

Beaverton School District Student Success Act Survey Analysis

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Table of Contents

	Page
Purpose	3
Methodology	4
Stakeholder Engagement Themes	6
Demographic Analysis	14
Considerations	15

I. Overview

Passed in 2019, Oregon's Student Success Act (SSA) marks a historic investment in Oregon's public schools, focused on equity and improving outcomes for populations of students who experience disparities in educational outcomes as a result of historical oppression and marginalization by the public-school system. As part of the SSA, the Oregon Department of Education is dispersing \$500 million dollars to school districts across the state as part of the Student Investment Account (SIA).

SIA funds serve two purposes: 1) Meeting students' mental and behavioral health needs; 2) Increasing achievement and reducing academic disparities for students of color, students with disabilities, emerging bilingual students, and students navigating poverty, homelessness, and foster care. Per the requirements of the law, investments must focus entirely on these focal populations.

Districts may invest SSA funds in the following areas: 1) Behavioral and mental health supports; 2) Providing a well-rounded education; 3) Expanded learning time; 4) Class size reduction, and all investments must focus specifically on improving outcomes for the focal populations.

As part of SSA planning, school districts are required to conduct expanded community engagement to ensure the voices and perspectives of impacted populations are used to guide investments.

Engagement must focus on soliciting input on strategies to:

- Reduce academic disparities
- Meet behavioral and mental health needs
- Provide access to academic courses
- Allow teachers and staff sufficient time to collaborate and develop strategies to help students stay on track to graduate
- Establish and strengthen partnerships

The Beaverton School District (BSD) will receive approximately \$31 million and to decide how to invest these funds, the district conducted a survey and focus groups in order to solicit community input. Additionally, the Beaverton Education Association (BEA) surveyed its members to ensure the inclusion of educator voice in the planning process. The district will use findings to guide a second phase of engagement with community-based organizations and educators with demonstrated expertise achieving positive outcomes with the SSA's focal populations.

This report provides a summary of the Beaverton School District's SSA community survey and provides an analysis of community feedback organized by SSA focal populations.

II. Methodology

Between August and November 2019 BSD solicited community input on how to spend SSA funds via a in person focus groups and an online survey asking community members what the district is doing well, and what needs to improve and received 3,910 responses from students, teachers, parents, classified staff, and other community members.

In order to analyze survey responses qualitative comments were coded into SSA aligned categories and sub-categories as follows:

- **Class size reduction:** Defined as any comment pertaining to increasing the number of teachers in each school, reducing caseloads for special education teachers, and reducing classroom ratios through hiring instructional assistants to support teachers.
- **Support for behavioral and mental health**
 - **Physical safety:** Defined as any comment pertaining to the need to ensure stronger security and guarantee the physical health of students.
 - **Social-emotional safety:** Defined as any comment pertaining to increasing mental health supports for students, increasing support for students with behavior challenges, and increasing support for students experiencing trauma.
 - **Cultural safety:** Defined as any comment pertaining to increasing support for students and staff from targeted populations who experience discrimination due to their racial or cultural identity, and for students and staff who experience discrimination due to sexual orientation or identity.
- **Well-rounded education**
 - **Early childhood education:** Defined as any comment suggesting expansion of preschool opportunities for students in the district.
 - **Electives:** Defined as any comment suggesting expansion of elective offerings including art, music, physical education, career technical classes, and expanded foreign language opportunities.
 - **Expanded core:** Defined as any comment suggesting deeper or more effective instruction in core classes such as math, reading/literacy, science, and social studies.
- **Expanded learning time:** Defined as any comment focused on expanding before or after school programming, lengthening the school day, and lengthening the school year.

Many survey respondents made suggestions for improvement that fall outside of SSA allowable expenditures¹. These responses were also coded and analyzed. Because this report is focused on community feedback as it pertains to the SSA these comments are not included in this report, however,

¹ Examples include but are not limited to: Improving facilities, improving school lunches, improving transportation, more responsible and transparent district budgeting processes, changes in the health curriculum, better instruction for dyslexic students, etc.

a separate analysis will be completed and shared with BSD leadership and board members for use in the district's 2020-2021 budgeting process to allocate other general funds.

After responses were coded, they were separated into categories based on the role of each respondent: parent/guardian, student, teacher, classified staff, community member, district administrator, other, and school administrator. Respondents who did not identify a role were coded as "no response."

Respondents were also asked to identify their race/ethnicity and membership to any of the SSA focal populations. Respondents who did not identify their race/ethnicity were coded as "declined." Responses were analyzed using this demographic information in order to allow district leadership to prioritize further community engagement and, ultimately, investment strategies in accordance with the SSA's legal requirements.

III. Stakeholder Engagement Themes

An analysis of themes that emerged from BSD's survey and community forums is presented below. A visual representation of the data, and an analysis of outreach to SSA focal populations, is provided in the next section of this report.

Overarching community feedback:

Class size reduction: Overall BSD constituents expressed significant concerns about class size and children's behavioral and mental health. For many people, these concerns are linked with respondents frequently noting the need for lower classroom ratios in order to better support both teachers and students coping with mental health challenges.

"I have deep concern about our students of marginalized groups, struggling students, our sped students and our students of poverty as well as our students of trauma (the ever increasing number in this group!) I am deeply concerned about their struggles to meet the needs of grade level targets and assessments and believe we are fooling ourselves to think that even the best teachers can meet all of their needs. Class size is TOO high ,and the need is TOO great. One is not mutually exclusive of the other."

"Our class sizes are WAY too big. Kids need small, calm classrooms. They need teachers who can focus on teaching instead of managing behaviors and room clears. We HAVE to reduce class sizes. We have to have more counselors and psychologists IN THE SCHOOLS. We need Student success coaches who manage wellness rooms and lead groups for kids- work with kids- step into classrooms and teach lessons and assist teachers. We need more instructional aides who are trained to work with high needs kids. We need help."

"Given the nature and development of children's brains in this modern American culture, it appears more children need to learn basic social and emotional skills, behavioral expectations, and practice these skills consistently. I think that smaller class sizes would allow teachers the opportunity to meet the needs of their students individually and collectively with less difficulty and more consistency."

"Equity to provide services for our more vulnerable populations - low income, students of color, English learners. Smaller class sizes across all grade levels, particularly in places we have higher levels of vulnerable populations - Title schools. Schools need to have more specialists - counselor, psychologist, social workers and nurses that are available to support our vulnerable populations."

While respondents requested an increase in the number of district teachers to reduce class size, many people also suggested focusing on reducing overall student to teacher ratios through hiring more assistants, particularly in elementary school, to support both instruction and student's behavioral health needs.

"Full time aides in Kindergarten or smaller class sizes (ideally in the teens). Small classes across the grades k-12. Aides in elementary schools to help with kids with high behavioral needs that can't be managed by the classroom teacher alone."

"EVERY Kindergarten class needs to have an IA. Some of the reasons for this are that so many children are entering Kindergarten with major issues that have not been addressed, class sizes are too big for effective instruction, which looks so different from a few years ago, and if the district truly wants to close the achievement gap, then Kinder classes need to be smaller with more help."

Health and well-being

Behavioral health: In addition to reducing class sizes/ratios commenters highlighted the need for more school social workers, counselors, and other mental health professionals on site in schools to support students navigating behavioral health challenges.

"I am feeling really stressed as a teacher this year because we do not have the support for needy students. We have two counselors for just under 1000 students. That is horrible considering the fact that we have three high needs specialized programs at our school plus just the general needs of issues that our students are facing. I feel like I don't have the support for students because the counselors are just helping the most needy students and not able to help those that have needs and are slipping through the cracks."

"Every year it is frustrating to see these students not get the support they desperately need. This is my 29th year of teaching and I am feeling like every year we get less and less support for our needy students and I feel more and more pressure to help the kids but I can only do so much without counselors, more classified staff for specialized programs and more support for our special education teachers."

"I believe BSD would benefit from increased mental health services for our students. As a district we did over 500 suicide screens last year. These students need continued support within buildings to keep them safe. This taxes our already overloaded school counselors whose caseloads are well over the recommended number."

"Any supports for students experiencing homelessness / housing insecurity are vital and include: - Bringing back the Resource Center - Increase the number of homeless liaisons - Increase the number of social workers - PLEASE BE THEIR CAUSE FOR HOPE."

Students who responded to the survey shared concerns about bullying and feeling like they are not always able to access health or support when experiencing mental health challenges, especially for students with targeted identities.

"Teachers say that there is a no-bullying policy, but they do not enforce it unless they actually see it. Kids feel pressured by their peers and do not ask for help when they need it. Minorities do not have many places to go when they feel attacked. Introverted kids are not academically involved as much as they should. LGBTQ people are not recognized, and they are made fun of."

"Bullying, harassment and verbal harassment in general is not improving or being impacted in any way besides getting worse and worse each year. Teachers can teach on topics about bullying, but it is not changing anyone perspective of public school student bodies."

Cultural safety: Respondents, particularly those who identify as people of color, also highlighted the need for strategies focused on racial equity and support for students with targeted identities.

"District wide trainings and professional development for ALL staff (certified and classified) that takes on anti-racist education."

"[We need] diverse staff specifically teachers and administrators, diverse books in the libraries, diverse curriculum, a curriculum that does NOT paint stereotypes about communities of color, culturally relevant teaching practices, conscious bias training for teachers (in the BSD, black boys are 4x more likely to be suspended than their white peers)."

"Better cultural diversity/awareness: As my kids progressed thorough BSD elementary, middle & high schools, I've seen/heard culturally insensitive behavior/remarks from some teachers and front-desk staff at all 3 places. They were likely unintentional but were still so obviously inappropriate to the recipient that it felt astonishing. Why not have a long-term goal of hiring staff with cultural backgrounds that approximately mirror the attending students' cultural backgrounds? Why not hire/promote more principals, vice-principals and other leadership staff from diverse backgrounds? Cultural diversity & awareness doesn't seem to have moved much in the last 15+ years I've interacted with BSD (at least in parent facing roles)."

Well-rounded education: The community also expressed a strong desire for expanded elective options, particularly more foreign language choices for students, more art, music, and P.E. offerings, and many respondents emphasized the importance of distributing these opportunities equitably across the district.

"Please renew your commitment to music and arts in our schools. These areas are vital to the education of our children. These programs need to begin at the elementary level and continue all the way through high school. The arts are just as important as academics for our students. For some students, our schools may be the only place they have exposure to music, art, drama, dance, etc. All students across the district at all ages should have equal opportunity to participate fully in these areas."

"Having consistent approaches across all middle schools (similar middle school experiences for all). Having more bilingual teachers and foreign language programs."

"I hope that the specials could be improved. For instance, in my school, I didn't learn a lot about tech in technology class. I was thinking that we were supposed to learn coding or computer programming as a main subject in tech class instead of using websites."

"I think we need to do more art literacy, because creativity can be very important in future jobs. I also think that school itself should be more enjoyable because this will help students who normally don't pay attention, actually pay attention. It will also help with how dedicated people are to school, and how serious they take it."

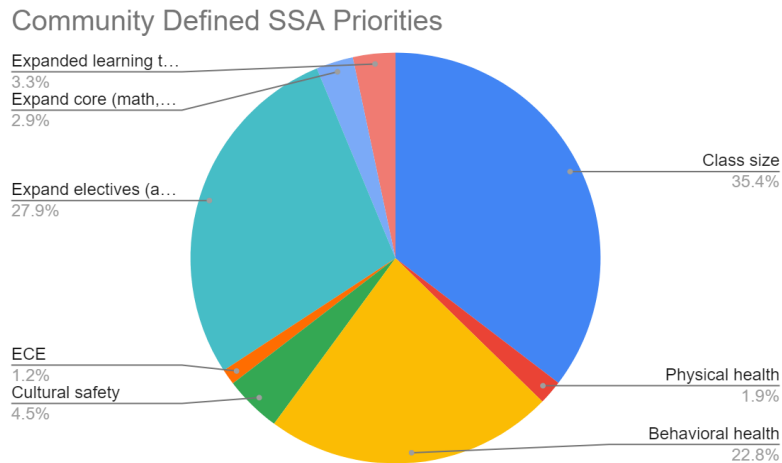
"Consistency in music programs at the middle schools. Arts education makes a difference is cognitive ability, as many studies have shown. Students at MS should have opportunity to play an instrument and to sing! There is great inequity in this area."

In proportion to the majority of comments, relatively few respondents expressed a need for expanded learning time, however, those that did primarily focused on the need for more before and after school options/supports for students with special needs, and on identifying strategies to prevent summer learning loss.

"Oregon schools need to reduce their summer vacation time - 11 weeks of vacation is excessive! Teachers are then required to refresh / reteach subjects from the previous year as the children have forgotten what they were taught and not much revision / practice is done at home during vacation time. Our teachers do

not have enough time to teach what needs to be taught and the children are therefore not given adequate time to grasp concepts. There is far too much pressure put on both children and teachers to get through the curriculum in too short a space of time."

"Extended school day for Students with Disabilities and Emerging Bilingual so that these students can receive their education supports while not having to sacrifice elective opportunities."

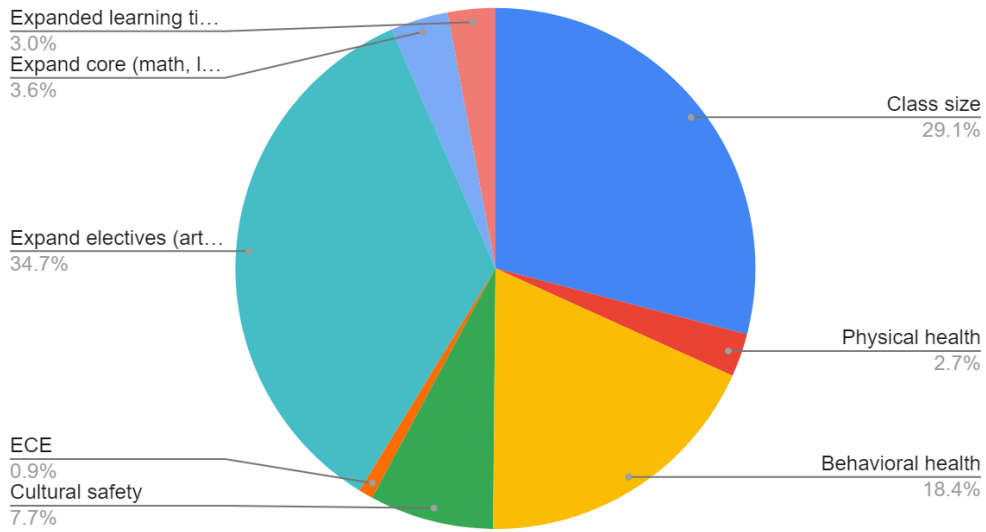


While these comments represent overall community feedback, priorities vary slightly when analyzed by role and SSA focal population. Themes emerging from an analysis of these populations specifically are provided below.

Feedback from SSA focal populations:

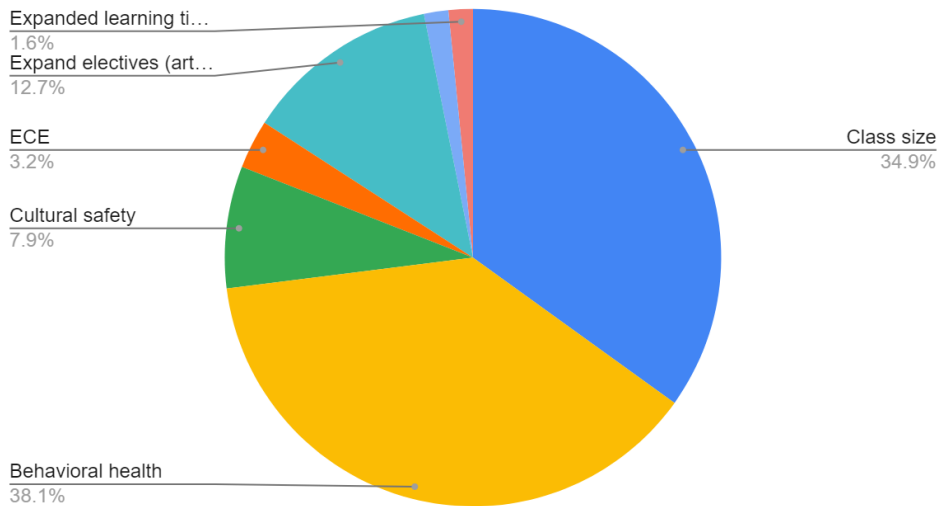
Identify as a student or family of color: Overall, feedback from respondents who identify as people of color mirrored that of the community as a whole, with priority places on class size reduction, expansion of electives, and support for behavioral health. Respondents from this population prioritized electives at a higher rate than the general population. Additionally, while cultural safety is the 4th priority for this group, people of color prioritized it at a higher percentage than the community as a whole.

SSA Priorities - Identify Person or Student of Color



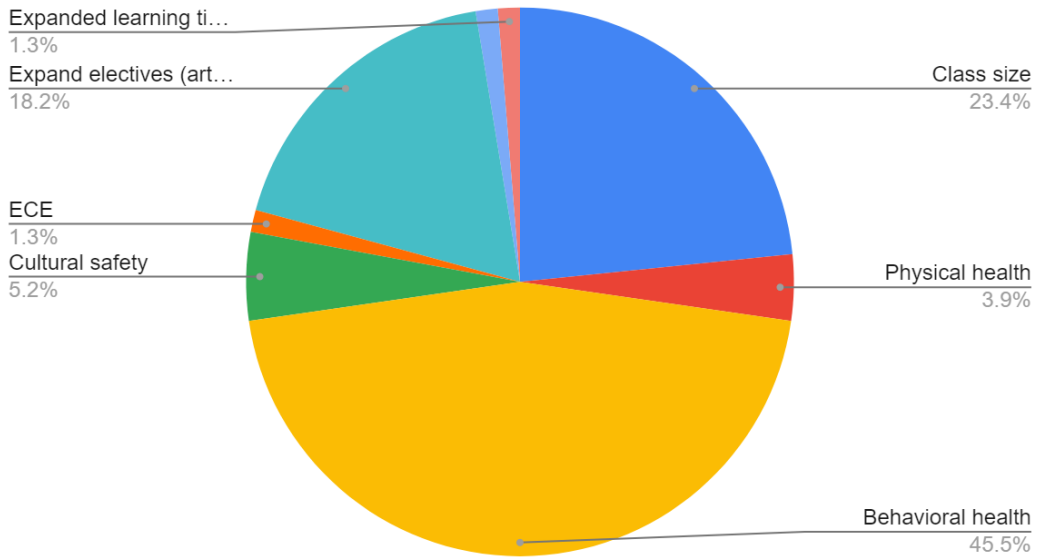
Navigating poverty: Families navigating poverty prioritized behavioral health supports as the most important investment, followed by class size reduction. The group prioritized these two categories higher than all other categories combined.

SSA Priorities - Navigating Poverty



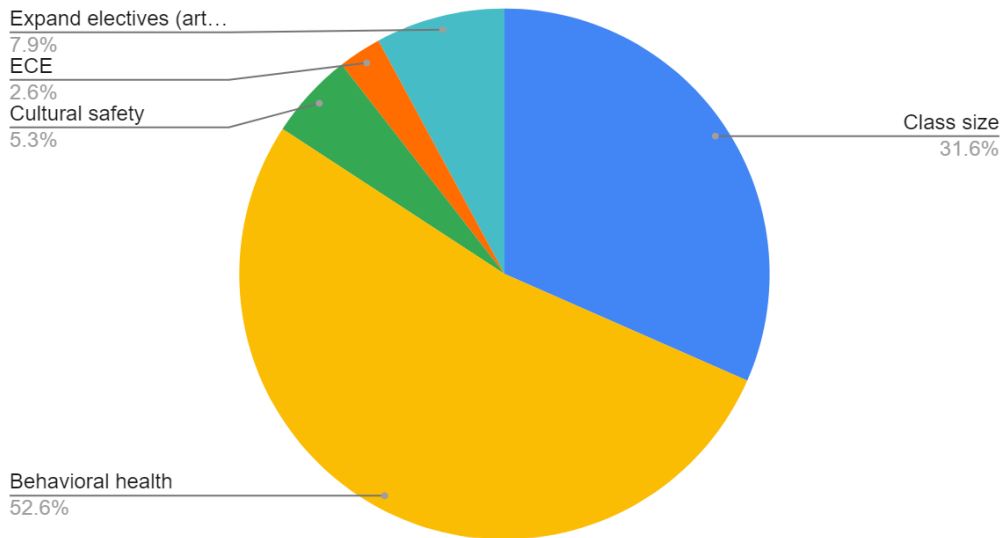
Identify as LGBTQ: This community also prioritized behavioral health supports as the most important investment followed by class size and expanded electives.

SSA Priorities - LGBTQ



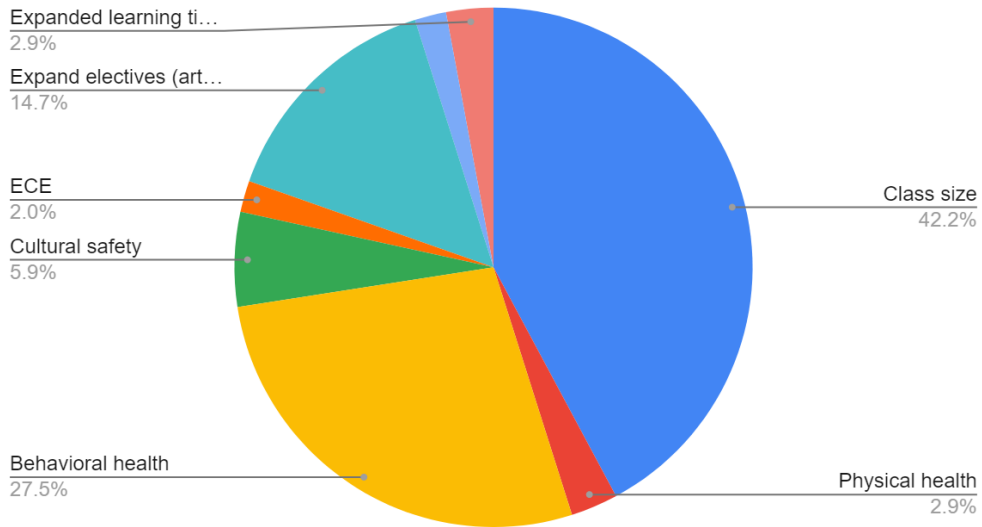
Homeless: Respondents identifying as homeless ranked behavioral health first, and ranked this category higher than any other subpopulation.

SSA Priorities - Homeless



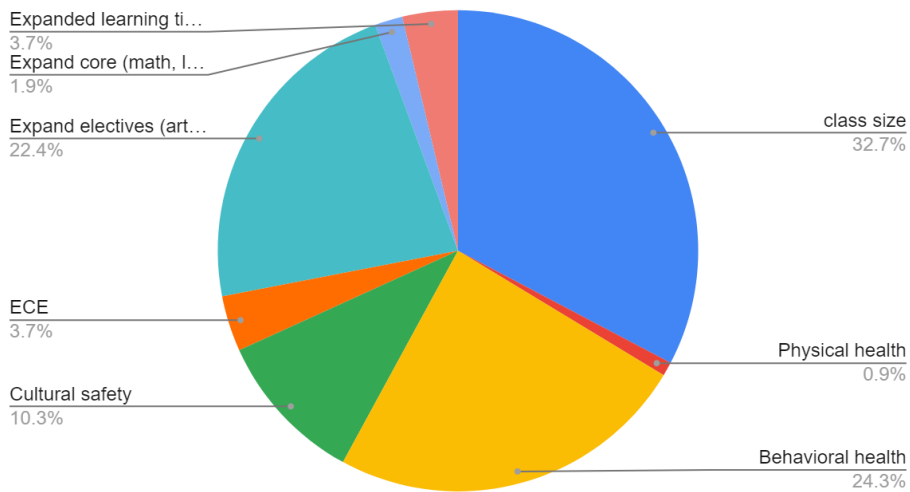
Students with a disability: Like other respondents, this population ranked class size reduction as the highest priority, followed by behavioral health.

SSA Priorities - Students With Disabilities



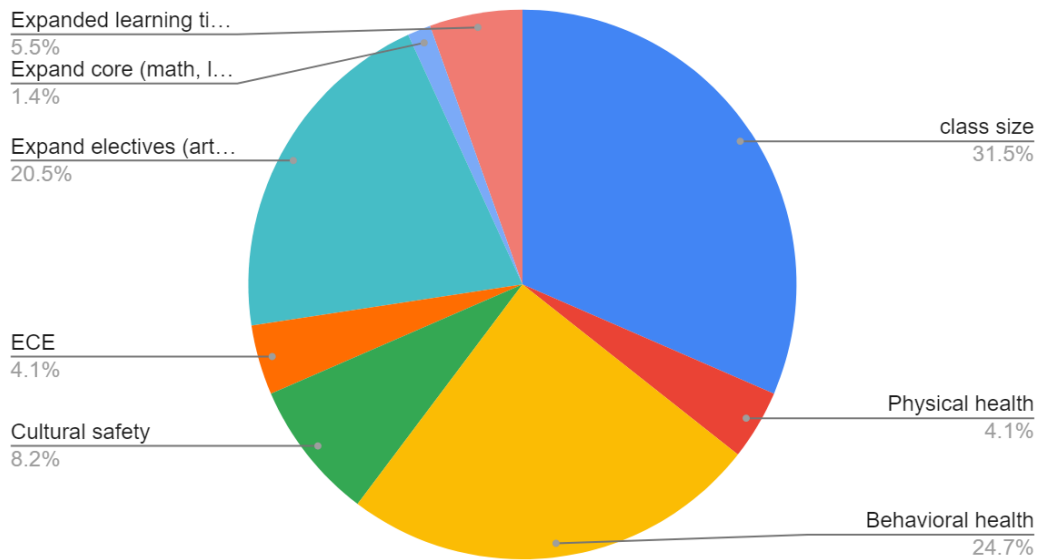
Emerging bilingual students: Responses for this population mirror the community as a whole, with class size and expanded electives as the top two priorities. For this population expanded access to foreign language instruction was particularly important. This population ranked cultural safety and early childhood education higher than any other population.

SSA Priorities - Emerging Bilingual Students



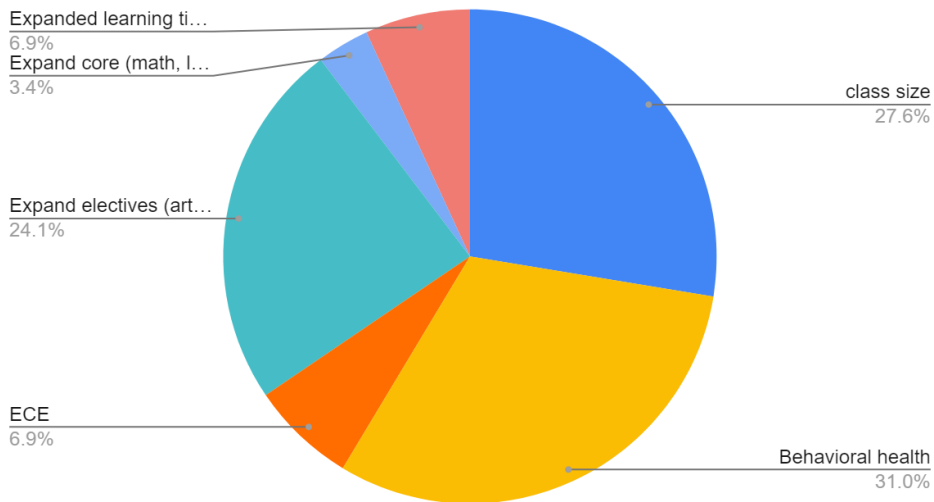
Migrant: Responses from this population also mirror those of the general population with class size, electives, and behavioral health as the highest priorities.

SSA Priorities - Migrant Students



Foster: Foster families ranked behavioral health as their most important priority, followed by class size and electives.

SSA Priorities - Foster Care



Findings from the Multilingual Department:

BSD’s Multilingual Department (MLD) conducted a series of focus groups for the district’s linguistically diverse families to provide a deep look at their needs and priorities. Findings are presented below. During the community engagement process the MLD conducted linguistically and culturally specific focus groups with families from the American Indian/Alaska Native and Muslim communities, as well as

Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Japanese, Arabic, Somali, Chinese, Spanish speaking families. The top four priorities for families from these groups were: 1) reducing class size; 2) well rounded education; 3) extended learning time; and 4) behavioral health supports.

These families all viewed their priorities through a culturally responsive lens. For example, while families believe that class sizes are too large, they want to see BSD prioritize hiring teachers and school staff from diverse communities, and prioritize hiring staff uniquely qualified to work with emerging bilingual students and students from diverse cultures.

Similarly, families want to see more electives offered that represent and sustain their cultures including more world language offerings, and culturally responsive art and music classes. Representative comments for each of the respondents top four priorities are detailed below:

Class size/more adults

"The help (classroom assistance) should be consistent among teachers in the same classroom."

"Increase bilingual teachers."

"Add more ELD teachers to help the students who just came to the USA."

"More teachers/school staff of color that reflects the diversity of BSD."

Behavioral health

"AI/AN families still fear kids will be picked on or bullied because of who they are."

"Provide better and constant psychological support or counseling or social services."

"Psychologists who speak Spanish to keep in touch with their children."

"More help and investment to students from foster homes. They are, at times, not only alone, but also without love. They deserve, at least, a good education."

"Have therapy at school."

"Mental health – there is a lack of faith-based counselors and understanding."

"Is there any way for my child not to [feel] shy/ashamed about their Korean name in elementary school?"

Extended learning time

"Create programs or clubs where students can learn about culture, health, or reducing anxiety and depression."

"Courses for children after school in reducing stress and depression – this is a very important topic today."

"After school English support classes for all schools, especially for kids born outside of the states."

Well-rounded education

"Curriculum need to reflect or be more inclusive of the non-dominant narrative"

"Bring up Native/US history – no cultural shaming."

"Have tribal languages available in schools or resources in libraries that teach about tribal languages."

"Have Spanish classes from kindergarten as part of the curriculum."

"Being in such a multicultural country and district, I would like that children were more exposed to historical knowledge of other cultures; maybe make a program or a class that was of world history from an early age."

"Improve bilingual programs."

"Please offer more bilingual programs."

"ELD class is too short. Please spend more time so students can learn English."

"There must be academic programs in Spanish that become/transition into bilingual education."

"Existence of programs in drama, choir, band, that involve the culture of the children or that the teachers are native [bicultural.]"

"Offer standard classes without everything being raffled."

"It would be great if in the school where my children attend they could have more curricular support and interpersonal development activities after school."

IV. Demographic Analysis

The SSA requires engagement efforts focus on receiving feedback from students and families from the law’s focal population. A demographic analysis of survey respondents is provided below.

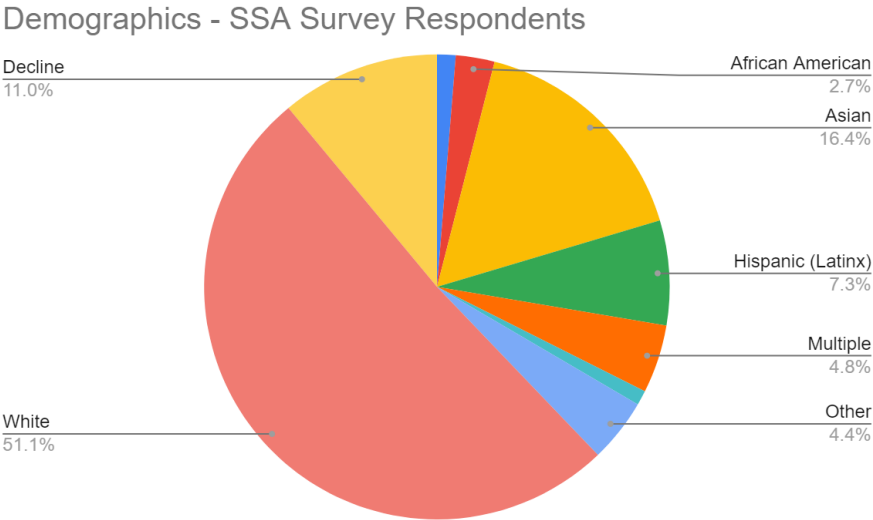
According to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) the district’s student population is as follows:

Race/ethnicity	Percent of student population
American Indian/Alaska Native	<1%
Asian	16%
Black/African American	3%
Hispanic/Latinx	25%
Multiracial	8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%
White	47%

ODE reports that 27% of BSD students were ever English learners, 35% are on free and reduced lunch (a proxy for navigating poverty), and 12% are in special education.

While the District has made a significant effort to reach a large number of families, teachers, and community members, some key populations are underrepresented in survey responses. Of the 2,360 people who responded to the survey, 3% identified as navigating poverty, 4% identified as a student with a disability, and 4% identified as emerging bilinguals indicating a need for more engagement and feedback from these populations.

Similarly, an analysis of the race/ethnicity of survey responses indicate Latinx, African American, and Multiracial families are underrepresented in survey responses and additional, focused, engagement of these populations is necessary prior to finalizing SIA investments.



V. Considerations and Next Steps

BSD is preparing a second phase of focused community engagement aimed at partnering with educators and community-based organizations that have expertise and experience improving outcomes for students in the SSA focal populations.

These convenings will result in an actionable draft plan that can be socialized with parents, students, educators, and community members from the focal populations for further refinement prior to submitting the District's SIA plan to ODE.

The district will host three meetings focused on instruction, racial equity, and behavioral health.

Instructional expertise convening:

This group will be comprised of classroom teachers, student success coaches, school-based mental health representatives, classified staff, building administrators and district administrators focused on reviewing the results of engagement so far, aligning the current state of student achievement with feedback from the needs assessment and requirements of the SIA to create a draft recommendation for instructional programs.

Equity and community-based partner convening:

This group will be comprised of local culturally specific community-based organizations charged with reviewing the current status of students in the district and to identify "blind spots" and unidentified areas of need based on feedback from the needs assessment and develop draft recommendations grounded in community lived experience and knowledge of the focal populations.

Student health convening:

This group will be comprised of community-based physical, and behavioral health organizations with expertise meeting the needs of students experiencing the impact of trauma and mental health challenges, charged with developing strategies for addressing needs assessment feedback related to student health needs.

Following these convenings the District will host another round of community meetings and focus groups to socialize draft strategies with parents, students, and teachers from the focal populations. As this next phase of work is completed it is critical that the District puts an emphasis on hearing from populations underrepresented in the first phase of community engagement.