



Jefferson County School District Community Engagement Summary Report for Student Investment Account Funding, February 2020

Purpose

The Student Success Act marks a turning point for education in Oregon. When fully implemented, our state will see an additional \$1 billion invested in education each year. This investment will provide opportunities for every student in our state, particularly students who have been historically underserved. JCSD 509J engaged in a community process to seek input on how the district can best support our students.

Process

The engagement process included a community survey, community meetings throughout the district, and targeted meetings with students, staff, and community leaders. The tools were offered in English and Spanish with the goal of making all the participants feel comfortable enough to share their needs, experiences, and ideas about the barriers to their children's education.



The district invited the community, students, and staff to provide a voice in developing our plans. Fifteen focus-group sessions were held between April 2019 and February 2020 involving our students, families, community, and staff. An electronic community survey was conducted December 11, 2019, through January 12, 2020.

Staff input included group meetings with staff and written and electronic feedback. All staff members were encouraged to participate. A core team composed of the Equity Team, Communication Groups, Leadership for Learning, and School Learning Coordinators have helped guide this process. The themes from the National Equity Project listening sessions in 2019, School District Collaboration Fund survey, Oregon TELL survey, and JCSD 509-J Action Plan 2019-20 are incorporated in the results.

In October 2019, JCSD 509J surveyed middle and high school students throughout the district on their perceptions of their school. YouthTruth gathered student feedback through a confidential online survey that utilizes student perceptions to help K-12 educators accelerate improvements in their schools and classrooms. The survey was offered to all secondary students in the district; 1066 secondary students participated.

“Seeing more tribal partners slowly becoming included in the schools is a step in the right direction. . . . Attempting to include local language is very appreciated by the community.”
--A parent in the school district

The perceptions survey included questions on engagement, academic rigor, relationships, belonging and peer collaboration, culture, college and career readiness, academic support services, learning styles, and student voice and leadership. The highest-rated themes were engagement and culture, and the lowest-rated themes were belonging, peer collaboration, and relationships.

Students in the 8th and 11th grades also participated in the Oregon Healthy Teens survey in May 2019. The survey is an anonymous, voluntary research-based tool that monitors the health and well-being of

Oregon's adolescents. The results assess whether the approaches being implemented in our schools are working and improving the outcomes for young people.

This extensive community engagement process, along with staff comments, data, and survey results, helped define the themes and areas of need for our Student Investment Act Plan. In addition, we reviewed the Oregon Report Card student data which highlights areas of stability, success, and opportunities for growth to help improve efforts to attain excellence and equity for all our students. The final report will be presented to the community, school board, and staff in March 2020.

Findings

Student Investment Act funding is our district's opportunity to address the significant emerging needs in our schools. Participants were invited to provide input on the following areas: reducing academic disparities; meeting students' mental health and behavior needs; providing access to academic courses; and allowing teachers and staff to have sufficient time to collaborate, review student data, and develop strategies to ensure that at-risk students stay on track to graduate.

The greatest strengths identified are change in positive average class size; strong partnerships with the community; professional learning communities for staff; late-start Mondays; counselors in the schools; and after-school programs and tutoring offered through the 21st Century Program.

Recommended areas for improvement were consistent from the staff, families, students, and community. The results from the community engagement process were used to establish themes to guide our plans for the Student Investment Account funding. Common themes identified included:

- Additional support across the district to meet students mental and behavior health needs.
- Increased focus on academic achievement, and reduction of academic disparities for our identified student groups through implementation of tiered supports for students: American Indian, Students with Disabilities, and English Language Learners.
- Additional job embedded professional learning for staff.
- Continued implementation of professional learning communities to allow teachers and staff to have sufficient time to collaborate, review data, and develop strategies to ensure that at-risk students stay on track to graduate.

Our schools, like many around the nation, are working for some students and not for others. We are making positive strides toward improving our students' academic achievement, but we still have lots of opportunities to adjust our strategies and spending priorities. Our next step is to develop our Student Investment Account Plan to outline the key priorities to guide our plans for the Student Investment Act funding.

"The 21 Century Program was a huge help to my family. Last year both of my daughters were struggling. My oldest was struggling with 5th grade math and the youngest with 3rd grade reading. The afterschool homework help and other classes has given our kids new learning opportunities while improving their academic and social success."

--A parent in the school district

