



# Santa Maria-Bonita School District

## District Strategic Plan: Initiatives, Actions, and Services

### 2022-2023

**Broad Goal #5 - All schools will increase student engagement by intertwining social and emotional learning and academics, maintaining a safe, secure, healthy, and positive learning environment, and providing a supportive environment with strong adult relationships.**

#### **An explanation of why the LEA has developed this goal.**

Santa Maria-Bonita School District (SMBSD) continues to identify the need to maintain good attendance rates, reduce suspensions, and implement strategies to promote positive school cultures, physical and emotional positive/appropriate behaviors, and overall safety. This goal was developed in response to our continued efforts to create a safe and inclusive climate that promotes relationships, involvement, diversity, and values. The District recognizes that attendance and engagement in school are prerequisites for academic success. A meaningful connection to caring adults, friends, engaging subject matter, and activities in class is at the core of what our students need to learn and thrive in any environment. Social-emotional and academic supports identified within this goal address the whole child to alleviate mental health and academic barriers that many of our students face.

Analysis of student data from the California School Dashboard (2019) shows that 3.4% of students were suspended at least once during the 2018-19 school year. In 2019-2020, the Suspension Rate showed a slight decrease to 3.2% of students being suspended at least once. We acknowledge that this direct comparison is incomplete, as the district moved to emergency closure/shelter in place precautions on March 13, 2020. For the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, there were no student suspensions. A more accurate comparison of suspension trend data can be obtained by comparing the equivalent instructional period to 2018-2019. The March 2020 closure occurred on the 128th day of instruction/student attendance. If we compare the 2018-2019 data (including only the first 128 days of instruction), we can more accurately make statements about the effectiveness of strategies and goals implemented in the 2019-2020 school year. In 2018-2019, the SMBSD Suspension Rate for the 128 days was 2.2%. In 2019-2020, the Suspension Rate was 2.1%, a decrease of 0.1%.

SMBSD students began a gradual return to in-person instruction in March 2021, if families chose this option. Families and students that did not feel safe returning to school, due to the pandemic, could continue synchronous and asynchronous instruction from home. Those students that chose to return to in-person instruction, could do so two days a week. From the months of March, April, and May, there were two out-of-school suspensions. Three hundred students began the 2021-2022 school year on Independent Study, while 16,300 students returned to in-person instruction. At the current time, there are close to 100 students that continue to be on Independent Study. All other students are attending school five days a week. During the months of March, April, and May 2022, there have been 93 out-of-school suspensions.

Overall, while suspension rates plummeted during 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 when learning from home began, this year's suspension rates and

disproportionality of suspension applications have returned to pre-COVID levels. To continue to reduce suspension and disproportionality of suspension, several actions and services under this goal are either continuing or being implemented in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Analysis of student data from the California School Dashboard (2019) shows that almost 6% of students were chronically absent during the 2018-2019 school year. Data from the 2019-2020 school year, prior to school closures, was comparable, with 5.8% of students chronically absent through March 13, 2020.

During the 2020-2021 school year, the attendance average for the District was 96.33%. This percentage accounts for synchronous instruction, as well as the blended learning that occurred when students had the opportunity to return to class in March of 2021. During the 2021-2022 school year, SMBSD returned to full in-person instruction. Families that did not feel comfortable returning to in-person instruction, were given the opportunity to enroll in the Independent Study program. With SMBSD and other schools in California following the Department of Public Health Guidelines, in order to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID), students were excluded from school for 10 days if they were symptomatic. If students were exposed to someone living in the household that was exhibiting symptoms, they could be excluded for up to 21 days. Santa Barbara County adjusted this guidance in January 2022, allowing positive and symptomatic students to test on day five and return on day six if they tested negative. At the same time, close contact with students could also shorten their quarantine period. This impacted our overall attendance rate, which is currently set at 90.5%. Providing COVID testing locations at our school sites for students and families has reduced the number of students being absent, as they can test for COVID, and return to school if they test negative and are asymptomatic after 5 days.

Our educational partners identified the importance of the following areas when considering the development of learning goals that focus on the whole child:

- increase the percentage of students that report a sense of safety and school connectedness as measured by the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) and Panorama survey data,
- decrease pupil suspension and expulsion rates as measured by suspension rates and expulsion rates,
- improve the district attendance rate,
- decrease chronic absenteeism,
- increase services for homeless and foster youth by increasing family advocates and providing an increase in mental health and social-emotional services,
- increase wrap-around services for individual students, with a particular focus on student groups with the highest needs,
- maintain or increase the support for mental health and counseling services, and
- provide supplemental and intensified support to students who require more academic, behavioral, and/or emotional support.

Survey results from students, staff, and parents indicate the need for students to continue to demonstrate improvement in social-emotional learning outcomes, as demonstrated by Panorama data, the CHKS, student attendance, and student discipline records. Results from a Panorama survey which was given to all educational partners in May 2021, showed the need to increase or create new services within this goal to build students' social-emotional competencies, create an environment where students thrive and develop adult competencies for social-emotional learning.

Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the District recognizes the need to continue to increase and improve the services listed below and

continue to pivot whenever needed, depending on our students' and families' safety and social-emotional needs. The following services prioritize student safety, social-emotional learning, stress management, and the overarching need to continue to support the well-being and long-term academic success of students.

Key influences in these services include:

- monitoring/supporting students' mental health and addressing trauma,
- creating safe environments and conditions,
- being available, compassionate, and connecting visually or orally with students on a regular basis,
- providing routines and structure,
- creating activities that increase student engagement and feelings of connectedness,
- providing social-emotional support to students and caregivers,
- being a support system and facilitating connections,
- prioritizing health and well-being,
- promoting healthy sleeping, eating, and exercise habits,
- identifying children and families who need additional support, and
- connecting families and students to resources based on assessed needs and fulfilling all mandated reporter duties.

Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.1	School Safety and Security	<p>The District will continue to implement, strengthen, and monitor a tiered system of support for students in need of behavioral and academic interventions and/or support services. The District will provide a safe school environment for all students. This will be done by providing two School Security Guards per junior high school.</p> <p>SMBSD is working with the Classified Union (California School Employees Association) to create Campus Safety Assistants (CSAs) at each junior high school, which would be district employees. Until the new position is approved, SMBSD will continue to provide two security guards per junior school site, along with two security supervisors, one per two junior high schools through an outside contract.</p> <p>These two school security guards will work at their assigned junior high school and support the feeder elementary schools, thus building relationships with students throughout their elementary and into their junior high school years. In this process, they will be familiar with these students, their parents, and siblings and have bonded as students move from the elementary to the junior high school level. These specially trained school security guards will continue to serve as educators, mentors, and support figures for students while maintaining the physical security of our schools. They play a vital role in ensuring that SMBSD schools are safe and welcoming places where all students can learn.</p>	\$349,912	N/A
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.2	Outreach Mentors (ORM)	<p>To maintain a safe, secure, and healthy learning environment for our low-income, foster youth, homeless, and English learner students, the District will continue to implement and expand social-emotional, psychological, and academic support. The District will continue to increase services by providing one full-time Outreach Mentor (ORM) to each school site. ORMs conduct individual and group sessions at all schools pertaining to issues relating to school attendance, academics, behavior, and developing resiliency. ORMs help students with peer interactions and build their self-esteem so they have positive relationships with others. They also support integrated first instruction</p>	\$1,830,560	\$1,013,040

		with social-emotional learning. Qualitative data, before and during the pandemic, has demonstrated a significant positive relationship between students feeling supported by ORMs and engaging more at school and at home. Due to this positive trend and the need to increase the service, many school sites have funded another ORM in order to better serve their students.		
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.3	Junior High Counselors	The District will continue to provide nine counselors to the junior high sites. In addition, the District will add counselors. The District will provide eleven total. These positions have been ongoing services that prior to the implementation of LCFF were supported by categorical resources and continue in support of school site provisions of services to all students but specifically targeting our English learners, foster youth, and low income students. These positions continue to grow in both quantity and quality. Junior High Counselors prepare and assist students to be successful, lifelong learners, and provide career and academic counseling to enable students to make informed decisions toward achieving their future goals.	\$1,768,721	N/A
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.4	District Program Specialist (6) and Teacher of Special Assignment (1) to support Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education Services	The District will continue to provide one full-time Program Specialist (PS) of Health Services. This PS will serve under the Director of Pupil Support Services and is responsible for assisting with the administration and evaluation of health programs. The position also provides support to site administrators, teachers, and other service providers to ensure compliance with health and safety guidelines district wide. The District will increase this action by providing a Program Specialist of Pupil Personnel Services. This PS will oversee discipline, attendance, homeless and foster youth programs, as well as all of the contracts with outside agencies that provide service to SMBSD students. The district will also continue to have four full-time Program Specialists of Special Education (25%) and High-Needs Students (75%). These positions assist in planning, developing, and implementing support programs and provide support for professional development, co-teaching, and other supplemental services for students who are identified as having high needs. The positions also provide support to	\$965,977	N/A

		<p>site administrators, teachers, and other service providers to ensure compliance with special education law and policy. These PS also support related service staff such as school psychologists, speech and language pathologists, mental health specialists, board-certified behavior analysts, and adapted physical education teachers. In addition, this PS plans and coordinates Extended School Year (ESY) services for students with individualized learning plans (IEPs), oversees the requisition of specialized supplies, materials, software, and equipment for students per their IEP in order to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).</p> <p>The District will continue to provide one Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA). The TOSA for Special Education serves as a teacher leader and specialist in specially designed instruction, program compliance and facilitates professional development related to the department and district's instruction and curriculum goals. As a leader and specialist, the TOSA supports other specialists, teachers, school leaders, and support staff in identifying, developing, and implementing curriculum, assessment and instructional strategies designed to improve student learning in specific areas. As a TOSA, they may work in a variety of elementary and/or secondary educational, individual, or team teaching settings.</p>		
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.5	<b>Student Supervision and Safety Aides</b>	<p>Student Supervision and Safety Aides are responsible for ensuring that the school's health and safety rules are followed, interacting with students, encouraging appropriate play, managing student behavior, and working with teachers and administration where appropriate. Due to positive qualitative data and a need to increase coverage of the playground and lunch campus areas that need to be supervised, the District will continue to increase the number of aides as needed, in order to support school safety and to increase students' sense of connectedness to their school site. Increasing the number of staff members, as needed, also increases the ability of caring adults to build positive relationships with students as they interact with them on campus and provide needed support.</p>	<b>\$2,036,426</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>

Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.6	<b>Community Partnership for Foster Students</b>	Foster youth face greater challenges and barriers within the educational system which contributes to troubling outcomes including low academic achievement and feeling disengaged in school. Due to an increase in students' engagement and an increase in academic achievement, the District will continue to participate in a community partnership to provide resources and support to help foster youth students. This partnership will include one full-time staff member to case manage foster students. This position will meet with administrators, at each site, once a month to review the caseload of each site and what resources each student is accessing, based on need.	\$70,000	N/A
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.7	<b>Community Partnership for Truancy Mentors</b>	Truant students face greater challenges and barriers within the educational system which contributes to troubling outcomes including low academic achievement and feeling disengaged in school. Due to an increase in students' engagement and an increase in academic achievement, SMBSD will continue to partner with a community agency to provide four full-time program specialists that work with truant students using evidence-based interventions to assist them to get to school every day and on time. Truancy Mentors also assist and advise parents in good attendance practices and habits to decrease student truancy and improve academic access.	\$348,064	N/A
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.8	<b>Community Partnership to Support Students who are Experiencing Homelessness</b>	Students who are experiencing homelessness face greater challenges and barriers within the educational system which contributes to troubling outcomes including low academic achievement and feeling disengaged in school. Due to an increase in students' engagement and an increase in academic achievement, SMBSD will continue to partner with a community agency to provide two full-time homeless liaisons that are dedicated to SMBSD to assist homeless students and families with their basic needs. This is an increase in the partnership and the two liaisons are funded out of Title funds and one is funded out of LCFF supplemental/concentration grant dollars.	\$118,186	N/A

Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.9	Full-time Health Assistants	The District will continue to provide one full-time health aide to each school site. This position will assist students with health issues and work with families to make sure their needs are addressed. Health assistants ensure that students are compliant with their immunizations, order the proper supplies to deal with any type of health issues or incidents that arise, administer basic first aid, assist students in the COVID Appraisal, Response, and Evaluation (CARE) room on campus, and take direction from the school nurse in handling student health issues/concerns.	\$1,256,311	N/A
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.10	One Certificated Teacher for each Junior High Opportunity Class	The District will continue to provide one full-time certificated opportunity teacher at each junior high school. This position will provide a small classroom environment for students who need additional support. Individual academic and behavioral needs will be addressed in this class and support will be provided to best meet students' needs.	\$482,593	N/A
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.11	Teen Court	The District will continue to provide tuition for SMBSD students that enroll in Teen Court. Students who enroll in Teen Court receive a restorative justice approach to address the behaviors they are exhibiting that are interfering with learning and are taught skills to address these behaviors. By addressing these issues, students who attend Teen Court will have fewer disciplinary issues and maximize time in the classroom, accessing their education.	\$193,000	N/A
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.12	Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) and/or School Based Therapist (SBT)	Due to the pandemic and an overall increase of students who have social-emotional concerns and mental health issues which include depression, anxiety, loss/grief, and have experienced negativity, the District will continue to provide one Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) or School-Based Therapist (SBT) to each school site (21). The MFTs/SBTs will work with students who have the highest level of social-emotional needs and will maintain a caseload of up to 20 students. These students will be referred through the Coordination of	\$1,405,788	\$64,500



		the Services Team (COST) or the Student Study Team (SST) and have goals set when they begin counseling. At the end of 6-8 weeks, the MFTs/SBTs will review the goals and determine whether to maintain, decrease, or increase services. In addition, school sites may continue to increase the service by funding additional MFTs/SBTs, as appropriate.		
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.13	Fitzgerald Community School	The District partners with the Santa Barbara County Office of Education (COE) and the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District to provide a community school to students in grades 7-12. The District will continue to provide one junior high classroom, for up to 20 students, for students with at-promise behaviors in grades 7th and 8th. Students will be referred through the site-level School Attendance Review Board (SARB) Administrative process after all Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions/supports have been exhausted, at the site level. This class will provide small group and individualized instruction designed with the students' interests, as well as academic and social-emotional needs in mind.	\$450,000	N/A
Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.14	Assistant Principals	In order to continue to support leadership adequately to serve staff and our unduplicated student population, the District will continue to provide one Assistant Principal (AP) at 15 elementary, 4 junior high, and 1 specialty school site. These positions assist the site principal in organizing and fostering a positive, safe environment that is conducive to meeting the needs of all students, staff, and parents. These positions also support the principal in forming a stronger leadership team that improves academic and social-emotional learning outcomes. The APs support the implementation of school plans, policies, and programs and ensure that the needs of disadvantaged student populations are met. They also support state and local testing and lead professional learning communities as they monitor and use data to drive instruction.	\$3,443,945	N/A

Action	Title	Description	District Funds	Site Funds
5.15	Elementary School Counselors	Due to the pandemic and an overall increase of students who are at-risk, have social-emotional concerns, and/or mental health issues, the District will provide one Elementary School Counselor for every elementary school site (17 total). These counselors will have a positive impact on a student's overall achievement. They will support the development and implementation of social-emotional programs by collaborating with school administrators, classroom teachers, school staff, and community educational partners. Additionally, they will support classroom lessons, academic, and social-emotional counseling, connecting families to community support, and parent engagement opportunities. This will improve our students' academic development, college and career readiness, and social-emotional development.	\$2,379,954	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$17,099,437</b>	<b>\$1,078,540</b>