



## **Ralph C Mahar Public Schools**

### **Student Opportunity Plan: SY 2021-2023**

#### **Amended: Winter Spring 2023**

#### **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?**

#### **SWD and Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic Students**

As noted in our strategic plan, Ralph C. Mahar (RCM) is committed to ensuring all of our students achieve success in school and after graduation. 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 students with disabilities are not experiencing the same level of MCAS outcomes and graduation rates as their peers. In addition, our multi-race/non-Hispanic students has achievement gaps compared to their general education, white peers.

Currently (MCAS 2022) there is a 34.7% gap between SWD and their peers in ELA; however multi-race non-Hispanic students closed the gap with their white peers and outperformed their white peers by 3.9% in ELA. In mathematics, there is a 31.6% gap between SWD and their peers in mathematics; however multi-race non-Hispanic students closed the gap with their white peers and outperformed their white peers by 18.6% in mathematics.

As noted in our strategic plan, Ralph C. Mahar (RCM) is committed to ensuring all of our students achieve success in school and after graduation. 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 students with disabilities and multi-race/non-Hispanic are not experiencing the same level of MCAS outcomes as their peers. Significant gaps exist in ELA and mathematics with students having double-digit gaps between their nondisabled peers and white students. While we have seen growth in the growth of multi-race/non-Hispanic students the low enrollment of the sub-groups impacts the reporting percentages.

We are committing to intensive work to close achievement and opportunity gaps for these student subgroups and recognize that this important work will take not just the efforts of district staff, but also our families and community.

#### **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?**

Within the last few years, RCM has begun to adopt strategies that focus on meeting the needs of our diverse student groups. Alongside several other improvement strategies detailed in our strategic plan, we intend to continue and deepen our work on two important initiatives already underway.

##### **A. Inclusion for students with disabilities in our middle school (SWD).**

In FY23, the district struggled finding special education teachers to allow for a fully inclusive model of education for SWD. The district has continued to advertise for all open special education teaching positions to ensure that all students are taught in the least restrictive environment. A review of our special education services three years ago found that our

district could make further progress in serving our SWD in a least restrictive environment. We have implemented a program to support the content specific educators and special education educators in delivering instruction in an inclusionary setting at the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School. We will ask our towns to continue to support this program in the coming years. Our inclusion program will be available to all SWD at the middle school level, including students of color, English learners, and low-income students.

The school is committed to ensuring vacancies for these positions remain filled with highly qualified educators.

FY23 budget item	Amount	Foundation Category
Paraprofessional support for SWD (4)	\$122,000	D7 (Classroom & Specialist Teachers, Employee Benefits / Fixed Charges)

**B. Personnel and Services to Support Holistic Students’ Needs.** Our workforce currently mirrors our student population; in order to increase the success of our students, the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School will provide educators with professional development in social emotional learning to further support an inclusive environment and promote high achievement and engagement for all our students. In response to Covid, the district has continued to fund a robust guidance department of three guidance counselors and 2.5 guidance/school adjustment counselors to meet the needs of a student population of approximately 600 students 7-12.

In addition, the school is in partnership with Heywood Hospital and offers tele-health services to students on an as needed basis.

FY23 budget item	Amount	Foundation Category
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Academy Paraprofessional	\$23,000	D4 (school personnel)
Guidance/Adjustment Counselor	\$87,000	C (guidance and psychological)

**C. Early College** - The Ralph c. Mahar Regional School is committed to providing an early college experience for its students. In the Spring of 2021 Ralph C. Mahar Regional School piloted a dual enrollment course for HS juniors and seniors. Sixteen students successfully earned 3 credits in English in the spring of 2021 and in the Fall of 2021 16 students earned 3 dual enrollment credits in psychology 101 and another 13 students earned 3 credits in college English 101. The average grade for dual enrollment students is an A- (90%)

In FY23, we have expanded our dual enrollment program to include four (4) college dual enrollment courses: English 101, English 112, Intro to Psychology 101, and Biology 132. While the district currently contracts with Greenfield Community College to provide these courses for students, we began a partnership in FY23 to build a systemic early college program and are currently in the planning stages.

Below are the results of our college dual enrollment program to date:

SEMESTER	COURSE	AVERAGE GRADE	# STUDENTS
Fall 2022	English 101	A-	15 Students
Fall 2022	Psychology 101	A+	11 Students
Spring 2021	English 112	B+	16 Students
Fall 2021	Psychology 101	A	16 Students
Fall 2021	English 101	A-	13 Students

The district is currently working with students to ensure that underrepresented groups and first-generation college students receive priority when enrolling. Approximately 25% of students who have successfully completed the dual enrollment course are first generation college students. Beginning in the Spring 2023 semester, the district will begin surveying students to gather data regarding their experience and demographics.

FY23 budget item	Amount	Foundation Category
Contracted Dual Enrollment Course with GCC and materials	\$20,000	I (Enhanced Core Instruction) -- Title IV grant & ESSER

**D. Summer Learning Programs** - The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School has discontinued its vacation acceleration academies and has replaced them with credit recovery programs for high school students – focusing on grade 9 students who historically struggle the most to remain on track for graduation with their cohort; to support these students a Grade 9 paraprofessional has been hired to assist students who struggle with this transition. In addition, the district secured funding from a State Promising Grad Grant to provide vacation credit recovery programs to provide high school students who have lost credit opportunities to recover credit and remain on target with their original graduation cohort.

The district continues to provide a summer learning program composed of core subject intensive sessions that run in 2-week blocks. Students have the opportunity to attend up to two intensive session (each running for two weeks) in two of the following core areas: ELA, math, or science.

FY23 budget item	Amount	Foundation Category
Vacation Credit Recovery Programs (High School)	\$26,000	E6 Title I and Ma Promising Grad Grant
Summer Programming	\$60,000	E6 ASOST Grant and ESSER II

**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?**

**A) DESE (State) Metrics - MCAS**

<b>2021 ELA Proficiency</b>	<b>2022 ELA Proficiency</b>	<b>2021 Math Proficiency</b>	<b>2022 Math Proficiency</b>
SWD 7.1 General Education 46.3 White 37.0% Multi-race/non-Hispanic 12.5%	SWD 2.9 General Education 37.6 White 29.4 Multi-race/non-Hispanic 33.3	SWD General Education White Multi-race/non-Hispanic	SWD 7.2 General Education 38.8 White 31.4 Multi-race/non-Hispanic 50.0
2021 ELA SGP SWD 35.4 General Education 40.9 White 38.7 Multi-race/non-Hispanic 37.0	2022 ELA SGP SWD 37.0 General Education 47.6 White 44.8 Multi-race/non-Hispanic 39.3	2021 Math SGP SWD 26.9 General Education 33.0 White 32.1 Multi-race/non-Hispanic 31.6	2022 Math SGP SWD 40.0 General Education 57.0 White 51.8 Multi-race/non-Hispanic 48.8

**B) Local Assessments - STAR**

<b>2022 BOY Reading Proficiency</b>	<b>2023 MOY Reading Proficiency</b>	<b>2022 BOY Math Proficiency</b>	<b>2023 MOY Math Proficiency</b>
SWD 6.8% General Education 6.25%	SWD 7.84% General Education 8.17%	SWD 8.33% General Education 5.19%	SWD 3.88% General Education 5.4%
<b>2022 BOY Reading SPG</b>	<b>2023 MOY Reading SPG</b>	<b>2022 BOY Math SGP</b>	<b>2023 MOY Math SGP</b>
SWD 50.3 General Education 47.3	SWD 50.5 General Education 47.2	SWD 51.7% General Education 45.5	SWD 51.0 General Education 47.3

**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?**

Ralph C. Mahar recognizes that family engagement is critical to ensuring successful outcomes for all students. Given our focus on student subgroups, it is particularly important that we find ways to effectively engage our families of students, especially with our students with disabilities. In FY23, the district offered a virtual workshop for families with Polly Bath on 10/26/22 on *Managing Adolescent Behavior and Setting your Adolescent Up for Success*.

We recognize that existing family engagement opportunities at our schools may not be effective in reaching all families. Therefore, in addition to our ongoing outreach to families through SEPAC and Title I meetings, the school will reach out to families through its advisory program. The school will begin to implement scheduled parent conferences and virtual parent meetings for those families who are unable to attend in person conferences.

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School partnered with the local community, educators, ESP staff and families to ensure broad and demographically representative participation. Additionally, individuals and groups spoke during public comment at our school committee meeting. A primary concern for families was the social emotional needs of our students in the district; a second was the lack of support for students who struggle academically -- as a result of this

information, the district continues to provide inclusion in the middle school for SWD and has begun offering acceleration academies and robust summer programming to support struggling learners. This information was gathered through parental and community surveys regarding parent interest and use of Federal and State grant funding.

**Certifications:**

**X By checking here, I certify that our district has engaged stakeholders in accordance with the**

**SOA**

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

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School partnered with the local community, educators, ESP staff and families to ensure broad and demographically representative participation. Additionally, individuals and groups spoke during public comment at our school committee meeting. A primary concern for families was the social emotional needs of our students in the district; a second was the lack of support for students who struggle academically -- as a result of this information, the district continues to provide inclusion in the middle school for SWD and has begun offering acceleration academies and robust summer programming to support struggling learners. This information was gathered through parental and community surveys regarding parent interest and use of Federal and State grant funding.

**By checking here, I certify that our district's school committee voted on our Student Opportunity Plan**

- **Date of vote:** April 13, 2023
- **Outcome:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Position: Dr. Elizabeth Zielinski, Superintendent

Date: April 13, 2023