

SOA Plan Addendum Narrative Question

How is the use of additional Chapter 70 funds – in conjunction with investments from other funding sources – enabling you to transform how your district serves students most in need of support?

The Student Opportunity Act continues to support Lowell Public Schools (LPS) in providing enriched educational opportunities for students and families. With a commitment to evidence-based programs, LPS is leveraging resources to foster a holistic approach for student success. At the core of LPS's educational strategy is a comprehensive approach to literacy. This approach encompasses a multifaceted model that emphasizes phonics, phonemic awareness, interactive reading of grade level complex texts, cultivation of independent reading skills, and targeted writing instruction. LPS will continue to provide teachers with literacy professional development focused on strengthening early literacy skills. Recognizing the ever-evolving landscape of education, LPS is embarking on a review of its English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum in the upcoming 2024-2025 school year. This initiative aims to enhance our comprehensive literacy framework. LPS provides targeted academic support and acceleration, both during and after school hours. Through a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) approach, students receive instruction and tiered interventions that cater to their unique learning needs. As part of its commitment to equity and inclusivity, LPS continues to expand after-school and summer school programming capacity and program offerings to ensure access to academic support that meets the needs of every student. Summer school programs will continue to be scaled up to meet the needs of students and families seeking an extended school year option. This expansion underscores LPS's unwavering commitment to providing continuous learning experiences that align with individual growth needs and academic requirements. LPS is also focused on enhancing secondary pathways, which serve as structured plans of academic and pre-career experiences bridging secondary and postsecondary education. Over the next three years, LPS aims to expand and enrich these pathways by integrating in-school and out-of-school learning experiences. These efforts are aligned with regional workforce demands and emerging career opportunities, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the professional landscape they will navigate. A key aspect of LPS's pathway enhancement includes the expansion of Early College and Career certifications. This expansion is designed to accommodate diverse student abilities and aspirations, equipping them for immediate employment within a dynamic professional environment. LPS will continue to prioritize equitable access to full-day high-quality pre-kindergarten for 3 and 4-year-olds. Collaborative initiatives with local providers have already begun, with Phase 1 of establishing universal pre-kindergarten programs launched during the 2022-2023 school year. Efforts are underway to open additional high-quality pre-kindergarten slots, addressing the needs of families requiring such programming.

Recognizing the critical importance of mental health and SEL supports, LPS has bolstered its capacity in these areas. Additional funding has been allocated to each school to enhance mental health supports, particularly for students facing social-emotional and mental health challenges stemming from disruptions caused by the pandemic. An office of Mental Health, Behavior, and Social Emotional Learning has been developed to spearhead a district-wide 5-year mental health plan aimed at providing comprehensive support to students and families. LPS remains committed to diversifying its workforce through targeted strategies and collaborations. Initiatives such as on-site job fairs, partnerships with adult education programs, and alliances with local community colleges and universities underscore LPS's efforts to cultivate a diverse and talented cadre of educators who reflect the community they serve.