

# Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Plan 2022 Biennial Report to the Oregon Legislature

Office of Equity, Diversity, and  
Inclusion Initiatives

February 2022



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## Executive Summary

The Student Success Act (Oregon House Bill 3427) ensures significant investments in programs to support historically underserved students. When fully implemented this act will invest approximately \$2 billion per biennium for early learning and K-12 education. Within the SSA, the Oregon Legislature established the Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Plan.

In Oregon, Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* make up nearly one in four students and are the largest non-white population in the state, and this number only continues to grow. Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students are already the majority population (over 50%) in ten school districts across the state. This plan is critical in building understanding of this population and addressing strategies for educational success.

The [Latino/a/x & Indigenous\\* Student Success Plan](#) seeks to address historic and current systemic inequities experienced by Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students through focused investments and partnerships with community based organizations, school districts, early learning providers, and higher education. The plan centers equity and community by ensuring those closest to the problem help develop, design, and implement solutions. Through this effort, we will work to close the opportunity gap and eliminate educational disparities to ensure all our students can thrive.

This first year of implementation, 2020, was upended by the COVID-19 pandemic. ODE responded by assessing community needs, developing an interim success plan, and awarding grant funding earlier than originally planned in order to support students and families impacted by the challenges associated with Distance Learning for All. Despite this swift change, we awarded \$1 million in grant funds. ODE then focused the next year to establish the permanent Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Advisory Group and the [Latino/a/x and Indigenous\\* Student Success Plan Phase 1](#).

ODE continues to work to engage schools, community partners, families, and students to expand the plan and ensure it can ensure a positive impact on all Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students across Oregon.

Note: Throughout this report, you will see the word Indigenous with an asterisk (\*). We did this in order to recognize the growing presence of individuals from MesoAmerican and indigenous communities throughout Mexico, Central, South America, and the Caribbean. For many of these communities, their native indigenous language is their first and dominant language and Spanish may be their second or even third language. We also must recognize and acknowledge the history and sovereignty of Native American Tribal communities and nations within the border

of what is now considered the United States. To ensure our efforts with this Success Plan are targeted for maximum impact, we respectfully differentiate between Indigenous communities from Mexico, Central, South America, and the Caribbean from our U.S. based Native American Tribal communities. Although the name for this body of work has not changed legislatively, we will refer to this plan as the Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Plan (\*Indigenous Mexican, Central American, South American, and the Caribbean). As the next phase of this Plan is developed ODE will engage with community members to dialogue about this issue because in the end, we want to stay in the right relationships with community. Through this work, we seek to elevate and illuminate community experiences and histories. This language was developed in partnership with the Office of Indian Education while we work together to ensure all historically and current underserved students of color can achieve academic success.

## Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Plan

### Overview

Funded under the Student Success Act Statewide Education Initiatives account, the [Latino/a/x and Indigenous\\* Student Success Plan](#) seeks to address historic and current systemic inequities experienced by Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students through focused investments and partnerships with community based organizations, school districts, early learning providers, and higher education. The plan centers equity and community by ensuring those closest to the problem help develop and design the solutions.

The Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Plan seeks to address the following:

- a) Disparities experienced by Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students in every indicator of academic success, as documented by ODE's statewide report card and other relevant data sources;
- b) The historical practices leading to disproportionate outcomes for Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students; and
- c) The educational needs of Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students from early childhood through post-secondary education as determined by examining culturally appropriate best practices in this state and across the nation.

Through this plan, ODE will award grants to early learning hubs, providers of early learning services, school districts, post-secondary institutions, and community based organizations, to implement the strategies in plan.

ODE will also work to develop practice and policy recommendations to ensure the Success Plan goals and objectives are being met across all Oregon school districts.

### Success Plan Values

The Success Plan and all its strategies focus on closing the educational opportunity gap for Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students. ODE engaged community partners, students, families and the Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Advisory Group to develop the following values to guide and shape this work:

**Student Centered:** This plan is focused on closing the educational opportunity gap faced by Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students. This means all of the strategies will ultimately

lead to creating conditions and measurable outcomes for student success in the K-12 school system.

**Policy and Systems Change:** Systemic problems require systemic solutions. This means strategies in the plan should focus on addressing the systemic and root causes of educational disparities. This means developing policy solutions at all levels to ensure our outcomes are long-term and sustainable. Additionally, we must center the voices and experiences of those most impacted by oppression to develop systemic solutions.

**Centering Cultural and Community Assets:** Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students and their families bring a wealth of cultural knowledge, experiences, history, and leadership. Solutions should be designed in partnership with family and community leadership. This approach sees family and community as thought partners rather than simply as recipients of services.

### **Success Plan Approach: People, Practice, Policy**

This plan focuses on creating conditions for long-term systemic change. The educational opportunity gap between white students and students of color exists because of decades of racism and policy decisions, which were built into our educational system. To fix systemic problems, we require systemic solutions. This means examining, fixing, and if needed, dismantling policies which contribute to educational disparities. Objectives in this Success Plan will use a three-part approach to support long-term change:

**People** - Includes programs and services that benefit individuals or groups of people. Usually involves providing a service or benefit on a one-time or on-going basis to students and/or families.

**Practice** - Involves educator training and professional development to address cultural understanding, empathy, and relevancy. Evolving practices can lead to new policies, pedagogical practices, and new ways of engaging students and families with a focus on disrupting inequities and racism.

**Policy** - Involves re-examining, updating, and/or dismantling policies and institutional practices which advertently or inadvertently create disparities for students and families. Policy and systems change has the potential to be far more impactful than simply providing programs. Policy solutions can impact the entire system whether the system is a school or an entire district. The focus is on fixing the system, not the student.

## Success Plan Objectives

As per the Student Success Act, the [Latino/a/x and Indigenous\\* Student Success Plan](#) must provide strategies to address the following educational objectives:

- a) Address the disproportionate rate of disciplinary incidents involving Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students compared to all students in the education system;
- b) Increase parental engagement in the education of Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students;
- c) Increase the engagement of Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students in educational activities before and after regular school hours;
- d) Increase early childhood education and kindergarten readiness for Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students;
- e) Improve literacy and numeracy levels among Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students between kindergarten and third grade;
- f) Support Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students as they transition to and through middle school grades and as they transition to and through high school grades to maintain and improve academic performance;
- g) Support culturally responsive pedagogy and practices from early childhood through postsecondary education;
- h) Support the development of culturally responsive curricula from early childhood through postsecondary education;
- i) Increase attendance of Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students in community colleges and professional certification programs; and
- j) Increase attendance of Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students in four-year post-secondary institutions of education.

## Year One Grants

These objectives guide and inform ODE's statewide investments, and establish actions and outcomes for the Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Grants. In 2020, grants were made available to community-based organizations, school districts, post-secondary institutions, and early-learning providers to address the goals and objectives in the plan.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapid shift to distance learning in March and April of 2020, ODE saw the significant impact this change had on Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* students and their families. Families struggled to adapt to the technology needs of remote learning and many families suddenly lost the in-person academic supports they needed for their children. In response, ODE created an Interim Success Plan and established temporary rules for grantmaking after seeking input and feedback from community partners. ODE awarded grants earlier than originally planned in order to support communities during this challenging transition.

The following grant recipients were each awarded \$142,857.14 for a total of \$1 million. The grant period was from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021:

- *Centro Latino Americano, Eugene*
- *Consejo Hispano, Astoria/North Coast*
- *Next Door Inc., Hood River/Gorge*
- *Peggy's Primary Connection / South Lane School District, Cottage Grove*
- *Salem Keizer Coalition for Equality, Salem-Keizer*
- *Southern Oregon Child and Family Council, Inc., Medford*
- *Southern Oregon University, Ashland*

## Accomplishments

Included here is a brief, though not exhaustive, list of some of the accomplishments this cohort of grantees were able to accomplish in one year across the state:

- Over 1,000 students served across the state in various forms
- Over 400 families served through a wide range of programs
- Saturday virtual classes for middle school students transitioning to high school (Eugene-Springfield)
- Direct financial assistance for families struggling with unemployment/underemployment (Eugene-Springfield)
- Virtual Pandemic Learning Pods (North Coast)



- Non-profit partner supported school district with culturally and linguistically specific case management, interpretation, school registration and enrollment (North Coast)
- Youth Outreach Worker home visits to hundreds of area students (Hood River/Gorge)
- Supported Latinx Youth Advisory Council (Hood River/Gorge)
- Ready for Kindergarten classes for families in Spanish (Salem-Keizer)
- Mental Health support groups in Spanish (Salem-Keizer)
- Adult Basic Education for GED in Spanish and Adult ESL classes (Southern Oregon)
- Online Mental Health support groups (Southern Oregon)
- Post wild-fire food care packages delivered (Southern Oregon)
- Supported students with their DACA applications (Southern Oregon)
- Supported students with college applications, FAFSA, and scholarships (Southern Oregon)
- Developed a Kids in Transition to School summer program in Spanish (Cottage Grove)
- PILAS 10-week family literacy program (Cottage Grove)
- Provided programs for Spanish and Mam speaking families (Cottage Grove)

## Latino/a/x & Indigenous\* Student Success Advisory Group

ODE convenes the [Latino/a/x and Indigenous\\* Student Success Advisory Group](#). Members provide knowledge, suggestions, and recommendations to advise the department for the development and implementation of the Plan. The Advisory Group also establishes eligibility criteria for grants and funding, and helps develop outcomes to measure success. The Advisory Group consists of individuals representing:

- Urban and rural communities;
- Indigenous and immigrant populations;
- English language learners;
- Individuals with disabilities;
- Parents and students;
- Youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or another minority gender or sexual orientation;
- Community-based organizations serving Latino or Hispanic youth and families; and Education stakeholders, including representatives of the Early Learning Division, the Youth Development Division and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

The Advisory Group meets regularly throughout the year and works collaboratively with ODE to ensure successful implementation of the Plan. There are currently 24 members on the Advisory Group representing a diverse range of perspectives from across the state.

The Advisory Group first met in interim form beginning fall of 2019. It consisted of seven members who each had an expertise in educational policy and systems as well as deep connections with the Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* community. This Interim Advisory Group provided guidance to ODE when we developed the Interim Plan and Temporary Rules and continued meeting until the fall of 2020. During this time, ODE put a call for letters of interest to recruit potential candidates for the full Advisory Group. ODE received 79 letters of interest from across Oregon and invited 24 individuals to join. The current Advisory Group members meet all of the statutory requirements listed above and represent various part of our state including the Portland metro, Eugene-Springfield, Hood River, La Grande, Ashland-Medford, Bend-Redmond, Hermiston-Umatilla, Washington County, and Salem. Additionally, we have four members who are current students, a first for the agency.

Most recently, the Advisory Group voted two of their members to serve as the first chair and vice-chair who will work collaboratively with ODE staff to develop meeting agendas and facilitate future meetings.

## Adjacent Projects

ODE staff coordinated two projects whose impacts overlap with Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* student populations. These projects were the [DACAmended/Undocumented Toolkit](#) and the Mesoamerican Language of Origin Pilot Project.

The [DACAmended/Undocumented Toolkit](#) serves as a resource guide for district and school personnel to immediately put proactive measures into practice to shift school culture, policies, practices, supports and resources, and how to take action. This resource will continue to be updated as the DACA program evolves and as priority areas for resources are identified.

In 2020, ODE launched the Mesoamerican Language of Origin Pilot Project, a multi-phase effort to revise the language code list to include codes for the languages of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, as well as the growing communities of Oregon students from Mexico and Guatemala who speak Mesoamerican languages. ODE partnered with the University of Oregon's Language Revitalization Lab to develop a fine-grained inventory of language codes that reflect the state-of-the-art classification of Mesoamerican languages as per the Linguistics discipline. The revisions have resulted in refinement to better record and honor over 150 unique Mesoamerican Indigenous languages that could be spoken by Oregon students. The use of this updated languages code list will shed light over time on the actual number of Mesoamerican languages spoken in the homes of Oregon students and eliminate the use of a generic code "other" as a default so that education services can be improved to accommodate this diversity.

As a result of the project, ODE and UO developed a program guide and designed a training workshop for Agency staff and District Pilot Partners (Agency selected school districts) to provide accessible explanations about the linguistic diversity of Mesoamerican languages and to suggest approaches to gathering data with the improved language codes list for use during a future pilot project. ODE and UO are currently developing a long-term plan for implementing the project across all of Oregon's school districts.

## Looking Forward

The Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Plan will continue to grow over the next two years. In the spring of 2022, ODE will release a new grant application for the 2021-2023 biennium and anticipates awarding up to \$6 million in funding. Selected grantees will be awarded up to \$300,000 and will be eligible to renew their grants for the 2023-2025 biennium upon satisfactory progress of their grant projects.

The current Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Plan was designed as a 2-year Phase One Plan. This allows ODE to measure progress in these first start-up years of the Plan. The agency will work closely with community partners, schools, and the Advisory Group to develop a long-term five-year plan.

ODE staff are developing outcomes and measures for the Latino/a/x and Indigenous\* Student Success Plan objectives and for the Advisory Group. ODE will seek an external evaluator to assist with data collection and analysis. This evaluation will ensure the Plan objectives are being met and identify any areas of growth for the program.

Finally, ODE is working to elevate the student success plans and hold ourselves accountable to the objectives in the plans by operationalizing them through practice and policy across not only the agency but ultimately across all of Oregon's school districts. ODE is also working to align the objectives and strategies across the different programs and funding sources of the Student Success Act. This way, outcomes can be evaluated across programs and accountability is shared across the agency.