

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY ACT PLAN

Millis

Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups

Student subgroups requiring focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life.

- High Needs students (defined as any student who is economically disadvantaged, has a disability, or is an English learner/former English learner)

The rationale for selecting these student subgroups.

As noted in our strategic plan, Millis Public Schools is committed to ensuring all of our students achieve success in school and after graduation. MPS is a small district with approximately 1400 students. As a result, a limited number of subgroups.

However, we recognize that not all student groups have experienced the same level of success to date. Based on a review of our district data, our High Needs subgroup is not experiencing the same level of MCAS outcomes. Anecdotally, our High Needs population has challenges with graduating on time.

We also note the troubling fact that students within these high needs subgroups, demonstrate higher rates of chronic absenteeism. We recognize that attendance is a fundamental ingredient to improving student achievement, engagement and success beyond graduation. In short, students have to be present in order to benefit from services and supports, such as TSS, social and emotional learning, EL services and special education programming. As a result, this year the district engaged with McLean Hospital's Anxiety Reduction Clinic to help identify ways to support students with chronic absenteeism. All counseling staff benefited from year long professional development and consultations with case studies focused on addressing the needs of students with anxiety leading to school resistance or chronic absenteeism.

Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps

Within the last few years, Millis Public Schools has begun to adopt strategies that focus on meeting the needs of our high needs student groups. Alongside several

other improvement strategies detailed in our strategic plan and focus on Personalized Learning, we intend to continue and deepen our student-centered work.

Focus Area 1: Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs (C and/or D)

Within the larger district focus to improve student attendance, the Millis Public Schools will target the Millis High School and will convene a workgroup to research, design and implement attendance improvement initiatives for all students with special focus on the High Needs population. This will result in individual attendance improvement plans for any students demonstrating a 10 % absence rate at any point during the last half of the school year. As part of the tiered system, Tier 1 messaging and communication and Tier 2 interventions will also be developed and utilized in addition to the Tier 3 planning and intervention efforts.

| | FY21 budget item | Amount: enter number, do not use the \$ character | Foundation Category |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Prof. Develop. on anxiety reduction and school resistance | 7,000 | Professional Development |

Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets

Outcome metrics that will be used to measure progress in closing gaps for selected student groups.

- Student Achievement: English language arts (ELA) achievement as measured by average scaled scores on MCAS
- Student Achievement: Mathematics achievement as measured by average scaled scores on MCAS
- High School Completion: Four-year cohort graduation rate
- High School Completion: Annual dropout rate
- Additional Indicators: Chronic absenteeism (percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership)

Commitment 4: Engaging All Families

District plans for ensuring that all families, particularly those representing identified student subgroups most in need of support, have access to meaningful engagement regarding their students' needs.

Millis Public Schools uses a multi-tiered approach to engage all families. We recognize that existing family engagement opportunities at our schools may not be effective in reaching all families all the time. Therefore, Administrators and educators will deepen and enhance attendance messaging and collaboration with parents and caregivers. Assuring that all messaging/communication is delivered in parent friendly language and/or the primary language of the home. In addition, we will work with community partners to deliver parent forums/informational sessions on attendance improvement. A primary focus will be on the importance of home school relationships/ collaboration in any efforts to improve chronic absenteeism.

Certifications

Certification that stakeholders were engaged in accordance with the Student Opportunity Act.

The Millis Public Schools have increased communication to all parents regarding absenteeism and meets individually with families of those with high absenteeism. Millis Public Schools has partnered with McLean Hospital's Anxiety Reduction Clinic to deepen our community's understanding of the role of anxiety, and the often complex issues facing students with chronic absenteeism. Pilot programming this year has engaged parents in the attendance improvement planning for students in the case study group. The Millis Public Schools community also recognizes the helpful tools offered by McLean and the resources available through the DESE to improve student attendance.

Certification that School Committee has voted (or is expected to vote on the district's Student Opportunity Act Plan.

Date of Approval: 03/10/2020