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

***Phoenix Charter Academy Lawrence***

# → Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups

## Which student groups will require focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life?

Phoenix Lawrence has chosen to focus on Special Education (SPED) students because of the schools consistent population of Special Education students nearing 25% or more of the total population and the historic under representation of SPED students in post-secondary education. Given Phoenix Lawrence’s unique student population which consists of students that may have taken the MCAS at a previous school or test more than two years after their eighth grade test, Phoenix Lawrence does not consistently meet the minimum cohort size for MCAS SGP results, we use the external assessment STAR to evaluate our student growth. Phoenix Lawrence has leveraged the STAR exam since the 16-17 school year prior to becoming a charter and our SPED population has consistently trailed behind our general population in growth percentage. In Math, SPED students perform 10.61 growth points below non SPED students and in Reading SPED students are currently performing slightly better than our non SPED students in growth points.

# → Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps

## What evidence-based programs will your charter school adopt, deepen, or continue to best support the closure of achievement and opportunity gaps? What resources will be allocated to these programs?

### Evidence-based program #1: Early college programs focused primarily on students underrepresented in higher education

* Phoenix Lawrence has an ongoing partnership with Northern Essex Community College (NECCO), which creates the opportunity for students to dual enroll in college credit-bearing courses, while still enrolled in high school. In the 2019-2020 school year, Phoenix Lawrence and NECCO piloted a credit bearing class specifically for Phoenix students that would allow them to experience a college level class while also using the support that Phoenix Lawrence provides to all of its students. The initial class of students had 15 students participate and despite being interrupted by COVID-19, six students earn credit towards their degree.
* Increased access to early college opportunities will specifically impact our SPED population by lifting a financial burden to post secondary success and providing our SPED students with valuable experience while maintaining the social-emotional supports that Phoenix provides. While our entire student population consistently identifies as being part of a high risk subgroup and expanded access to cost covered college access will benefit our student body at large. Phoenix Lawrence provides all students access to a Manager of Post-Secondary to ensure that the needs of our dual enrollment and rising seniors are properly addressed.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category1** |
| Manager of Post Secondary | $60,000 | Administration & Employee Benefits / Fixed Charges |

1 The foundation categories are: Administration; Instructional Leadership; Classroom & Specialist Teachers; Other Teaching Services; Professional Development; Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology; Guidance and Psychological; Pupil Services; Operations and Maintenance; Employee Benefits/Fixed Charges; and Special Education Tuition.

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| Northern Essex Community College Courses | $20,000 | Pupil Services |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Early College programs focused primarily on students  under-represented in higher education |
| **SOA program categories:** | | Hiring school personnel (D), Developing additional pathways to strengthen college and career readiness (I) |

### Evidence-based program #2: Diversifying the teaching and leadership workforce through targeted recruitment and retention

* As a charter network, Phoenix began the creation and implementation of a Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan in 2018 with a multi-faceted approach to DEI, including a plan to strengthen talent practices to recruit and develop staff of color. The five major goals aligned with this component of the DEI plan are:
  + Diversify at the top leadership levels (CMO and Schools) and maintain clear goals over time
  + Review recruitment and selection to decrease opportunities for bias
  + Transparently define and share internal postings including stipended work
  + Create leadership programs for people of color for CMO and School Leadership positions
* By developing and recruiting staff of color, we provide our student body unique chances to connect with adults who can relate to their lives in ways that are not inherently obvious to staff who have not dealt with systemic trauma. Specifically, providing staff of color to our school that identifies as over 93% people of color, that work directly with SPED students as well as provide assistance to other teachers who may need support with behavioral support in the classroom. Additionally, developing and retaining our staff overtime will ensure that students are receiving academic lessons from experienced teachers who have consistently grown based off of goals set by Phoenix Lawrence and evaluated against the state's criteria as reported in EPIMS. Phoenix Lawrence will use professional development time to fully commit to being an anti-racist organization as a way to ensure that our staff of color are not continually exposed to white supremacy culture and foster a safe working environment for staff to grow and share their experiences.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Professional Development | $8,500 | Professional Development |
| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Diversifying the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention |
| **SOA program categories:** | | Diversifying the educator and administrator workforce (H), Increased or improved professional development (E) |

### Evidence-based program #3: Increased or improved professional development

* As a charter network, Phoenix began the creation and implementation of a Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan in 2018 with a multi-faceted approach to DEI, including a plan to strengthen talent practices to recruit and develop staff of color. The five major goals aligned with this component of the DEI plan are:
  + Offer core, routinely scheduled, consistent professional development on DEI (examples include understanding bias, interrupting microaggressions, white dominant culture, etc.)
  + As part of onboarding, staff get professional development on our beliefs around DEI
  + Create a process to develop affinity groups within schools and across the network
  + Diversify at the top leadership levels (CMO and Schools) and maintain clear goals over time
* Phoenix has also invested in an instructional coach that will meet with teachers to develop goals and observe teachers progress towards growth. Outside of the formal evaluation policy, this evaluation cycle will give teachers the opportunity to guide their own growth and allows for multiple points of feedback throughout the year.
* By embedding DEI as a focus of PD for both all staff and to our new staff onboarding process, our staff develop understanding and skills to uncover historical biases that our student population and

specifically SPED students have been exposed to throughout their academic careers and lives.

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| **FY21 budget item** | **Amount** | **Foundation Category** |
| Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Professional Development | $8,500 | Professional Development |
| Instructional Coach | $65,000 | Instructional Leadership |
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| **Evidence-based program identified by the Department:** | | Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs  Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum |
| **SOA program categories:** | | Increased or improved professional development (E), Hiring school personnel |

# → Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets

## Department outcome metrics: 2) Custom metrics (must include

**targets as well):**

* + - Each year, Phoenix’s SPED

Students average Fall to Spring growth in Math on the STAR exam will meet or exceed the median student growth percentile (SGP) for alternative education schools, which is set at 39% for students in 9th grade.

* + - Each year, Phoenix’s SPED students’ average Fall to Spring growth in Reading on the STAR exam will meet or exceed the median SGP for alternative education schools, which is set at 39% for students in 9th grade.
    - SPED student's progress will be monitored at the same level of our general population, namely passing 50% or more of their assigned units in a given term, reported each school year as an average of all terms.

# → Commitment 4: Engaging All Families

## How will your charter school ensure that all families, particularly those representing the student subgroups most in need of support, have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the charter school regarding their students’ needs?

* Since its founding, Phoenix Charter Academy has placed monumental importance on engaging with the adult supporters of all of our students. We have intentionally hosted events that prominently display the impressive work that our students complete as part of their competency based learning journey after each term and specifically host events that match up with our adult support schedules in order to deliver and explain to the adult supporters of SPED students their progress reports in their native language when possible.
* To bolster our outreach to our student population, Phoenix has developed a primary person model. Phoenix Lawrence’s primary person model is designed so that each student has an adult at the school that they feel connected with and a resource for the student as they navigate reaching their goals. Every staff member serves as a primary person to a cohort of 5-10 students who they are responsible for checking in with on a daily basis. The primary person will ensure that the students’ wellbeing is known and will work with that student to set goals on a short term, mid-term, and long-term scale, which along with their graduation map will make up their Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). A student’s primary person is chosen partly on the basis of being knowledgeable about a student's specific disabilities and needs and provides weekly outreach and connects the student as well as their family to the social supports that are built into the Phoenix model.

# Certifications:

### ☒ By checking here, I certify that our charter school has engaged stakeholders in our community in accordance with the Student Opportunity Act

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

* Phoenix’s work on the Student Opportunity Act coincided with the development of our Strategic Plan and we specifically focused on areas to bolster our programming with the SOA in mind. The Strategic Plan was a collaborative effort between senior leadership at the Phoenix network, school based leader and staff (including teachers), student focus groups, and external educational consulting groups.

### ☒ By checking here, I certify that the [insert name of charter school’s] Board of Trustees voted on our Student Opportunity Act Plan.

**Date of vote: 06/10/2020 Outcome of vote: Vote was affirmative**