

HAVERHILL PROMISE

The Campaign for
Grade Level Reading

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS ACTION PLAN



SPRING
2021



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"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

— Margaret J. Wheatley

Fellow Haverhill Residents and Partners:

We find ourselves in a pivotal moment for our community. This new decade offers us a new beginning to think holistically about the future we want to create in Haverhill. There may be many paths towards creating shared prosperity and opportunity for our residents, but there is one essential element— a strong educational system that allows every child to live up to their full potential. To that end, many strides have been made in Haverhill Public Schools in recent years. However, it will take a deliberate and sustained cross-sector partnership to ensure that each student has a fair chance at reading proficiently by the end of the third grade.

Third-grade reading proficiency is not a comprehensive or perfect metric to identify every student's achievement (no single metric can). However, the data on third-grade reading proficiency is compelling and Haverhill schools and community partners have been smart to not ignore it. Students that are not reading proficiently by the end of the third grade make up the majority of high school students who don't graduate, they are half as likely to go to college, and their adult annual earnings eventually average half of their peers. Almost 85% of teenagers in the juvenile justice system cannot read at third-grade level proficiency. These critical data points could not only alter the course of a student's life, but that of our city.

Thankfully, since 2018 Haverhill has rallied around the cause of literacy through the city-wide grade-level reading campaign, Haverhill Promise. Dozens of organizations across diverse sectors have come together to embark on a campaign to ensure that every child in Haverhill is on their way towards reading proficiently by the end of the third grade. In the past three years, literacy promotion has been embedded within our local culture. Little free libraries multiplied, murals of kids reading appeared, health care providers asked parents about reading, and hundreds of books have been donated and delivered.

Haverhill Promise has been off to a strong start, thanks to a committed executive committee, working groups, and a Campaign Director that wakes up every day thinking about what she can do to improve literacy in our city. The following pages serve as a roadmap with concrete plans, target areas and desired outcomes. We hope that you will take an active and sustained role in realizing this mission.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Andy X. Vargas".

Andy X. Vargas
State Representative

WHAT IS HAVERHILL PROMISE?

THE BEGINNING

The Haverhill Promise initiative began in 2017, when a small team of Haverhill leaders led by MA State Representative Andy Vargas and philanthropist Dr. John Maddox took a trip to Western MA to learn about Springfield's Read by 4th campaign for grade-level reading. At the time, the percentage of third graders meeting or exceeding expectations in state-wide ELA assessments in Haverhill was only 30%.

Inspired by the progress being made in a fellow Gateway City, the Haverhill team returned energized and eager to begin the important task of improving literacy outcomes for Haverhill students. A steering committee made up of leaders from the health, education, government, and business sectors was formed, and in March of 2018, the Haverhill Promise campaign for grade level reading was formally launched.

During the spring and summer of 2018, a number of literacy-focused events presented by the Haverhill Education Coalition introduced community members to the priorities of Haverhill Promise—school readiness, school attendance, and summer learning. Concurrently, a research team from Brandeis University and Haverhill Promise Fellow Patrick O'Connor spent months meeting with stakeholders and researching best practices from other grade-level reading communities, presenting their findings to a room full of educators, parents, and community leaders at August 2018's "Haverhill Promise: Next Steps for Early Literacy forum." Shortly thereafter, and with a substantial financial commitment from the J.F. Maddox Foundation, the Haverhill Promise steering committee began its search for a full-time Campaign Director. Local artist and community engagement expert Jenny Arndt was hired in June of 2019 to help lead the charge. A Haverhill Promise "Huddle" event later that summer brought educators, parents, and invested community members into the room once again to begin the real work of goal setting and strategizing.

Haverhill Promise is a cross-sector collaboration between schools, non-profits, educators, families, health entities, early education providers, and businesses committed to ensuring that all Haverhill students have the tools necessary to achieve grade-level reading proficiency.

The Haverhill Promise campaign is focused on supporting children and their families from birth through grade three, with a mission of reading proficiency for all Haverhill students.

"A goal without a plan is just a wish."

— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

The following Community Solutions Action Plan (CSAP) is the result of nearly three years of research and collaboration between the Haverhill Promise steering committee, volunteer workgroups, and local leaders meeting regularly to develop innovative solutions to the problems impacting grade-level reading outcomes in Haverhill.



COMMUNITY PROFILE



Geographic Name:
Haverhill, MA

Branded Community Name:
Haverhill Promise
The Campaign for Grade Level Reading

Geographic Boundary:
City of Haverhill, MA

63,533

TOTAL POPULATION

12.5%

POVERTY RATE

53.6%
OR
4,322
STUDENTS

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

Total # of School Districts Involved: 1 (Haverhill Public Schools)

Total # of Public Schools Involved: 16

Total # of Students (K-3): 2,314


Total # of Students (K-12): 7,589

Community Lead:

Jenny Arndt, Campaign Director
Haverhill Promise
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SOCIAL LINKS

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Designated Learning & Data Partner:

Irene Collins, Assessment Coordinator & Data Coach
Haverhill Public Schools
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Funding:

The J.F Maddox Foundation represented by Dr. John Maddox has been the initiative's primary funding source. The foundation invested \$40K in initial funding and made a multi-year commitment of up to \$85K/year through the end of FY22 for the Campaign Director salary and a yearly operations budget. One-time donations totaling \$11,535 have provided additional program and project support.



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Haverhill, MA is a vibrant city north of Boston with a mix of urban and rural areas across 35 square miles.

Settled in 1640, Haverhill was originally known as Pentucket, a Native America word meaning "Place of the Winding River." The Merrimack River, now a beloved scenic and recreational attraction, once powered sawmills and gristmills, solidifying Haverhill as an important industrial city for most of the 1800's and 1900's. Haverhill's most notable "claim fame" was as a women's shoe manufacturing mecca. By the end of 1913, one tenth of all women's shoes produced in the US were made in Haverhill. Today, while no longer manufacturing shoes, Haverhill's shoe-making history is celebrated through murals, memorials and giant shoe sculptures.

Haverhill is one of 26 historic manufacturing cities in MA deemed "Gateway Cities" "because they are at once gateways to the next era of the state's economic success and key portals for their diverse, often foreign-born, residents' ongoing pursuit of the American dream."¹ Like other Gateway Cities, Haverhill has experienced a demographic shift across several decades. Since 2010, Haverhill's Latino population has increased by 70% with nearly 15,000 residents identifying as Hispanic/Latino as of the 2020 Census,² compared to just over 8,800 in 2010.³ Similarly, the number of Latino students enrolled in Haverhill Public Schools has increased by more than 100% from just over 1,500 students in 2010,⁴ to over 3,000 students in 2020,⁵ now representing 40% of the total student population. Haverhill has struggled to diversify city committees, non-profit boards, and political offices to reflect its changing cultural makeup. In 2016, Andy Vargas, now a MA State Representative, became Haverhill's first Latino City Councilman. Since then, he and other community leaders have made the case for a ward-based charter for City Council and School Committee seats in hopes that it will create a more equitable playing field for candidates. Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini's new Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion has also sought to improve diversity by prioritizing the recruitment and retention of minority educators in the district.

One of Haverhill's largest assets is a strong nonprofit and volunteer base, with around 350 registered 501c3 organizations, many of whom meet regularly to collaborate and leverage resources for maximum impact. Team Haverhill, a 100-member volunteer organization, as well as numerous service clubs, neighborhood groups, and generous individuals have already contributed to the early the efforts of Haverhill Promise, and are standing by to help as a plan takes shape.

¹ MassTech.org: <https://masstech.org/innovation-economy/regional-economies/massachusetts-gateway-cities>

² 2020 Census: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/haverhillcitymassachusetts/PST045219>

³ 2010 Census: <http://censusviewer.com/city/MA/Haverhill>

⁴ DESE Haverhill Enrollment Data (2019): <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=01280000&orgtypecode=5&fycode=2010>

⁵ DESE Haverhill Enrollment Data (2020): <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=01280000&orgtypecode=5&fycode=2020>

Assurance 1: The Problem

A data-rich description of the current situation and recent trend lines for high school graduation, grade-level reading, school readiness, student attendance and summer and afterschool learning.



HAVERHILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATES

Overall, Haverhill's all-student graduation rate is on a slight upward trend (+6% over 5 years) with 80.4% of the 4-year cohort graduating in 2020.⁶ The graduation rate for Hispanic/Latino students, who make up approximately 25-30% of each 4-year cohort has been less predictable, landing between 60-70% each year, while the graduation rate for EL and former EL students has steadily improved (+31.9% over 5 years). Haverhill students with disabilities are consistently the least likely subgroup to graduate within four years, and note the highest dropout rates amongst sub groups.

GRADE-LEVEL READING

District-wide, three-year trends in third-grade reading proficiency are on the rise, with 43% of Haverhill's third-grade students meeting or exceeding expectations in the area of English Language Arts as of the last statewide assessment (MCAS) in 2019 compared to only 30% in 2017.⁷

In MA, a student is considered high needs if he or she is designated as either economically disadvantaged, an English Learner (EL) or former EL, or a student with disabilities. For the majority of the Gateway Cities the percentage of high needs students in each district correlates closely with their MCAS ELA performance. That is not the case for Haverhill, which has the 9th lowest total percentage of high needs students (60% as of 2019) but falls to 19th amongst the Gateway Cities when comparing the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA as of the 2019 MCAS test.⁸

One school in Haverhill is an anomaly when considering the number of high needs students it serves. Tilton Lower School, which had 79% high needs students in 2019 (more than any other Haverhill school) was the top performing Haverhill school in grade 3 ELA on the 2019 MCAS assessment. Tilton Lower has more than doubled the number of third-grade students reading at grade-level in recent years. In 2017, only 25% of students at Tilton Lower were meeting or exceeding expectations. By 2019, that number had jumped to 55%. Tilton's growth in reading proficiency can be attributed to strong leadership and close to \$1 mil in turnaround grants⁹ which funded additional staff positions, social emotional learning supports, free after-school learning opportunities in reading and math, and extra busing for students. Former Tilton Lower Principal Bonnie Antkowiak, now serving as a district-wide administrator has shared that her team's approach to the Tilton turnaround started by simply asking teachers "what do you need?" and really listening to their answers. Celebrating successes every step of the way both within the school and out in the community was another important strategy for Tilton, and allowed

⁶ DESE Haverhill Graduation Rates (2019): https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/grad/grad_report.aspx?orgcode=01280000&orgtypecode=5&fycode=2020

⁷ DESE Next Generation MCAS Tests: Percent of Students at Each Achievement Level for Haverhill (2019): https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=01280000&orgtypecode=5&fycode=2019

⁸ Gateway Cities Reading (2019): <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AnCVstyVlelkvbks43WVNzeE5n1sEnFd/view?usp=sharing>

⁹ Eagle Tribune "Tilton gets \$404K grant to boost academics" (June, 2018): https://www.eagletribune.com/news/haverhill/tilton-gets-404k-grant-to-boost-academics/article_ff40d317-22c7-51e1-a8b8-df3042edd969.html

everyone to be a part of their success story. The power of positivity is a lesson our campaign can learn from— it helped reframe Tilton’s situation, and led to buy-in from teachers, students, and families.

Haverhill has more work to do to address achievement gaps. For example, Haverhill’s Hispanic/Latino students who represent almost 40% of the total student population consistently score lower on ELA state assessments than their white peers. While 50% of white third grade students met or exceeded expectations in ELA in 2019, only 32% of Hispanic/Latino third grade students hit that mark. Also worth noting is the performance of Haverhill’s students with disabilities, with only 16% of third-grade students meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA in 2019.¹⁰ In her 2018 entry report,¹¹ Superintendent Marotta stressed that strategies to assist students in the most historically marginalized subgroups should be funded and prioritized within the school district. Haverhill Promise intends to support the effort to close significant achievement gaps in ELA by prioritizing thoughtful, inclusive community strategies to help all Haverhill students achieve reading success.

SCHOOL READINESS

What does the term “school readiness” actually mean? And which specific measures determine whether or not a child is “ready” to start kindergarten? The answers to these questions depend on where you look and who you ask. Boston, MA’s “Thrive in 5” school readiness roadmap defines it this way:

“School readiness is the state of early development that enables an individual child to engage in and benefit from kindergarten learning experiences, which is a stepping stone for sustained school success. Early development encompasses a child’s capacity in language development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, social and emotional development, physical well being and motor development.”¹²

In Haverhill, a standard definition of school readiness has not been officially adopted amongst early childhood experts, and a wide range of developmental screening tools and assessments are used, making it difficult to determine the aggregate readiness of Haverhill students when they begin kindergarten. Haverhill’s Early Learning Leadership Team (ELLT), made up of leads from center-based child care programs has expressed a desire to move toward a common assessment tool for early education programs in Haverhill. In their 2018 Haverhill Preschool Expansion Grant Strategic Plan,¹³ the ELLT expressed the following: “we recognize the value of adopting at least one common child and/or program assessment tool in order to have a common language to discuss child outcomes and program quality.” Supporting that effort is the local United Way’s DRIVE initiative, which has created an online platform for early childhood education providers to enter data from the widely accepted Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and is currently working with the Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Haverhill to begin its rollout.

¹⁰ DESE Next Generation MCAS Results by Subgroup by Grade and Subject (2019):

<https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/subgroups2.aspx?linkid=25&orgcode=01280000&fycode=2019&orgtypecode=5&>

¹¹ Supt. Marotta’s Entry Report (2018-2019): <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qpV9-FBY-6t9jj6rvL6pl9SoqPZ5J2XI/view?usp=sharing>

¹² Thrive in 5 Boston: http://www.thrivein5boston.org/pdf/TN5_Full_Report.pdf

¹³ Haverhill PEG Strategic Plan (June 2018): https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VZHsyHQ5Laaj_OEKv0EdXc062faFOfJl/view?usp=sharing

While the big picture for school readiness in terms of health, basic needs, and physical development continues to develop, the School Readiness workgroup has chosen to focus specifically on literacy readiness– the point at which a child has the early literacy skills necessary to learn to read. In order to determine a baseline measure of literacy readiness for entering kindergarten students, the school readiness workgroup will first need to understand what literacy readiness looks like to stakeholders like teachers, school nurses, and parents. Data from the newly adopted iReady Reading assessment in which all entering HPS students participated at the start of the 2020/2021 school year might be the best available option to determine how many incoming kindergarteners are “literacy-ready” and to measure the effectiveness of the strategies outlined in Assurance 3, but that decision must be made collectively.

KidsCount.org estimates that 49% of three and four year-olds in Haverhill are enrolled in a formal preschool program (compared to 60% statewide).¹⁴ A 2017 needs assessment from the ELLT found that nearly 200 Haverhill families were on waitlists for center-based preschool programs.¹⁵ In recent years the City has contributed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to subsidize preschool slots for economically disadvantaged families. In 2020, leaders from the ELLT approached the Director of Community Development with an idea to create a city-wide scholarship fund from CDBG Cares Act dollars. The collaboration was a huge success, allowing families experiencing financial stress from the Covid-19 pandemic to apply for tuition assistance at any Haverhill preschool.

2020 US Census data revealed around 4,000 children under the age of five living in Haverhill.¹⁶ In a typical year, there are an estimated 30-35 playgroups, story-times, and other early literacy enrichment programs offered each month for families with children ages 0-5 in the City. All but one program is presented in English, and most take place on weekday mornings, limiting access for working parents and non English-speaking families. Program facilitators have noted low attendance at times due to poor weather conditions and/or lack of transportation. The School Readiness workgroup believes that utilizing the Haverhill Promise platform to promote enrichment programs in Haverhill, and working with coordinators to bring programs directly to underserved neighborhoods will help increase awareness and improve participation.

The role that local hospitals, pediatric practices, school nurses, and other healthcare providers play in early literacy development has been a key factor in the development of the school readiness portion of this plan. While a school district only learns a child’s name when they register for kindergarten, healthcare providers are a part of a child’s life from day one. They are among the first to assess developmental milestones, screen for vision impairment, and detect the presence of learning disabilities. As we move forward, it will be important for Haverhill Promise to lean on that expertise and leverage the influence of respected healthcare providers to reach families with resources and important messaging around early literacy.

¹⁴KidsCount.org: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7278-children-ages-3-and-4-enrolled-in-preschool-by-city-and-town-county-subdivision?loc=23&loct=11#detailed/11/3324-3674/false/1692,1691,1607,1572,1485,1376,1201,1074,880,815/any/19840,14329>

¹⁵Haverhill Preschool Expansion Planning Grant Needs Assessment 2017: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1026NIFm-4zndQF9HKBSow_1diJOTIQwQ/view?usp=sharing

¹⁶US 2020 Census: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/haverhillcitymassachusetts>

One element of literacy readiness that has been a focal point of Haverhill Promise in the past few years is the connection between vision and literacy. The State of MA mandates the following vision protocol:

“Upon entering kindergarten or within 30 days of the start of the school year, the parent or guardian of each child shall present to school health personnel certification that the child within the previous 12 months has passed a vision screening conducted by personnel approved by the department of public health and trained in vision screening techniques...”¹⁷

Despite the State mandate, HPS nurses have noted that each year only around 30% of kindergarten registrations include vision screening documentation. This may mean some Haverhill children are slipping through the cracks and starting school with an undiagnosed vision problem or a neurobiological condition like dyslexia that could greatly affect their ability to learn. In 2019, School Nurse Consultant Shanyn Toulouse secured a \$20K Better Vision Together (BVT) grant which has been used to expand vision screening training for early childhood education providers. Toulouse is working closely with Haverhill Promise and HPS registration to track and increase the number of students receiving screenings.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) began including chronic absenteeism data as part of its school and district accountability measures in 2018, prompting school administrators to prioritize attendance improvements district-wide. Many Haverhill schools implemented their own attendance challenges and convened “attendance watch” teams to connect with students at risk for chronic absence. To help increase awareness of the importance of daily attendance, local leaders worked with the public access station HC Media to create a series of PSA’s using the phrase “School Every Day.” Annual DESE reports monitor the rate of chronic absenteeism (defined as students missing 10% or more of learning days) at the district-wide level, and at each school. For the purposes of this plan, the School Attendance workgroup has chosen to monitor the rate of chronic absenteeism at only those schools which serve students in kindergarten through grade 3, excluding the preschool, high school and dedicated middle schools. In 2020, the total rate of chronic absenteeism at Haverhill schools serving students in K-3 was 16.29% compared to 14.98% in 2019.¹⁸ Chronic absenteeism data from the 2019-2020 school year was only reported through March 2, 2020 and was not counted in state accountability.

The reasons for chronic absenteeism among young Haverhill students align with common issues faced by low-income families. Those who support families directly, like HPS attendance supervisors, school nurses, and parent liaisons have cited parent and/or student mental health, access to transportation, and chronic health issues as reasons given for absences. However, the district has historically taken a case management approach, assessing and addressing the individual needs of each family, and has not aggregated qualitative data, which could reveal patterns in specific neighborhoods or schools. The School Attendance workgroup will consider ways to track qualitative data by speaking directly with

¹⁷ MA Vision Screening Protocol for Districts (2016): <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-vision-screening-protocol-for-school-districts-0/download>

¹⁸ Chronic Absence by School: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10n_gMNMGEmd-rGBZA1J0bY0p0Hyc9JLrJQgBhBW-Li8/edit?usp=sharing

parents, doctors, and attendance watch teams, and will enlist the help of local leaders to assist in developing community and neighborhood-specific attendance improvement strategies. At both the district-wide level, and amongst the Haverhill schools serving students in K-3, the students at highest risk for becoming chronically absent were economically disadvantaged students and more broadly, those considered high needs.¹⁹

Technology and innovation in schooling during the unique Covid-19 school year has created opportunities for students to participate in school when they may not have otherwise been able to. However, remote learning has also been an obstacle for attendance this school year, with students facing issues of internet connectivity in their home and/or difficulties navigating online platforms. HPS parent liaisons were able to assist struggling caregivers this year by setting up bilingual Google Classroom training sessions in partnership with the local community hub Make It Haverhill. HPS has applied for funding to expand technology training in multiple languages for parents and caregivers in the future.

SUMMER LEARNING

In a typical year, Haverhill Public Schools hosts around 1,000 students in more than a dozen free summer learning programs around the city, including a Title 1 Summer Advancement Program, Title 3 Summer Program for EL students, ongoing services for children with IEP's, and a number of site-specific programs. While there are ample free summer learning opportunities with a focus on ELA, summer program leaders have expressed concerns that the names, locations, eligibility requirements and other details for each program may be confusing for parents. The Summer Learning workgroup is exploring ways to centralize and share information about summer learning online and in-person through key community events each spring.

In recent years, the process for determining which students to recruit for specific programs began with a list of the lowest-performing students across the district based on ELA assessments (the bottom 25% in grades K-8), and was generated by the HPS data and assessment coordinator sometime after spring assessments concluded. This year, district leaders have decided to use winter ELA assessments to generate the list of lowest performing students, which has helped program leaders get a jumpstart on planning and recruiting families before their summer plans are set. For grades K-2, there are around 400 "high-risk" readers that have been identified for summer learning program recruitment in 2021.

The Haverhill Y has emerged as a local champion for summer learning loss prevention, with their 6-week Summer Literacy Academy. The program utilizes pre and post testing to track student progress, and provides a unique model—a morning of intensive reading intervention followed by an afternoon of summer fun at the Y's lakeside Camp Tricklin' Falls. The program has tripled in size over the past three years from just 60 students in 2018, to 180+ seats for the upcoming 2021 summer.

The Covid-19 learning disruption has brought the issue of learning loss into the spotlight, creating a strong case for the importance of funding and expanding summer learning opportunities. Programs like the Y

¹⁹Chronic Absence by School: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10n_gMNMGEmd-rGBZAIJ0bY0p0Hyc9JLrJQgBhBW-Li8/edit?usp=sharing

Summer Literacy Academy have received Covid-related funding for summer 2021, but ongoing funding support will need to be secured in order to sustain the same number of seats and/or increase program capacity in future years. Haverhill Promise Director Jenny Arndt spoke to City Council during the City's November 2020 tax classification discussion, emphasizing the need for City investment in extended learning programs to help students overcome learning deficits from the pandemic. The release of the Haverhill Promise CSAP is timely, as budget discussions this spring will impact summer 2022.

KEY CHALLENGES

Equity/Inclusion: In her time as Superintendent of Haverhill Public Schools, Dr. Margaret Marotta has brought to light serious issues around equity and inclusion within the district. The remarks below from Dr. Marotta's final entry plan of 2018 will provide context for some of the challenges and changes our Haverhill students have faced in recent years.

"Equity refers to the principle of fairness. In Haverhill, a variety of systemic barriers present roadblocks to educational equity for some of our students. Examples of barriers include user fees for athletics, fees for summer credit recovery, tuition-based full-day kindergarten, and a lack of translation and interpreting services. Other barriers include excessively large class sizes in some schools, and too many facilities that are not ready for 21st century learning. This lack of equity exacerbates opportunity gaps and segregates our schools and our community. While Haverhill is a wonderful place for some students to attend school, as a community we need to rally behind all of our students and provide equitable access to the many rich opportunities our schools offer."²⁰

Many of the changes Dr. Marotta underscored were implemented in the 2019-2020 school year, including eliminating sports fees, reducing class sizes across the district, and introducing free all-day kindergarten. As of the 2020-2021 school year, every Haverhill school has a dedicated bilingual parent liaison to lead family engagement efforts and assist with translation, and all Haverhill students receive breakfast and lunch at no cost through a federal grant. These positive changes will serve Haverhill Public Schools well; however, our Haverhill Promise Steering Committee believes that the topic of equity must remain at the forefront of planning not just within the school district, but for Haverhill Promise and every youth and family serving program in Haverhill if our community wishes to make grade-level reading achievable for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures.

SERVICES & SUPPORTS

There are a wide range of services and supports in Haverhill focused on addressing aspects of the problems described above. Non-profit organizations such as Community Action Inc., Emmaus Inc., Ruth's House, and United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley work diligently to meet the needs of economically disadvantaged families and support early literacy by providing families with access to

²⁰ Supt. Marotta's Entry Report (2018-2019) Page 15: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qpV9-FBY-6t9jj6rvL6pl9SoqPZ5J2XI/view?usp=sharing>

parent support groups, playgroups, low-cost preschool/daycare slots, and literacy resources. Other groups focused specifically on advocacy and education like the Haverhill Education Coalition (HEC), the Haverhill Education Foundation (HEF), the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), the Haverhill Youth Advisory Council, and the Haverhill Latino Coalition are committed to closing achievement gaps for historically marginalized groups and have hosted community forums to help bring the mission of Haverhill Promise into the spotlight.

Reach Out and Read (RoR) and the Ready4K text messaging program serve to educate parents on important early literacy concepts and ways to support their child's literacy readiness. The Haverhill Y's Summer Literacy Academy, the Haverhill Public Library's Beanstack Reading Challenges, and HPS summer learning and school vacation camps aim to stem learning loss during school breaks. The school district has worked with 1647, a nonprofit organization focused on family engagement, hired bilingual parent liaisons, and launched an attendance awareness campaign called "School Every Day" to assist in reducing chronic absenteeism. There are ample resources for free books such as a strong public library consortium, a robust network of Little Free Libraries, and a summer bookmobile through the HPS transportation department.

More bilingual programming and translation of resource materials is needed to better serve families where English is not a first language, and more could be done to better serve and support the special education community as well. A robust list of grade level reading supports and services can be found in the appendix at the end of this document.

What conclusions has Haverhill Promise drawn about the extent to which some, most, or all of the following contribute to the performance gaps between children from low-income families and their peers?

- Problems/issues identified above are not a high priority for leaders in our community
- Too little information about what works
- Insufficient coordination among the key stakeholders and actors
- Inadequate resources
- Ineffective use of available resources
- Insufficient access to otherwise available resources
- Mismatch between the interventions and the needs
- Insufficient engagement of and support for parents
- Insufficient attention to the Health Determinants of Early School Success

Haverhill Promise plans to use the Clear Impact Scorecard tool to bring partners into alignment and help draw meaningful conclusions about some of the issues listed above. While we have national research to draw on and assumptions about what will work for Haverhill, the data we track within the Scorecard tool will provide evidence to support the strategies we have outlined in the remainder of our CSAP.

- **Insufficient engagement of and support for parents** is an area of weakness that has been identified

by Haverhill Promise workgroups and many of our partners. The majority of strategies laid out in Assurance 3 aim to improve in this area.

- Our workgroups have theorized that **insufficient access to otherwise available resources** has widened the gap for children from low-income families. For families without reliable transportation or the means to take a bus or cab, getting their children to school, the library, or an early learning program may be challenging. Limited free and subsidized preschool slots makes the important preschool experience inaccessible for many children from low-income households.

Assurance #2: Destination (Desired Outcomes and Impact)

Ambitious but achievable goals, targets and milestones for the current and successive four school years, and an overarching vision for where Haverhill will be in five years for school readiness, student attendance, summer and after school learning and third-grade reading.

GRADE LEVEL READING GOALS:

The desired outcomes for the Haverhill Promise initiative outlined in this Assurance are the culmination of nearly three years of input from educators and stakeholders at Haverhill Promise community events, the direction of the Haverhill Promise Steering Committee, research and recommendations from Brandeis University graduate students, and months of meetings with working groups specifically focused on improving school attendance, school readiness, and summer learning.

Haverhill Promise has set an ambitious goal of 55% or more of Haverhill third graders meeting or exceeding expectations on the English Language Arts MCAS and to rank within the top five Gateway Cities by 2025. It is worth mentioning that there will be an obvious gap in MCAS data due to the cancellation of statewide testing at the end of the 2019/2020 school year, and MCAS scores this Spring will likely be poor— reflecting a year full of learning disruptions and constant change. The Haverhill Promise steering committee understands that over the next few years this plan and its metrics may need to be revisited and adjusted. Haverhill Promise will work closely with community stakeholders to set and review interim benchmarks and metrics in the three priority areas that directly impact grade-level reading achievement, investing in the strategies that are proving to be most effective.

SCHOOL READINESS GOALS:

Haverhill Promise’s overarching vision for school readiness is that all Haverhill students enter kindergarten “literacy-ready” or “ready to learn to read.” As mentioned in detail in Assurance 1, the year one goal for the School Readiness workgroup will simply be to establish a baseline for literacy readiness. Which skills are children expected to have upon entering kindergarten? And just how many Haverhill students are entering kindergarten “literacy-ready”? Once that baseline is established, the School Readiness workgroup will determine a specific, measurable goal for increasing the percentage of literacy-ready students each year.

Subsequent years will be more broadly focused on improving critical connections for parents and children in the early years. The Haverhill Promise School Readiness workgroup will use the Clear Impact Scorecard collective impact tool to develop and track the implementation of strategies which aim to:

- Effectively communicate to parents/caregivers what literacy readiness means and which skills children are expected to have upon entering kindergarten;
- Increase opportunities for positive parent/child interactions that support early literacy development and are culturally and linguistically appropriate; and
- Improve access to books, early learning programs, and information about early learning resources, especially for economically disadvantaged and ESL families.

Haverhill's Early Learning Leadership Team (ELLT) will continue to meet regularly, contributing to Haverhill Promise's overarching vision for school readiness by pursuing funding for preschool expansion and alignment between early education programs.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE GOALS:

The Haverhill Promise School Attendance workgroup has set a goal of maintaining or reducing the 16.29% chronic absenteeism rate (at Haverhill public schools serving K-3 students) during the current Covid-19 learning year. Over the next five years, it is our goal that the strategies developed by the workgroup will help reduce the overall rate of chronic absenteeism (at Haverhill public schools serving K-3 students) by at least 1% each year.

SUMMER LEARNING GOALS:

Over the course of our 5-year CSAP, the Summer Learning workgroup will aim to improve the total number of high-risk readers in grades K-2 enrolled in summer learning programs. In 2021, around 400 students in grades K-2 have been identified as high-risk readers in need of a summer learning opportunity based on their winter iReady assessments and Fountas and Pinnel reading levels. This summer, the Haverhill Promise Summer Learning workgroup will partner with HPS and the Haverhill Y with a goal of enrolling at least 50%, or 200 high-risk readers in grades K-2 in a summer learning program. By 2025, it is our goal that at least 75% of high-risk readers in grades K-2 (as identified by winter assessments) will be enrolled in a summer learning program each summer, and that all youth-serving summer programs across the city would incorporate an intentional literacy development strategy into their programs.

The Haverhill Promise Summer Learning workgroup will also closely monitor summer learning loss by comparing spring iReady assessment results with fall iReady assessment results for K-3 students across the district. A baseline measure will be determined in fall of 2021 at which time the Summer Learning workgroup will decide on a specific goal to reduce summer learning loss in subsequent years.

To maximize on learning opportunities for children of all ages, the Summer Learning workgroup will aim

to increase the total number of free enrichment programs for families with children ages 0-5 offered each summer in Haverhill, especially in neighborhoods with a high number of economically disadvantaged families. In addition to creating more educational opportunities for early readers, these programs will help Haverhill Promise provide literacy readiness resources, information on preschool programs, and books to families.

Assurance #3: Strategy (Integrated and Intertwined)

An overview of the sets of coordinated activities, programs and initiatives designed to respond to each of the core challenges (readiness, attendance, summer and after school learning loss and grade-level reading).

GRADE LEVEL READING STRATEGIES:

Haverhill Promise will meet our goal of 55% or more of Haverhill third graders meeting or exceeding expectations on the English Language Arts MCAS by 2025 by implementing community-wide strategies around improving school readiness, decreasing chronic absenteeism, and supporting high quality summer learning programs. The strategies are explained in detail in the sections below.

We will also dig deeper into what has worked for Haverhill schools in the past. The Haverhill Promise steering committee will specifically look to Tilton Lower as a case study for how an underperforming school with the right supports and targeted investments was able to drastically improve the number of students reading at or above grade level. This research will help Haverhill Promise advocate for school-level investments and present a strong case to philanthropic partners.

To complement the above strategies and improve access to physical books, the development of a comprehensive system for book donation and distribution will serve to provide more age appropriate books and literacy resources to Haverhill families and encourage daily reading practice at home.

- A book distribution project team will take on the task of developing and implementing a smart, community-wide book donation and distribution system. One arm of the team will focus on identifying a central location for accepting donations of gently used children's books, and a simple system for sorting and displaying them. A second arm of the team will develop strategies for disseminating books to teachers and students and to partner locations in key neighborhoods. Some examples for book distribution include a BookMobile, pop-up libraries, community events, teacher days, curated book bags for families in need, etc. The Haverhill Promise book distribution team will set up a landing page on the Haverhill Promise website with information about donating and acquiring books.

SCHOOL READINESS STRATEGIES:

The School Readiness workgroup's goal to establish a baseline for literacy readiness will take more than just crunching iReady data. The workgroup must ensure that teachers, administrators, school nurses and

parents are all in agreement about what literacy readiness means and how it should be measured. Members of the School Readiness workgroup will meet this goal by:

- Assessing the knowledge and understanding of key stakeholders through surveys and focus groups.
- Bringing stakeholders into agreement around a set of early literacy skills/milestones and how to measure them effectively.

As mentioned in Assurance 1, the Haverhill Promise School Readiness workgroup has identified children's health care providers as important school readiness champions. Therefore, our strategy to effectively communicate to parents/caregivers what literacy readiness means and which skills their children are expected to have upon entering kindergarten begins in the pediatrician's office. Members of our School Readiness workgroup, including the Regional Program Coordinator for Reach Out and Read will...

- Collaborate with Reach Out and Read team at Pentucket Medical Associates to leverage successes in their existing ROR program with the goal of developing a literacy-rich model for integration at area pediatric and family medicine clinics. Reach Out and Read program development will be available to clinics who wish to incorporate the program into their practice.
- Begin strategic outreach to other major pediatric and family practices in Haverhill (Children's Healthcare, Haverhill Family Health Center, etc.) to share resources and learn what they are currently doing to promote literacy.

A broader communications strategy will also be developed to bring important readiness resources and messaging to the Haverhill community. The strategy will include:

- Centralizing electronic early literacy resources and information on the Haverhill Promise website and directing families to the web site through email and social media.
- Developing a printed early literacy resource pamphlet in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic to disseminate to families through pediatrician's offices or hospital maternity wards.

In an effort to increase opportunities for positive parent-child interactions that support early literacy development and are culturally and linguistically appropriate, Haverhill Promise has identified the following strategies:

- Partner with Community Action to pilot the Ready4K text messaging program with HeadStart, Early HeadStart, WIC, and Family & Community Connections families.
- Identify key locations where parents and young children regularly spend time and create site-specific literacy prompts and activities that encourage parent-child interaction and discourage screen use. For example, grocery store letter scavenger hunts, neighborhood "Trail Tales," or laundromat read-alouds.
- Develop strategies to connect with families from day one. Consider seeking funding to provide

parents of new Haverhill babies with a gift that reinforces messaging such as a “Read to Me” onesie or bib. Pursue the creation of a branded “Haverhill Baby” board book that encourages families to get out and experience the City with their baby.

Our strategy to improve access to books, early learning programs, and information about early learning resources, especially for economically disadvantaged and ESL families includes...

- Partnering with local food pantries to disseminate early literacy resource pamphlets and free children’s books to families in need.
- Investing in translation services to ensure all Haverhill Promise printed and web materials are accessible in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic (the top four languages spoken at home in Haverhill).
- Funding and curating free early learning pop-up events run by Haverhill Promise partners like the library, FCC-CAI, and Creative Haverhill in neighborhoods with a high concentration of economically disadvantaged families.

By implementing these strategies over the course of the next five years in tandem with the Early Learning Leadership Team’s preschool expansion and alignment work, we are confident the Haverhill community will see an increase in the percentage of students entering kindergarten with the skills necessary to learn to read.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGIES:

Haverhill Promise’s goal to maintain or reduce 16.29% chronic absenteeism rate (for Haverhill public schools serving K-3 students) during the current Covid-19 learning year has been supported by the following strategies:

- Increasing awareness of the importance of daily attendance, whether remote or in-person. The School Attendance workgroup began implementing this strategy with an Attendance Awareness Poster Design Contest where students in pre-K through grade 8 designed posters using the phrase “School every day, no matter which way.” The contest was funded by a grant from the Haverhill Cultural Council.
- Incentivizing attendance during key times of year when attendance patterns typically show high rates of absence, such as between winter recess and February vacation, and between February and April vacations.
- Promoting and supporting HPS parent liaison’s Google Classroom training events at the Make It Haverhill community hub.

The strategy to reduce the overall rate of chronic absenteeism (for Haverhill public schools serving K-3 students) by at least 1% each year over five years involves a targeted family engagement strategy and a proactive awareness approach. In addition to growing the Year 1 strategies outlined above, the School

Attendance workgroup will:

- Identify the Haverhill elementary school(s) with the highest rate of chronic absenteeism and recruit parents, teachers, and volunteers to develop neighborhood and school-specific strategies to improve attendance that can then be scaled up and/or implemented at other schools if proven successful. An effort will be made to connect with neighborhood groups and enlist “community brokers” like church leaders, youth leaders, and well-loved residents to develop creative solutions to assist families in their vicinity.
- Distribute tools and tips to encourage healthy attendance habits at the start of the school year. For example, “My Attendance Plan” dry-erase magnets helping students think through things like what time they should go to bed, when their bus comes, and who to call if they miss the bus.
- The Haverhill Promise Attendance work group will also partner with the Early Learning Leadership Team to begin tracking chronic absenteeism rates at local preschool programs using the Clear Impact Scorecard tool and will begin working with program directors to reach families with messaging around the importance of developing healthy attendance habits early on.

SUMMER LEARNING STRATEGIES:

To reach a goal of 50% of the total number of high-risk readers in grades K-2 (as identified by winter assessments) enrolled in a summer learning program in 2021, the Haverhill Promise Summer Learning workgroup plans to:

- Effectively communicate information about summer learning opportunities in Haverhill to families by centralizing and simplifying information about summer learning opportunities on the Haverhill Promise website and working with HPS summer learning leaders to develop and distribute a Summer 2021 pamphlet or brochure.
- Monitor the district-populated list of high-risk readers to ensure that those students are getting plugged into summer learning programs. Empower parent liaisons as “Summer Learning Ambassadors” to follow up with families and help them through the registration process.

To reach a goal of 75% of the total number of high risk readers in grades K-2 (as identified by winter assessments) enrolled in a summer learning program each summer by 2025, Haverhill Promise teams will continue with the strategies listed above and also work to...

- Partner with groups like Creative Haverhill and Cogswell ArtSpace to develop new multi-disciplinary summer learning programs that encourage and improve reading skills through mediums like art, theater, science, and film.
- Identify barriers to enrollment and improve accessibility of current summer learning programs by distributing a summer learning survey to families.

We believe that even with the encouragement of school leaders, many families in Haverhill will still prefer a purely recreational summer program for their children. This theory will be supported (or debunked) by the results of the summer learning family surveys. Either way, Haverhill Promise intends to connect with leaders of summer programs and use the following strategies to work toward our goal that all youth-serving summer programs across the city would incorporate an intentional literacy development strategy into their program by 2025.

- The Haverhill Promise Summer Learning workgroup will coordinate a “summer learning summit” each spring and invite summer program leaders and staff to participate. The event will provide tips and strategies to make reading fun, and will allow community program staff to brainstorm with and learn from teachers, literacy coaches and interventionists.
- Haverhill Promise will partner with the Haverhill Public Schools curriculum department to arrange professional development opportunities for summer staff from community programs. Staff will learn about the iReady program and how their campers can use it to continue their independent learning pathways after school and during the summer.

Haverhill Promise Summer Learning workgroup members have already begun developing plans which we believe will help toward the effort to increase the total number of free enrichment programs for families with children ages 0-5 offered each summer across the city, especially in neighborhoods with a high number of economically disadvantaged families.

- For summer 2021, the Haverhill Promise Summer Learning workgroup has coordinated a 10-week series of “Literacy Lunches,” enlisting local children’s authors, the public library, arts organizations and early education providers to offer weekly family literacy programming at one or more food distribution sites and recreation areas.

Assurance #4: Connecting for Synergy

How the Haverhill Promise Campaign for Grade Level Reading will connect with, benefit from and/or support other ongoing efforts and initiatives.

The Haverhill Promise initiative was designed to support and leverage the work of smaller groups of community members and education experts like the Early Learning Leadership Team. The ELLT’s Preschool Expansion Planning Grant (PEG) Strategic Plan was an important step toward ensuring that all Haverhill children have access to an affordable, quality preschool experience. Haverhill Promise will continue to support the ELLT’s efforts to secure funding for preschool expansion and alignment.

Our work benefits from and supports the ongoing efforts of HPS to eliminate systemic barriers and improve educational equity for students, and the educational outcomes Superintendent Marotta outlined in her 2018 Entry Plan. As an HPS staff member housed at the Parent Resource Center, Campaign Director Jenny Arndt is well positioned to support HPS initiatives and bring the school district and

community stakeholders into alignment.

The Cogswell ArtSpace Initiative, a project of the nonprofit arts organization Creative Haverhill aims to preserve a historic school building in Bradford and transform it into a vibrant community art space. Haverhill Promise has seen an encouraging amount of engagement from families with our arts-enhanced projects like the 2020 City-Wide Reading Challenge “Reading Takes Us Places” mural²¹ and a recent Attendance Awareness Poster Contest.²² Members of the Summer Learning workgroup have also cited high levels of student engagement in their programs when they have incorporated theater and project-based learning. This evidence suggests creative approaches to reading instruction that include art, theater, science, music and other disciplines could help build excitement around summer learning and is something that should be leveraged. Haverhill Promise is looking forward to exploring opportunities for after school and summer learning programs in partnership with Cogswell ArtSpace when it opens in 2023.

Haverhill Promise will continue to partner with Shanyn Toulouse to maximize the impact of the Better Vision Together initiative, training more early education providers on how to perform vision screenings and make referrals.

Assurance #5: Data

A summary of the steps taken to ensure ongoing availability of and access to the data needed to set baselines, track progress and ensure accountability.

A good portion of the CSAP development process was spent understanding which data existed, which data was missing, and who would be responsible for collecting and organizing the data to monitor goal progress. Research into different types of data collection platforms has led our data team to believe that the best tool for the purposes of Haverhill Promise is one that distinctly tracks and measures collective impact. We were also interested in the tool’s ability to turn data into easy-to-read reports that allow stakeholders and the general public to view our initiative’s progress in real-time. In our research of various tools, we found a plethora of case management-style systems and others focused on multi-partner data collection and output. However, one tool, the Clear Impact Scorecard stood out among the rest for its ability to track “the story behind the curve,” communicating not only the numeric data, but where it comes from, why it’s important, and how it is being used to measure the effectiveness of a particular strategy.

The paragraphs on the following pages outline the types of data our team will track to determine the effectiveness of strategies for improving grade-level reading, school readiness, school attendance, and summer learning.

²¹ Haverhill Promise “Reading Takes Us Places” Mural Project (2020): <https://www.haverhillpromise.com/reading-mural>

²² Haverhill Promise Attendance Awareness Poster Contest (2021): <https://www.haverhillpromise.com/attendance-awareness-poster-contest-winners>

GRADE LEVEL READING DATA:

MCAS results—the summative assessment for third-grade level reading—are kept by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. DESE publishes state, district, and school-level MCAS results each fall. The Haverhill Promise data team will specifically look at overall results for Grade 3 ELA and chronic absenteeism, plus disaggregated data for subgroups in both of those areas.

The HPS Assessment Coordinator will provide iReady assessment data broken down by grade and school at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year.

SUMMATIVE METRIC:

% of Haverhill students meeting or exceeding expectations on the grade 3 ELA MCAS assessment.

INDICATORS:

- % of K-3 students in Green (on or above grade level) on fall, mid-year, and spring iReady assessments.

SCHOOL READINESS DATA:

Haverhill Promise has opted to focus primarily on literacy readiness. At this time the best data we have that measures incoming kindergarten students' understanding of early literacy concepts is the fall iReady ELA assessment. This data will be provided by the HPS Assessment Coordinator. The HPS registration department will also provide data on preschool experience and vision screenings for incoming kindergarten students.

The ELLTs annual program survey, which asks preschool providers to share their total capacity, total enrollment, and waitlist numbers will be compiled and used for preschool advocacy and planning. Finally, United Way's DRIVE initiative, currently being piloted through Community Action Inc. will aggregate data from the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) that Head Start and Early Head Start families fill out each year through an online platform. As the DRIVE initiative enrolls more Haverhill preschools, the Haverhill Promise School Readiness workgroup and ELLT will have the ability to review and report on ASQ data at a community-wide level.

SUMMATIVE METRIC:

% of students entering Kindergarten with the skills necessary to learn to read.

INDICATORS:

- % of 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in a formal Pre-K program.
- Number of enrichment programs for families with children ages 0-5 each month.
- % of entering K students providing proof of vision screening at time of registration.
- % of entering K students with at least one year of Pre-K experience.
- Number of families enrolled in Ready4K text messaging program.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DATA:

The School Attendance workgroup will work with the HPS Assessment Coordinator and Attendance Supervisor to monitor data that relates to our attendance improvement strategies throughout the school year using the SchoolBrains application. Annual data reported to DESE will be used to calculate the rate of chronic absenteeism at Haverhill Public Schools serving K through grade 3 students. It is our hope to also begin tracking community-wide preschool attendance rates, a conversation we will be having in the coming months with the ELLT.

SUMMATIVE METRIC:

Total % of students chronically absent at Haverhill Public Schools serving students in grades K-3.

INDICATORS:

- % of students chronically absent at each Haverhill Public School serving K-3 students.
- % of students chronically absent at city and com Pre-K programs.

SUMMER LEARNING DATA:

Spring iReady assessment data will be compared to Fall iReady assessment data to measure the percentage of students entering grades 1-3 who lost, gained, or sustained reading progress over the course of the summer.

The district's SchoolBrains application will be used to track which students from the list of high-risk readers are enrolled in a summer learning program each year.

SUMMATIVE METRIC:

% of students entering grades 1-3 who retain reading progress over the summer.

INDICATORS

- % of high-risk readers enrolled in a summer learning program focused on ELA.



"Numbers have an important story to tell. They rely on you to give them a clear and convincing voice."

—Stephen Few

Assurance #6: Success and Sustainability

An overview of the steps taken to ensure confidence that the Haverhill Promise effort will have the broad-based support, capacity and resources to succeed and endure.

Haverhill Promise has taken strong steps in the effort to mobilize key stakeholders and important constituencies.

- From the start, well-respected elected officials including Haverhill School Committee members Gail Sullivan and Rich Rosa, and State Representative Andy Vargas have led the charge as fierce advocates for the Haverhill Promise initiative at the local level;
- The Haverhill City Council has enthusiastically endorsed Haverhill Promise, and select Councilmembers have voiced their intentions to support city funding for summer learning programs;
- Dr. John Maddox and consultant Sally Fuller have contributed their knowledge and experience, plus strong philanthropic and professional connections, helping to usher Haverhill Promise into the national grade level reading movement;
- Haverhill Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Margaret Marotta, and Haverhill Public Library Director Sarah Moser have given the Haverhill Promise initiative access to a plethora of valuable resources, including the literacy experts themselves—their staff members;
- Health experts, media journalists, early childhood educators, parents and business leaders represented on the steering committee and in each of the workgroups continue to add their expertise to the initiative and expand its reach to broader audiences;
- And a number of charitable organizations and individuals have given financial support to the Haverhill Promise effort, funding the purchase of bilingual books, Little Free Libraries, and multiple city-wide projects during the the Covid-19 pandemic.

While Haverhill Promise has done well with engaging a variety of stakeholders, it will be important to continue pursuing diverse perspectives.

- The steering committee plans to make a concerted effort to reflect the diverse community we live in. This means actively recruiting Hispanic/Latino, Black, and Asian parents, faith leaders, and other “community brokers”—trusted, well-loved community members.
- Adding workgroup representation to the steering committee: The workgroups are our “feet on the ground” and leaders will be identified who can help maintain cohesion and weigh in on high-level decision-making at quarterly meetings.

Now, with the completion of the CSAP, Haverhill Promise has a defined vision and an action plan that can be shared with potential volunteers, funders, and the community at large.

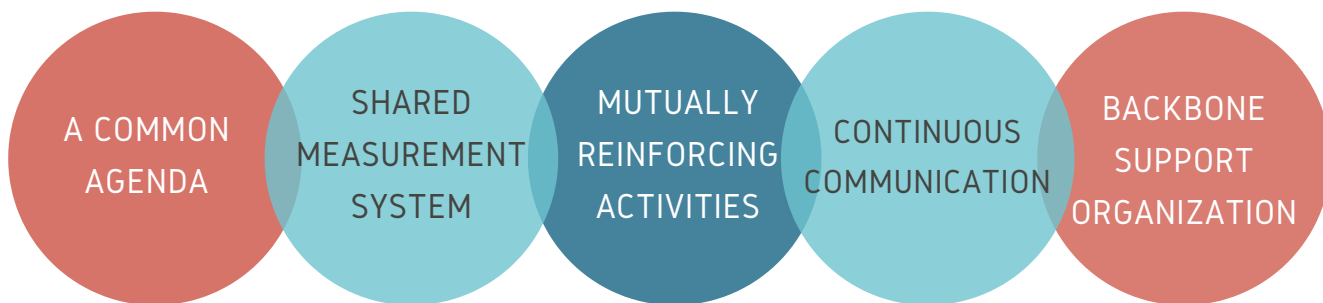
Ideally, Haverhill Promise’s annual overhead costs will primarily be the Campaign Director’s salary and expenses related to communications and operations. It is our hope that Haverhill Promise serves not as an umbrella, but as a platform—elevating the work of community partners and organizations in their individual and collective grade level reading efforts. As part of the Haverhill Promise collective impact effort, our partners will have valuable community data and a stronger position when looking to secure

grant funding, donations, and sponsorships of their own, launching and growing programs that further the goals our community has identified.

The Haverhill Promise workgroups will continue to meet regularly (at least once a month) to implement the strategies listed in Assurance 3. We anticipate that workgroup membership, like any volunteer committee, will ebb and flow over time, but each workgroup will aim to define roles including one or two steering committee representatives, a clerk to take notes, and a designated social media/web content manager for each. The groups will regularly review the collective impact data and ask “what’s working?” and “what’s not?” All workgroup members will be added to the Campaign for Grade Level Reading’s CLIP platform as a dedicated space for sharing research and best practices from other communities with our teams.

Transparency will be a critical piece of the Haverhill Promise communications strategy in order to maintain momentum and garner ongoing support for the initiative. In addition to a real-time overview of progress using the Clear Impact Scorecard on the Haverhill Promise website, Haverhill Promise will disseminate an eye-catching quarterly reporting infographic to celebrate growth and highlight areas for improvement. As partners are added, it will be important to communicate expectations and review the 5 conditions of collective impact.

5 Conditions of Collective Impact



Haverhill Promise anticipates hosting 2-3 large events each year to educate, collaborate, and build good will among the Haverhill community.

1. A collective impact check-in for the Haverhill Promise steering committee, workgroups, school administrators, and community program leads to meet together to review goal progress.
2. An annual breakfast or luncheon “progress report” for elected officials, key leaders of public, business, civic and philanthropic organizations; and
3. A community-wide celebration of reading for students and families.



OVERVIEW OF THE CSAP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



A letter was submitted to the Campaign for Grade Level Reading in August of 2018, declaring our intent for Haverhill Promise to become an official grade level reading community. While it has taken some time to complete our CSAP, nearly all of the partners outlined in the LOI have remained engaged over the past three years.

The Haverhill Promise steering committee and partners obtained community input on our CSAP through the following forums and meetings:

- April 4, 2018: "Haverhill Reads" forum hosted by the Haverhill Education Coalition
- August 14, 2018: "Haverhill Promise: Next Steps for Early Literacy" community forum
- November, 2018: Early Literacy Focus Group
- July 2019-Present: Monthly meetings of the Haverhill Promise steering committee
- August 6, 2019: National Night Out community event
- August 21, 2019: "Haverhill Promise Huddle" community forum
- August 2019-March 2021: Monthly meetings of the Haverhill Early Learning Leadership Team
- August 2019-March 2021: Bi-monthly meetings of the School Readiness, School Attendance, and Summer Learning workgroups

*All community forums and focus groups provided translation services for Spanish speakers.

SUCCESS & CHALLENGES

The CSAP process has been particularly successful in bringing the school district and community partners into alignment. Housing Jenny Arndt within HPS has given Haverhill Promise buy-in with educators, a seat at the table for important discussions around the priority areas, and access to data that would have otherwise been protected or unavailable. The school district partnership has "bridged a gap" and led to a number of mutually beneficial connections between HPS and community partners.

Both successful and challenging has been understanding the power of data and how to use it to change outcomes. This has been a learning process for all involved in the CSAP.

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly delayed the completion of our CSAP, which we planned to submit in the spring of 2020. The plan took a backseat as Haverhill Promise pivoted to meet the needs of the community by providing books and incentives to keep students reading amidst school closures. When workgroups relaunched in the fall, many of the strategies originally conceptualized in the priority areas were either no longer feasible or simply insufficient for the "new normal" and the projected learning loss our students would need to overcome. The pandemic was a set-back that ultimately made our CSAP stronger. We saw better attendance at steering committee meetings and working groups by using virtual meeting platforms, and contributors seemed to have a renewed sense of purpose and focus.

Appendix A: Mayor's Letter of Support

JAMES J. FIORENTINI
MAYOR



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MASSACHUSETTS

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March 25, 2021

Dear Haverhill Residents and Community Partners,

I have been pleased to support the important work of Haverhill Promise since its inception in 2018 with the critical and fundamental goal of ensuring third grade reading proficiency among all Haverhill children.

In my brief remarks at the initiative's kickoff almost three years ago, I referenced the achievement gap, which Haverhill has seen in the academic disparity between students from low-income families and those who are better off.

Sadly, this gap has only increased during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to degrees I don't think we will begin to realize for some time.

There are two strategies that I have found are successful in narrowing the achievement and education gap in urban communities. The first is to support vigorous summer school programs, like the great Summer Readers' program at our YMCA, to prevent summer learning loss and keep kids learning all summer long.

The second, which is another large piece of the Haverhill Promise plan, is to start literacy and learning early, so that when a child enters kindergarten or the first grade, there is no gap. As a city, we must prioritize early learning, early literacy, and improving access to pre-K programs, especially for low-income families.

We have made progress in education. But none of us can ever be satisfied until every single child, regardless of which area of the city they live in, and regardless of the income level of the parents, is guaranteed a great education.

We are proud as a city to promote early literacy and to make Haverhill Promise a successful city-wide initiative.

I look forward to much more from Haverhill Promise, including its recognition by the National Campaign for Grade Level Reading as an official grade level reading community in Massachusetts.

Very truly yours,

James J. Fiorentini
Mayor

JJF/lyf

SCHOOL READINESS SUPPORTS

Better Vision Together

In 2019 Regional Nursing Consultant Shanyn Toulouse received a \$20K grant from the National Center for Children's Vision & Eye Health (NCCVEH) to support early identification of childhood vision problems and expand access to vision screening training for early education providers and youth workers. According to the NCCVEH, up to 1 in 17 young children, 1 in 5 Head Start children, and an estimated 1 in 4 or 5 school-aged children have undiagnosed vision disorders.

Community Action, Inc.

Community Action, Inc. is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that provides resources and opportunities for individuals, families and communities to overcome poverty, and hosts the following programs: The CAI Head Start/Early Head Start (CAI HS/EHS) program which provides comprehensive services for children ages 0-5 and serves more than 300 infants, toddlers, pregnant mothers, fathers and preschoolers; the CAI Family Day Care Program (CAI-FDC) which provides comprehensive family child care services for children 8 weeks to 12 years old; and the CAI Family and Community Connection (CAI-FCC), which facilitates playgroups and early learning activities for children ages 0-8, and provides information about local education resources, opportunities to connect with other families in the Haverhill community, and referrals to Early Intervention and early childhood special education services when needed; CAI also supports the Massachusetts Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program, which provides nutrition, health education and other services free of charge to Massachusetts families who qualify.

Early Learning Leadership Team (ELLT)

Haverhill's Early Learning Leadership Team was established in 2018 in response to the formal launch of Haverhill Promise. Representatives from ELLT partners including the City of Haverhill, Haverhill Public Schools, Wildflower Schools, Community Action Inc. and the Haverhill YMCA applied for Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) funding and received \$20,000 in 2018 to develop a strategic plan with an overall goal of increasing access to high quality, full-day, full-year early learning opportunities in the city. While efforts to secure implementation funding for preschool expansion have not succeeded, the ELLT continues to meet regularly and hosts an annual Haverhill Preschool Resource Fair, showcasing the many options for preschools and other resources for preschool families in the city.

Haverhill Public Library (HPL) Youth Programs

HPL serves as a valuable resource for Haverhill's youngest residents, with weekly story times for children and creative, knowledgeable youth services librarians. Families are invited to participate in the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program, which encourages hitting this literacy milestone through prize incentives. Haverhill residents can apply for a library card and access print and digital resources from the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium.

Reach Out and Read (RoR)

Reach Out and Read is a national nonprofit that champions the positive effects of reading daily and engaging in other language-rich activities with young children. Reach Out and Read is uniquely positioned to encourage reading and literacy in families with children ages 6 months to 5 years at local pediatric practices. An age-appropriate book is given at well child visits and used to help parents understand developmental milestones. The trusted relationship between clinician and families has been key to success in promoting literacy. RoR is currently being implemented at Pentucket Medical Associates in Haverhill.

Ready4K

Ready4K is an evidence-based family engagement curriculum delivered via text messages. Each week, parents and caregivers receive fun facts and easy tips on how to promote their children's development by building on existing family routines – like pointing out letters on the cereal box at breakfast, counting the number of steps as you walk to the car or bus, or making feeling faces in the mirror after you brush your teeth. In a series of randomized controlled trials, this approach has been shown to increase child development by 2 to 3 months over the course of a school year.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Creative Haverhill

Creative Haverhill is a nonprofit arts organization whose mission is to support Haverhill arts and culture by providing experiences and access at the intersection of art, culture, and community, and developing high-quality spaces as platforms for community and cultural expression. Creative Haverhill partnered with Haverhill Promise in 2020 to create and install the community mural "Reading Takes Us Places" in celebration of the perseverance of Haverhill students to read at home during the Covid-19 school closures.

Emmaus Interfaith Network of Compassion (INC)

The INC is a monthly meeting for organizations to give updates about events or services offered, to gather information to address specific client needs, and to build bridges between nonprofit and faith communities in Haverhill to better serve the city.

Haverhill Education Foundation (HEF)

HEF is a nonprofit organization that supports and promotes engaging, creative, and challenging projects and programs for Haverhill Public School students in order to enhance their educational experience. HEF serves as a nonprofit partner for the Haverhill Promise campaign, managing grants and donations.

Haverhill Education Coalition (HEC)

HEC is an organization whose mission is to help promote and advance high-quality public education in Haverhill. HEC's public forums serve as a way to spread awareness and ideas, and encourage intelligent discussion around key issues for education in Haverhill. HEC presented a "Haverhill Reads" literacy forum in April of 2018, and an exciting "Read with Malcolm Rally" a few months later featuring former New England Patriot and author Malcom Mitchell.

Latino Coalition- Haverhill

The Latino Coalition-Haverhill is a nonpartisan group of Haverhill citizens working to make a difference in the Haverhill community in collaboration with the local government, state government, and Haverhill school system.

Service Clubs

Haverhill has a half dozen active volunteer service clubs that have signed on to partner with the work of Haverhill Promise, including Pentucket Kiwanis, Rotary Club, Exchange Club, and Lion's Club. Each club has their own mission and seeks to improve their community with projects like anti-bullying events, youth and adult literacy advocacy, and providing children with vision screenings and glasses.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

The Haverhill SEPAC is a council comprised of individuals involved in, or concerned with, the education of students with disabilities. Membership is open to parents and guardians of students with disabilities, teachers, administrators, individuals with disabilities, and interested members of the community. Haverhill SEPAC is an all-volunteer organization.

Team Haverhill

Team Haverhill is an independent, volunteer action group and nonprofit organization dedicated to making Haverhill a better place to live, learn, work and play. In 2019, Team Haverhill hosted a successful Read & Thrive Book Drive and Bowling for Books event to support the work of Haverhill Promise.

United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

The local United Way branch is committed to supporting young children in the area. Their solutions include: expanding access to high-quality early education and care programs that promote early literacy and social skills; and giving parents and caregivers the resources to engage with children and support healthy development, as well as the tools to screen for developmental delays if needed.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SUPPORTS

1647

1647 is a nonprofit organization that provides school employees with training, coaching, and ongoing data support to implement family engagement strategies that lead to student learning and success in school. In 2018, Haverhill Public Schools in partnership with Haverhill Promise enlisted the help of 1647 to improve family engagement efforts.

HPS Bilingual Parent Liaisons

Parent engagement liaisons assist with communication between Haverhill Public Schools and families. This school year, as many caregivers struggled to understand remote learning, parent liaisons partnered with a community space called Make It Haverhill to present training sessions in English and Spanish on how to use Google Classroom and Google Meet.

Safe Routes to School

The Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program works to increase safe biking and walking among elementary and middle school students by using a collaborative, community-focused approach that bridges the gap between health and transportation. Haverhill has been a designated SRTS community for a number of years.

School Every Day

The “School Every Day” Attendance Awareness Campaign was a series of short public service announcements about the importance of daily school attendance. The awareness campaign has continued into the unique Covid-19 learning year with a poster contest asking students to design a poster using the extended phrase “School Every Day, No Matter Which Way.”

System of Care

The System of Care is a group of local mental behavioral health service providers, organizations, nurses, school personnel, and others who serve youth and families. This group gathers monthly to share resources and supports that help them provide services to families in the region. Working collaboratively and learning the needs of the community is critical to understanding the needs of our specific community.

SUMMER LEARNING & OUT OF SCHOOL TIME SUPPORTS

iReady Reading Diagnostic

The Diagnostic offers a complete picture of student performance and growth, eliminating the need for multiple, redundant tests. Diagnostic results also set a personalized learning path for each student, ensuring they're working on instruction that matches their unique learning needs. Students can work on their individual learning paths at any time, including outside of school time and during February, April and Summer vacations.

Haverhill Public Library (HPL) Summer Reading Program

HPL's summer reading program has been a staple in the Haverhill community for decades. In 2020, HPL introduced a new app called Beanstack, which allows families to participate in reading challenges throughout the year. In addition to waiving late fines for youth with library cards, HPL has been a leader in the Haverhill Promise initiative in a number of ways, including using their outreach van to bring books out into the community and sign residents up for library cards.

Haverhill Y Summer Literacy Academy

The Haverhill YMCA Summer Readers Camp is a free 6-week program specifically geared toward helping struggling readers achieve literacy gains. Participants receive a half day of group and individual reading intervention, and a half day of recreational programming.

Vacation Academies

Haverhill Public Schools partners with the Haverhill Y to offer a free week of structured learning time and recreational opportunities for students during February and April vacation.

LITERACY RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

Letterland Phonics Curriculum

The Letterland program is a unique, phonics-based approach to teach reading, writing and spelling to our youngest learners. The Letterland curriculum was piloted at Hunking School in 2018, then introduced district-wide at the start of the 2019-2020 school year to help establish a district-wide vision for literacy and consistency in instruction between classrooms and schools.

Lesley Literacy Collaborative

The Lesley Literacy Collaborative is a comprehensive literacy model based on research, data, and best practices. Literacy Coaches at the elementary schools receive extensive training at Lesley University and then train their peers over a three-year period. Teachers trained in this model provide a high level of instruction in reading, writing, and language skills to their elementary students.

Merrimack Valley Jewish Coalition for Literacy

The Merrimack Valley Jewish Coalition for Literacy is a volunteer organization that trains volunteers on guided reading and then partners with schools to bring one-on-one reading assistance to struggling readers.

RESOURCES FOR FREE & LOW-COST BOOKS

Haverhill Promise/Haverhill Public Schools BookMobile

The Haverhill Promise 2020 Summer BookMobile was a two-week mission to provide new and gently used books to Haverhill students and their families amid the Covid-19 school and library closures. The “BookMobile” was a Haverhill Public Schools bus loaded with boxes of donated books for all ages. A licensed bus driver and Haverhill Promise staff and volunteers unloaded the book boxes each day at one of five designated lunch distribution sites around the City of Haverhill. More than 2,200 books were distributed over a total of 10 days.

Little Free Libraries

Haverhill is home to over 25 independently owned and maintained Little Free Libraries, creating walkable opportunities for neighbors to swap used books.

Ruth’s House Kid’s Reading Club

Ruth’s House, a nonprofit organization and thrift shop in Haverhill’s Lafayette Square neighborhood, has developed a Reading Club program for children 12 years and younger. Club members are given two free books each time they visit the store. Club Members who read at least five books each month receive a \$5 gift certificate to use in the store.

Stories Podcast

Stories Podcast is one of the top rated podcasts for children and families in the world, created and recorded in Haverhill by lifelong resident and HPS graduate Dan Hinds. The podcast performs a new story every week, drawing from a variety of sources and a variety of styles. There are retellings of classics, some folktales, and myths from around the world, as well as original stories. For a small fee, subscribers can access E-books to follow along with each story as it is performed.

Appendix C: Committed Partners List

- Bethany Communities
- Community Action Inc.
 - Head Start/Early Head Start
 - Family and Community Connection
- City Council Members
- Creative Haverhill
- Eagle Tribune
- Greater Haverhill Chamber
- Haverhill Boys and Girls Club
- Haverhill Cultural Council
- Haverhill Education Coalition
- Haverhill Education Foundation
- Haverhill Exchange Club
- Haverhill Public Library
- Haverhill Public Schools
 - Superintendent
 - Supervisor of Attendance
 - Supervisor of ELA
 - Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
 - Director of Remote Learning Academy
 - Chief of Teaching, Learning and Leading
 - District Assessment Coordinator and Data Coach
 - Literacy Coaches
 - Supervisor K-12 English Learner Program
 - Discovery Club
 - Moody Preschool
 - Nursing
- Haverhill School Committee Members
- Haverhill Youth Advisory Council
- HC Media
- Hilltop School
- JF Maddox Foundation
- Make It Haverhill
- Marigold Montessori School
- Office of the Mayor of Haverhill
- Parents
- Pentucket Kiwanis
- Pentucket Medical Associates
- Rotary Club
- Riverside Church
- Ruth's House
- Special Education Parent Advisory Council
- Stories Podcast
- Teachers
- Team Haverhill
- Umass Lowell Innovation Hub
- United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
- WHAV
- YMCA of the North Shore