

SIA Application for Bend-La Pine Schools Spring, 2020

Part One: General Information

Applicant

Bend-La Pine Admin SD 1

Institution ID: 1976

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Part Two: Narrative

Plan Summary

Bend-La Pine Schools' 2000+ employees serve 18,500 students across 35 schools, including two district-sponsored charter schools. Approximately 35% of our students qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches; 8% are linguistically diverse; and slightly under 11% qualify for IEP's.

Our students shine on many measures. Our graduation rate, 82%, is the highest in our history. Our students outperform their peers in third grade reading and on the ACT and SAT exams. However, digging deeper into our data reveals the experiences and outcomes of our students are not equitable, whether we look at academic achievement or participation in extra- and co-curricular activities or enrollment in advanced classes. On every measure, it is clear that we have large and persistent opportunity gaps between our historically underserved students and those who are not. The greatest challenge for our district is to ensure that **all** students have the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to be successful in both the present and the future.

After extensive efforts to listen to our students, staff, and families; to study student experience and outcome data; and to collaborate with key communicators across the district, Bend-La Pine Schools has committed its Student Investment Account (SIA) funds to three categories: promoting students' health and safety by greatly increasing social and emotional support, especially in our schools with the highest needs: reducing class size, especially in schools with the highest numbers of students who are historically underserved, and increasing access to a well-rounded education, especially for our historically underserved students who have not always had access to some of the most advanced and enriching content.

Part Three: Community Engagement and Input

Note: As part of its SIA planning process, Bend-La Pine Schools engaged in its first “excellence and equity review,” a five-month process that involved 36 listening sessions with students and families from 16 schools, focus groups with every school staff in the district, and a family school climate survey, completed by more than 2000 family members. This process, as well as the findings, is summarized in a formal report, linked here:

[*Excellence and Equity Review Report*](#)

Numerous responses in this section will reference specific pages and/or links within this report...

Overview of Community Engagement

(See Excellence and Equity Review Report)

Self-Assessment of Community Engagement

District leaders worked with a partner organization, Better Together, to design, implement, and evaluate the data from 36 listening sessions for families and students conducted throughout the fall. Community facilitators were trained alongside district staff, so that each focus group could be facilitated by an individual from a similar affinity group.

It is the district’s intent to continue working with trained facilitators to continuously improve its outreach and communication with students and families whose voices have not traditionally been part of planning and evaluation discussions.

Who was engaged?

The list of family/student listening sessions are listed on p. 7 of the Excellence and Equity Review Report.

How did you engage your community?

- Surveys
- Focus groups/listening sessions
- School board meetings
- Partnering with unions

Evidence of Engagement

The Excellence and Equity Review Report, our top artifact, includes additional resources on p. 21. The first four-listening sessions for families and students, listening sessions for staff, family survey results, and teacher interviews from the Bend Education Association-round out the “top five” list.

Strategies and Activities for Engaging Focal Student Populations and their Families *Strategies*

The primary strategies we used to engage focal student populations and their families were to prioritize these groups in creating our listening sessions and to leverage community

partners who already have active relationships with some of these groups. We used these strategies because we believed them to be most effective in engaging students and families whose voices are often in the background in school/district decision making.

Activities

The major activity we used was to host listening sessions for students and families held at a variety of schools. School leaders identified the students/families to invite. For example, a high school facilitator of Gay-Straight Alliance organized a listening session for LGBTQ students, facilitated by a staff member who identifies as a lesbian.

A related activity involved using key community partner organizations to help host listening sessions. Juntos, an enrichment/education program for Latino families, has been offered in our middle and high schools for several years. This fall, the directors of the Juntos program allowed our team to facilitate a listening session at the end of one of their previously-scheduled sessions. By utilizing this key community partner, we were able to have the largest turnout of any of our listening sessions.

Strategies and Activities for Engaging Staff

Strategies

A key strategy that we used in engaging staff was to ensure that conversations about strengths and areas for growth at schools were held in the context of student performance and experience data. Another strategy was to ensure that all voices were heard, with the use of protocols.

Activities

Related to the strategies identified above, staff at every school in the district had the opportunity to participate in a 60-90 minute session that included the following: a whole-group presentation about important school-level data, focusing on gaps in experiences and achievement; individual reflection time; small-group discussions of school strengths and areas for growth; and prioritization of resources needed to support this growth.

A second key activity involved a partnership with our teachers' association. The Bend Education Association trained facilitators to meet individually with hundreds of teachers across the district and engage in confidential conversations about the teachers' perceptions of school/district strengths and needs for growth. As part of these conversations, teachers spoke of priorities for additional funding.

Collecting and Using Input

Our findings from the Excellence and Equity Review Report can be found on pp. 9-16 of the report. The nexus between these findings and our planning can be found in our Strategic Investment Plan, linked here:

[*Strategic Investment Plan*](#)

Part Four: Data Analysis

Data Sources

All data sources used are linked on the Resources page (p. 21) of our Excellence and Equity Review Report.

Part Five: SIA Plan

Key Elements of SIA Plan: Outcomes, Strategies, Activities, Priorities

Bend – La Pine completed the optional SIA Integrated Planning Tool, linked here:

[*SIA Integrated Planning Tool*](#)

This tool provides elements for continuous improvement planning, including outcomes, strategies, activities and priorities. Each of those elements is aligned to multiple documents reflecting long-standing continuous improvement efforts. The district is aligning the SIA planning process to our existing Comprehensive Plan, linked here:

[*Comprehensive Plan*](#)

Alignment is highlighted by using the same five strategies that help structure our Comprehensive Plan for the strategies identified in the SIA Integrated Planning Tool, which is linked above. Further alignment exists between the SIA Integrated Planning Tool and our Excellence and Equity Review Report (See link in Part Three). Further evidence of alignment in continuous improvement planning is noted in the district's Strategic Investment Plan (See link in Part Three), which bridges the needs and the investment funds within the framework required in SIA planning and application processes.

It is our belief that SIA planning must live within a more comprehensive continuous improvement planning process in order to leverage existing priorities and maximize benefits of new funds. The linked documents noted above are evidence of a sophisticated level of alignment in that continuous planning process. As such, these documents serve as the narratives that explain how the SIA investments are aimed strategically at meeting the needs of our students.

Budget

Our SIA budget is linked below:

[*SIA Budget*](#)

Equity Lens or Tool

The district engaged in a needs assessment process that culminated in the completion of the ORISS Framework tool, linked here:

[*ORISS Framework*](#)

This tool has a rich equity perspective underlying many aspects of the needs assessment. In addition, the district convened multiple meetings with a group of more than 30 stakeholders to complete this needs assessment. As a critical component of its work, the

stakeholder group carefully reviewed and discussed the Excellence and Equity Review Report (linked in Part Three). This committee then engaged in a discussion focused on investment priorities, in light of both the completed needs assessment and the findings in the Excellence and Equity Review Report.

Draft Longitudinal Growth Targets

[Draft Longitudinal Growth Targets](#)

Part Six: Use of Funds

Allowable uses

- Addressing students' health and safety needs
- Evidence-based strategies for reducing class size and caseloads
- Expanding availability of and student participation in well-rounded learning experiences

Meeting students' mental and behavioral health needs

- Addressing students' health and safety needs
- Evidence-based strategies for reducing class size and caseloads

Addressing the Needs and Impacts on Focal Student Groups

The district is committing approximately \$6 million to directly address students' mental and behavioral health needs. We are currently in the planning stages of embedding new mental health and social-emotional supports into our already-existing Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) structures. Briefly, this will involve selecting, training, and supporting specialized certified and classified staff in virtually every school in the district. These staff members will both provide direct services to our students with the greatest needs and help build capacity among all staff at their schools to better address students' mental and behavioral health.

The district's next largest expenditure is approximately \$6.5 million in class size reduction. It is well established that teachers' abilities to create close relationships with and among students (or "high affect" classrooms). The findings in our own Excellence and Equity Review Report certainly echo this research, as students, families, and staff all addressed the importance of relationships. However, our investment is not equally distributed across schools; rather, it is allocated based on each school's number of historically underserved students. As a result, for example, La Pine High School, a high-poverty rural high school of 400 students, will receive the same number of additional teachers as Summit High School, an affluent school of about 1600 students.

Along with class size reduction, the district is spending approximately \$1.8 million on increased staffing to directly support our linguistically diverse students and our students with disabilities.

While the district is putting a historic investment into staffing, we recognize that adding staff is a necessary but not sufficient step towards increasing academic achievement and reducing disparities for our historically underserved students. Included in all three major investments above is a commitment to build capacity among all school staff through ongoing professional learning in critical areas: for example, continued equity training, family engagement, culturally responsive instruction, trauma-informed practices, etc.

Part Seven: Documentation and Board Approval

Evidence of Board Approval

[Link to February and March board agendas and minutes](#)

Part Eight: Public Charter Schools

- Bend-La Pine Schools sponsors two charter schools, Bend International School and Desert Sky Montessori School.
- The district invited both charter schools to participate in the planning and development of the SIA plan.
- Bend International School declined to participate. Because the school is eligible to apply for SIA funds on its own, Bend International School plans to submit an application.

Collaboration

The district collaborated with Desert Sky Montessori (DSM) in understanding the purpose of SIA funding, allowable expenditures, and the determination of priorities. The assistant superintendent met with Desert Sky Montessori's director, business manager, and board chair twice to discuss these issues, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) attached in the next session.

Other than inviting Desert Sky Montessori families to complete the family survey, the district did not actively engage the school's community in the planning process. This is an area for growth that we will need to improve in the next iteration of our SIA application.

Agreements

[*MOU with Desert Sky Montessori School*](#)

Applicant Assurances

Bend-La Pine Schools makes the following assurances:

- Adherence to the expectations for using its Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) needs assessment to inform SIA planning;
- Input from staff, student focal groups, and families of focal student groups was used to inform SIA planning (other community engagement input may also be used);

- Disaggregated data by focal student groups was examined during the SIA planning process;
- The recommendations from the Quality Education Commission (QEC) were reviewed and considered;
- The district's SIA plan is aligned to its CIP; and
- Agreement to provide requested reports and information to the Oregon Department of Education.