

Student Investment Account Annual Report 2020-21



Reflections

There are clear impacts from the reduction in SIA funding and from the direct efforts to respond to COVID-19. While you can't fully set those aside, what is important for your community, including focal student groups, families, and educators, to understand about your SIA implementation efforts during the 2020-21 school year and the positive impacts that have occurred? How were you able to make progress towards the goals and outcomes you were aiming at with SIA funding and processes?

Class size reduction impact - SIA funding allowed the District to hire 60.5 additional classroom teachers K-12. Twenty-one of these teachers were specifically allocated to K-2 class sizes. Class sizes were reduced at the elementary level an average of 1.25 and 0.5 at the secondary level.

Behavioral Health & Wellness (BH&W) Teams impact - 67% of students in BSD were able to have their needs met within the classroom setting or through Tier I supports 12,218 students or 33% of BSD students were referred to the school based Behavioral Health and Wellness teams during the 2020-21 school year and received Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports. BSD BH&W staff conducted 250 suicide screenings, 50 Student Threat Assessments (STAT) and 11 Sexual Incident Responses (SIRP).

Reflections

What barriers, impediments, or challenges to your SIA implementation have you faced or identified that are helpful for your community and/or state leaders to be aware of?

Reduced funding impact on:

Class size reduction - With reduced funding, the District was forced to find a one-time source for 21 teachers (\$3M) in ESSER grant funds, in order to maintain class size commitments. If the one-time funds were not available, the reduction in SIA funding would have removed 21 teachers from the District and increased class size by 1.7 at elementary and 0.66 at secondary.

BH&W Teams - With reduced funding, the District was forced to rely on High School Success monies to fund social workers. 39.5 social workers were budgeted for through SIA; however, only 8.8 social worker positions were hired through SIA. As a result we were not able to reach as many students and families as we would have anticipated.

Reflections

SIA implementation includes ongoing engagement with focal students, the families of focal students, and educators. What successes and challenges, if any, have you experienced in maintaining engagement?

Engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic was a challenge in Beaverton. With schools closed to in-person gatherings, we were limited to virtual engagement work. In many ways, the lessons of the prior year were not fully applicable to the work this year. Yet, the focus on specific and targeted outreach remained a necessity. For this year, we engaged with our community organizations earlier in the process and will work to strengthen those partnerships going forward. By combining the lessons learned in 2020 with the lessons learned in 2021, the district continues to iterate and improve its community engagement work, adjusting to a community-based policy-making mindset that has already been used in other areas of the district's work, such as board policy.

While virtual engagement allowed for more convenient access for the public it seemed to lack an authenticity that you get with in-person engagement. It is clear that something is lost when microphones are on mute. There is no opportunity for side-bar chatter, small talk, and other informal practices that serve to build authentic relationships. Virtual meetings have an air of formality and rigidity that is difficult to overcome. That said, the convenience of the virtual space, and the ability to more directly target engagement are strengths that need examining and the format needs refinement as it will prove a useful tool for getting feedback as part of a holistic engagement program going forward.

Reflections

Please share your professional assessment of what guided your choices and prioritization efforts in the first year of SIA implementation? What stands out? Anything important or surprising to report back or reflect on? How were key decisions on scaled down implementation made? What impacts, if any, are helpful to name in how you navigated through the last year, specifically as it relates to SIA implementation?

During the first year of implementation the district focused on investments in direct support to students. A cornerstone of the district's original application as a nearly \$7 million investment in equity-based class size support. While most of the district's investment strategies in other areas were eliminated entirely, this investment was trimmed to \$4.4 million but retained so as to ensure robust teacher support for students who need that support the most. In addition, \$3.5 million in proposed investments in behavioral health and wellness teams was retained to provide mental health support for students during challenging times. As the SIA was reduced along with overall State School Fund support, the district needed to navigate a shifting funding base so as to provide adequate support through the pandemic and position the district for recovery in a robust manner.

A key strategy for the district in navigating the current and coming years is to ensure continuity of services through a braiding of one-time or limited duration federal funds (ESSER, ARP), recovering Student Investment Account funds, and basic support from the State School Fund. Considering these three as cascading funding sources, such that, as federal funds are reduced or eliminated in the coming years the district is not forced to eliminate critical programs. This requires discipline in understanding programmatic prioritization and placing the highest priority items for long-term support into the general fund, down to the lowest priority and limited duration programs into the federal funding bucket.

Overall, the key learning from the first year of SIA implementation, coupled with the challenge of navigating a global pandemic, is that equity investments in classroom support and robust strategic investments in student behavioral and mental health and wellness remain the top priority for SIA funding.

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