



When students go deep in their learning, they turn every challenge into an opportunity to shine.

# **Student Opportunity Act**

January 23, 2020

# Student Opportunity Act (SOA) headlines

**The SOA is providing a significant infusion of new funds, with every district receiving at least some increase in Chapter 70**

**As a result of this progressive school funding formula, 35+ districts are receiving 85% of the new Chapter 70 money**

**In an effort to close persistent achievement gaps, all districts are required to submit three-year evidence-based plans to the Commissioner.**

**Recognizing that the funds are not evenly distributed across all districts, DESE will have a “short form” plan (~2 pages) for most districts and “long form” plan for those receiving significant funds**

# Four statutory requirements for district evidence-based plans

Goal of plans is to reduce “persistent disparities in achievement among student subgroups”

**3**  
**Resource allocation plan**  
What resources can be allocated to these programs?

## **1** Evidence based practices

What new programs will best reduce disparities for student subgroups?

- ✓ Expanded learning time (day or year: e.g., acceleration academies)
- ✓ Common planning time for teachers
- ✓ Social-emotional and physical health services
- ✓ Hiring school personnel to improve student performance
- ✓ Increased or improved PD (e.g., principal training / pipelines)
- ✓ Curriculum materials/equipment aligned to state standards
- ✓ Expanding early education and pre-kindergarten programming
- ✓ Diversifying the educator and administrator workforce
- ✓ Additional pathways to strengthen college and career readiness (e.g., early college)

*\*\*Or any other program determined to be evidence-based by the Commissioner*

**4**  
**Outcome metrics**  
What will we track to ensure improvement in student subgroup performance?

**2** Parent/community engagement  
How to meaningfully engage stakeholders?

# DESE's approach to the district SOA plans

**X NOT a bureaucratic exercise** to meet compliance requirements

**X NOT a comprehensive strategic plan** with 20+ different priorities and initiatives

Instead, SOA plans will ask districts to:

- ✓ **Do a few things:** Make a few bold, public commitments to programs that put kids first
- ✓ **Do the right things:** Adopt proven, evidence-based programs

# Guiding principles for district SOA plans

**Make it easy to make good choices:** DESE will provide a menu of evidence-based initiatives districts can select from

**Incentivize adoption of 2-3 “Commissioner Priority” strategies** across districts, ideally through competitive grants

1. Full-day, **high-quality Pre-K** for all four-year-olds & **evidence-based early literacy**
2. Increase percentage of high school students enrolled in **early college**
3. Recruitment and retention strategies to **diversify the educator and administrator workforce**

**Districts can also submit programs outside of the menu in their plans**, but they will require Commissioner review

# DESE is using a bifurcated approach for the SOA plans based on new Chapter 70 funds received in FY'21

## Example: 10 actual districts....

### Seven districts get the short form

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Districts receiving **less** than \$1.5M  
in new Chapter 70 funds in FY'21

Beverly  
Hopkinton  
Gardner  
Canton

Woburn  
Central Berkshire  
Lee

### Three districts get the long form

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Districts receiving **more** than \$1.5M  
in new Chapter 70 funds in FY'21

Lawrence  
Chelsea  
Chicopee



# Key dates this year for SOA plans



## **Late January:**

- Jan. 22: Governor Baker releases House 2 budget numbers
- Plan templates & guidance document released to districts

## **February - March:**

- Districts work with local stakeholders to develop plans
- DESE supports with technical assistance
- Local school committees should vote on plans before they are submitted to DESE

## **April 1:**

Plans due to DESE for review

## **May - June:**

Inform districts if plans require amendments

# More information coming late next week

**Late January:** Templates and guidance documents released

**First week in February:** Informational webinars (will host separate sessions for short vs. long form districts)

**Anytime:** Email [SOAplans@doe.mass.edu](mailto:SOAplans@doe.mass.edu) with questions

