer direct, clinical services to students and connect families to appropriate resources outside of school. At present, the social worker to student ratio in LPS is 1:643. We are unable to provide substantive supports to students with a ratio this egregious.

Much of clinical work to proactively address trauma-related issues exists in the district’s Every Student, Every Day attendance initiative. Through this framework, we have looked to create new systems, structures and processes to meet the needs of our most at-risk students and families. Part and parcel of a larger social and emotional learning focus and framework, the attendance initiative focuses on:

- Establishing an equity understanding that our focus is students in the margin and that they deserve our attention and efforts
- Designing a framework that positions absenteeism as the symptom of a larger problem
- Creating a culture and climate of support, knowing that our students and families who will be the focus of our interventions have many hurdles and struggles

We have concentrated on the development of systems as well as personnel that support every student attending school every day. We seek to improve upon this and other programs designed to meet the social and emotional needs of all students, but particularly our most vulnerable subgroups. We intend to do so by aligning our social worker to student ratio with the recommendation by the National Association of social workers. This calls for the addition of 35 social workers and 4 School Adjustment Counselors. At a high-level, this addition will achieve the following:

Impact of Additions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of caseloads based on school enrollments...As a result of this, the recommendation is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Addition of 35 social workers (new total of 63) ✓ Addition of 4 School Adjustment Counselors (new total of 12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At ALL schools across the district the student to social worker ratio is below the recommended caseload of 250 to 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of clear roles and responsibilities for social workers
Important ideological shifts:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense focus on providing Tier 1 supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A model that supports availability, approachability and access for ALL students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clinical team to be incorporated into the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Department with respect to supervision and evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A model that will emphasize and support the collaboration of the SEL and Special Education departments



- A model that has clear role definition and responsibilities based in equity, inclusiveness, shared responsibility, collaborative relationships, high expectations, inspiring life-long learning

The additional staffing will complement other efforts. At the high school level, we have introduced supports for EL's to address graduation and dropout rates. Most notably, the partnership with Youth Harbors and the launch of the student ambassador program both in the current school year are designed to address the hierarchy of need (food and housing stability) as well as deepen the connection for students to their school for some of our most vulnerable students. Further, the establishment of the After Dark program and a shift with the high schools schedule will allow more alternatives and flexibility for all students. We plan to build upon and expand these programs during the subsequent years. The addition of social workers will fill a significant gap in meeting the needs of these groups of students. We see this as a particularly compelling approach to curbing dropout rates and increasing the probability of students remaining enrolled, healthy, engaged, and on a track to graduate.

#2 Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners

Improving special education supports by expanding existing programming.

Students Impacted: 2735. LPS will build up on the existing inclusion model by increasing staff to ensure that the needs specified on a student's Individualized Education Plan will be met. Additional staffing will also decrease caseloads to allow for more personalized attention.

There is a solid foundation for meeting the needs of special education students in LPS. Leveraging Dr. Thomas Hehir's 2012 *Review of Special Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* as an impetus and anchor text, the district shifted to stronger regular education supports, more sound identification mechanisms, and a commitment to an inclusion model 8 years ago. Since then, LPS has consistently worked to limit the number of students identified for self-contained programs. That practice has been regularly refined through professional development. Further, the district has prioritized Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in order to provide more students points of entry in classes. In keeping with the current strategic plan, we are systematically building upon and expanding tier one instructional practices, by going from the 9 schools currently trained UDL to all 25 schools in the years to come.

With an existing, evidence-based inclusion model in place and plans to expand UDL, the focus of the allotment of SOA funds in the first year is to fundamentally and comprehensively address long-standing service delivery shortcomings based exclusively on understaffing. For years, LPS has struggled to meet student needs. The staff have gone to incredible lengths to serve students, but caseloads have been unwieldy. For example, LPS Speech Pathologists average caseload is in the mid-seventies. A typical caseload is around 50 students. Adjustment counselors have caseloads in the mid-eighties. A typical adjustment counselor caseload is about half of that. These and other ratios in special education have made it extremely challenging to service students well, not to mention meeting special education timelines. Because we are unable to meet the services



delineated on a student's plan, we must provide compensatory services at a later time at an additional cost. This additional financial cost to the district pales in comparison to the detrimental impact this cycle has on the education of the students in this subgroup, to say nothing of the related erosion of trust and partnership between the district and their families.

The proposed 50 FTEs in this realm feature roles and responsibilities that will allow the district to take a monumental step forward in servicing students' needs sooner and in more comprehensive fashion and align with special education timelines.

Improving EL supports by building upon existing programming and the implementation of a dual language program at an elementary school.

Students Impacted: (4957). LPS will build upon the existing inclusion model by increasing staff thus decreasing the student to English as Second Language teacher ratio. Further, LPS will open two dual language kindergarten classrooms at a high-incidence elementary school in the fall of 2020.

LPS has worked diligently toward an inclusive model for English Learners. Moving away from the pull out model to a small group instruction, push in model on the elementary level reflects a shift in mindset and approach. As a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) district, the learning environment has been one of providing sheltered content instruction and ESL support. In these classrooms students:

- Receive sheltered content instruction with appropriate English language scaffolds from an SEI-endorsed classroom teacher to develop skills in grade-level academic content aligned with state standards
- Receive ESL instruction from a certified ESL specialist

Over the past two years, the district has developed and facilitated professional development for all levels designed to address core tenets of effective instruction for ELs. That professional development will continue a SY20-21. We seek to build upon the existing program by reducing student to ESL teacher ratio, first and foremost. The extent to which the specialists are able to personalize instruction with a manageable caseload will only lead more positive outcomes. We are also implementing a dual language program at a high-incidence elementary school. The research overwhelmingly supports the varied benefits of such a program. This is the case for all dual language models, but particularly the two-way immersion model which we have chosen for implementation in the fall of 2020. The SOA funds will support the deepening of the current service model for English learners at the elementary level, professional development for all educators, and costs related to the implementation of the dual language program.



#3 Increased staffing to expand student access to enrichment and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers.

Students Impacted: 6,405. In an effort to create more an opportunity for preparation and common planning time for elementary teachers, LPS will add “technology” as a course offering for all elementary students.

The provision of time for teachers to collaborate and learn from one another is a research-supported best practice. As part of a recent agreement with the Lynn Teachers Union, the district now releases students from school early once per month to provide time for school-based or district-directed professional development. While this is a step in the right direction, instructional staff needs more time to collaborate around practice and engage in data analysis and response.

At the secondary level, creative scheduling has allowed for the practice of common planning time for clusters and content area teachers at the middle school level and content teachers at the high school level. On the elementary level, teachers have historically been provided with three opportunities for preparation and/or common planning time per week. By agreement with the Lynn Teachers Union, we will expand the preparation time at the elementary level to 4 times per week through the addition of technology teachers. This will necessitate the hiring of 16 teachers. Each week, every elementary student in LPS will receive direct instruction focused on the fundamentals of technology, digital citizenship, cultivating and managing an online identity, coding, among other topics.

We see the benefits of this addition in two ways. First and foremost, all elementary students will have the opportunity to engage meaningfully, once per week for 40 minutes, with a locally-developed curriculum with highly engaging topics and applicable skills. This will be an opportunity for all students to deepen skills and knowledge with technology. For ELs, the technology course will provide an opportunity for engagement with tier 2 and 3 vocabulary. For the educator, this is an opportunity for outreach with families, preparation, or grade or content based collaboration. Each of the activities is aligned with best practice.

#4 Facilities Improvements to create healthy and safe school environments

There is strong agreement in feedback solicited for this plan as well as for the development of the strategic plan that the facilities in LPS are in desperate need of attention. Many respondents expressed limits in the ability of teachers and students to engage in 21st century learning activities given the age of the buildings. Further, whether from the standpoint that schools are too small to accommodate the burgeoning student enrollment, are inappropriately or ineffectively maintained, or that there are safety concerns driven by the age of the buildings, there was broad agreement around the idea that the facilities are and will continue to be a challenge in the coming years. Here again, observation matches empirical data. On average, school buildings in LPS are more than 80 years old. Ten school buildings are more than 100 years old (see below).



In partnership with the Inspectional Services Department for the City of Lynn, a list of projects will be identified that prioritize the safety and well-being of students and staff, first and foremost. These will be followed by those inextricably tied to the most optimal conditions for learning.

Location	Yr. Opened	Age
Aborn School	1897	123
Breed Junior High School	1977	43
Brickett School	1911	109
Drewicz Elementary School	1909	111
English High School	1931	89
Cobbet Elementary School	1850	170
Fecteau/Leary	1909	111
Harrington School	1938	82
Hood Elementary School	1961	59
Ingalls School	1951	69
Julia F Callahan School	1952	68
Lincoln-Thomson School	1913	107
Lynn Voc Tech Including Field House	1971	49
Lynn Voc Tech Annex	1982	38
Lynn Woods School	1921	99
New Classical High School	1999	21
Sisson Elementary School	1953	67
Pickering Middle School	1916	104
Administrative Offices	1980	40
Robert L. Ford School	1938	82
Sewell Anderson School	1920	100
New Thurgood Marshall Middle School	2015	5
Tracy School	1898	122
W P Connery School	1939	81
Washington Community School	1914	106
William R. Fallon Elementary School	1900	120
William Shoemaker School	1950	70
	Mean	
	Avg.	82.1
	Median Avg.	81



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. *(Please note that targets will be added to this section once SY 2020 data is released this fall.)*

Category	Outcome Metrics
Student Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MCAS English language arts (ELA) achievement• MCAS Mathematics achievement
High School Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four-year cohort graduation rate• Extended engagement rate• Annual dropout rate
English Language Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress made by students towards attaining English language proficiency
Additional Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chronic absenteeism

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?

As is evidenced in LPS strategic objective #4, we believe in the critical importance of families as partners in our commitment to meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of every student, and we know from the work of Anthony Bryk and the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research that family-community engagement is one of the five key levers for school success. Additionally, while we are fully dedicated to this practice for every student and family, we are cognizant of the impact that family engagement can have on ensuring the success of students in subgroups most in need of support. Therefore, we are dedicating resources to increasing the effectiveness of our family engagement in general, and with these particular subgroups.

Currently, there are several formal structures within our system that proactively foster family engagement: Lynn Parent Groups, the SPED Parent Advisory, the EL Parent Advisory, the partnership with Migrant Education Parent Group, and School Site Councils with parents/guardians as members at every school. We have already engaged each of these groups in the process of determining where and how to increase investment with the additional funds through the SOA, and



their input has helped shape our plan. We are committed to regular meetings and dialogue with each of these groups, which represent the students in the targeted subgroups.

Also, we currently have a Parent Liaison in fourteen of our schools--our high schools, middle schools, and largest elementary schools. Starting in SY 20-21, we are proposing the hiring of 11 additional Parent Liaisons, so that all Lynn Public Schools will have a Parent Liaison dedicated to the school full-time. All of our Parent Liaisons are bilingual so that we can ensure access for all families with whom we partner. Furthermore, we are proposing a district level position: Program Specialist for Family and Community Engagement. This position will serve to coordinate the supports offered by the Parent Liaison at each school. The Program Specialist will help set and implement a cohesive, district-wide vision and strategy for family engagement, while also working with each Parent Liaison to tailor their work to meet the needs of their particular school community. This structure creates equitable access for families across the Lynn Public Schools, and creates avenues for school-level and student-level differentiated support.

Please summarize your stakeholder engagement process, including specific groups that were engaged:

LPS went to great lengths to solicit stakeholder input. In summary, the following took place between the months of December and March:

- In all 25 schools, principals were directed to feature “Student Opportunity Act Input” in a school site council meeting between the months of December in February. The minutes from those meetings were forwarded to the superintendent’s office.
- Two city-wide Student Opportunity Act forums
- An online feedback portal on the Lynn Public Schools website to allow anyone to offer feedback
- Dedicated Special Education Parent Advisory Committee meeting
- Dedicated English Learner Parent Advisory Committee meeting
- Dedicated Migrant Worker Education parent meeting
- Dedicated Superintendent’s Student Advisory meeting
- In partnership with the Lynn Teachers Union, input meetings for staff at all 25 schools
- 300 written submissions by students

These data were coded and grouped into themes. Ideas and concerns expressed among the various groups largely align with those expressed in the development of the strategic plan during the 2018-19 school year. The priorities of significantly restructuring and increasing tier one social and emotional supports, expanding and improving supports for special education and English Learner education, and providing more meaningful time for staff collaboration LPS are reflective both of feedback and in keeping with the LPS strategic plan.



APPENDIX A

Sped	IEP Team Chairs	5.0	\$381,660
Sped	School Psychologists	3.0	\$324,918
Sped	Sped Program Specialist	1.0	\$103,404
Sped	Speech Pathologist	6.0	\$443,766
Sped	Sped Specialist Para	6.0	\$201,390
Sped	Sped Early Childhood Transition Specialist	1.0	\$73,961
Sped	Sped Secondary Transition Specialist	1.0	\$73,961
Sped	Sped Behavior Specialist	1.0	\$73,961
Sped	Occupation Therapist	1.0	\$81,934
Sped	OT COTA	1.0	\$74,590
Sped	Physical Therapist	1.0	\$85,064
Sped	Sped Early Childhood Pre K Tester	1.0	\$73,961
Sped	Sped Hearing Specialist	1.0	\$73,961
	Total	29.0	\$2,066,531
SEL	Social Workers	35.0	\$2,588,635
SEL	SAC's	4.0	\$408,988
	Total	39.0	\$2,997,623
ELE	Dual Language Coach	1.0	\$73,961
ELE	Professional Development	0.0	\$30,000
ELE	Stipends Summer Work	0.0	\$51,500
ELE	Parent Liaison	1.0	\$57,190
ELE	ESL Elem Teachers	10.0	\$739,610
ELE	ESL Secondary Teachers	7.0	\$517,727
	Total	19.0	\$1,469,988
Curriculum	Elementary IT Teachers	16.0	\$1,183,376
Curriculum	Technology Supplies	0.0	\$127,500
	Total	16.0	\$1,310,876
ISD	Facilities Improvements	0	\$5,000,000
	Totals	103.0	\$12,845,018



