

Student Investment Account

Frequently Asked Questions

Here to Help

The Oregon Department of Education is responsible for implementing the Student Success Act. The Student Investment Account is one of 28 investments within the SSA, albeit the largest. ODE is still early in the process of adding dedicated staff and partnering with ESDs to provide support and guidance to school districts and community leaders. Your questions are welcome and ODE staff will be as responsive as possible to further support SSA and SIA implementation over the next few months.

Please make use of the resources provided here, your ESDs, peer districts, and the culturally specific and/or school supporting organizations based in your community along with your own judgment and skill-building.

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Eligibility

Q: Who is eligible to apply for Student Investment Account (SIA) grant funds?

A: The SIA defines eligible applicants for funds as:

1. Common school districts and union high school districts; and
2. Public charter schools who meet the requirements of eligibility within the law or reach agreements to apply as part of their sponsoring district's application. Virtual charter schools are not eligible for Student Investment Account funding.

Applying for SIA Funds

Q: How can my district or charter school stay on track to meet all requirements outlined in the Student Investment Account (House Bill 3427)?

A: Districts can find an easy-to-read resource listing the [requirements for applying for SIA funds](#). For a big-picture view, check out the [Roadmap for Applying for SIA funds](#). To stay on track and keep key dates in mind, use the [2019-2020 Calendar](#). For engagement strategies, tools and best practices across Oregon, check out the [SIA Engagement Toolkit](#). And to stay up to date on all things SIA, bookmark [ODE'S SIA homepage](#) and [sign up](#) to receive list-serv updates.

Q: When will eligible applicants submit SIA applications?

A: School districts and other eligible applicants must submit a complete application during the submission window set by ODE: March 2nd to April 15th 2020.

Q: What is considered a complete application?

A: A complete application includes:

1. Evidence of complying with the application requirements outlined above including community engagement processes and application development processes outlined in the law.
2. SIA plan
3. SIA Budget
4. Copies of any relevant district's agreement(s) with charter school(s) eligible to be included in the SIA Application.
5. Documentation of board approval and public presentation of the plan, application, budget and any charter agreements prior to submission. Note: Longitudinal Performance Growth Targets will be requested for review but will not be considered by ODE to determine if a district complies with application requirements and won't require school board approval until those

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targets and corresponding Intergovernmental Grant Agreement (IGA) are co-developed and approved by ODE.

Q: What's most important to keep in mind over the next three months related to Student Investment Account rollout as part of the School Success Act?

A: The most important thing to keep in mind is the bigger horizon of what can happen for the students, families, and educators in each Oregon community. We are at the beginning of a new era of education in Oregon - which will only be true if we live and practice and lean into a forward stance. How can we build and nurture the coherent, equitable, and powerful educational system we've always wanted? Between changes in federal law, from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and changes in state law, districts have the most significant window of opportunity to lead and drive transformative change for Oregon's students and communities in at least 30 years. One of the most challenging aspects of stepping into this opportunity is to shed the compliance-based habits that have impacted ODE and school districts across Oregon. The Student Success Act's Student Investment Account (SIA) funds are non-competitive grants focused on providing supports and capacity, including the right amount of challenge and accountability for the oversight of public dollars. The most important thing to keep in mind is the bigger horizon of what can happen for the students, families, and educators in each Oregon community.

Allowable Uses

Q: How can SIA grant funds be spent?

A: To receive grant money from the Student Investment Account (SIA), all Oregon school districts and eligible charter schools will be expected to meet the planning, needs assessment and authentic engagement requirements. **All grant requests must have a spending plan focused in any, some or all of the allowable uses that are detailed in HB 3427.** The categories (Reducing Class Size; Instructional Time; Health and Safety; and Well-Rounded Education) are helpful from a communications standpoint and the bullet points under each category are those outlined in the law and may be used as strategies to advance equity by reducing and eliminating disparities and by increasing health and well-being for students. School districts are encouraged to review the allowable uses as they engage with students and families from the priority populations and staff to discuss and inform and develop their SIA plan and application to ensure it meets the spirit and intent of the law.

Reducing Class Size

- Use evidence-based criteria to ensure appropriate student-teacher ratios or staff caseloads;
- Increasing the use of instructional assistants.

Instructional Time

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- More hours and/or days.
- Summer programs; before or after school programs.
- Technological investments that minimize class time used for assessments administered to students.

Health & Safety

- Social and emotional learning, trauma-informed practices; student mental and behavioral health.

Well-Rounded Education

- Developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive early literacy practices and programs in pre-K through third grade.
- Culturally responsive programs and practices in grades 6-8, including learning, counseling and student support that is connected to colleges and careers.
- Broadened curricular options at all grade levels including: Art, Music, PE, STEM, CTE, engaging electives, accelerated college credit programs, including dual credit, IB, AP, Life Skills, TAG, dropout and prevention programs, and transition supports.
- Access to licensed educators with a library media endorsement.

Q: My district is working to improve engagement in and access to extracurricular activities, after-school programs and sports. Can we use SIA funds to support these efforts? Including activities such as covering sports fees?

A: Your school district must be able to demonstrate how this focused investment meets the specific goals of the Student Success Act, is incorporated into the allowable uses (reducing class size; instructional time; health and safety; and well-rounded education), contributes to meeting the required performance growth targets, and is informed by the community engagement, needs assessment, and planning processes described in this document and the law.

Q: My district has gone through our continuous improvement planning process and would like to purchase curriculum with SIA funds. The curriculum is aimed at providing developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive early literacy practices and programs in pre-K through third grade. Is this an allowable use of funds?

A: Your districts' focus on third grade reading fluency is a key target of the legislation and on track with the intent of the law. When considering the use of funds for curriculum, it is important to consider what informed this need:

- Needs Assessment from continuous improvement planning
- Focal engagement of targeted students and families
- Engagement of staff

The district teams should take appropriate steps to review disaggregated data, apply an equity lens to ensure the curriculum is responsive to the students in the focal groups mentioned in the law and also has a plan in place for implementation that includes staff training and support.

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Q: Are Student Investment Account funds subject to *supplement not supplant* provisions?

A: While the Student Success Act does not contain any reference to supplementing and supplanting resources, the intent of the bill is to offer applicants maximum flexibility, in accordance with the requirements of the law. SIA funds are required to be spent within the allowable use categories and meet the intent of the bill: improving mental health outcomes and increasing academic achievement for historically marginalized student populations. For example, if a school district loses a federal grant that pays for a school nurse at a Title 1 school, it would be appropriate to spend SIA dollars to keep that nurse employed even though this expenditure does not expand or add to current staff. Additionally, if a district has been able to hire staff or expand programs temporarily with reserves or one time resources to meet the stated goals of the bill, it would also be appropriate to spend SIA dollars to retain those staff or programs and ensure continuity.

Q: My district wants to use the new money for teacher salaries. Is this allowed?

A: Your school district must be able to demonstrate how a targeted decision to increase teacher salaries meets the specific goals of the Student Success Act, is incorporated into the allowable uses (reducing class size; instructional time; health and safety; and well-rounded education), contributes to meeting the required performance growth targets, and is informed by the community engagement, needs assessment, and planning processes described in this document and the law. Students should be receiving additional support through the use of these funds.

Q: My district has a specific or unique question about the use of grant funds. Where can we direct our questions for a timely response?

A: We encourage districts to please send questions to SIainfo@state.or.us for tracking and responses. Questions about possible allowable uses will continue to be added to this FAQ section. This FAQ is posted to the front page of ODE's SIA webpage.

SIA Plan and Planning Process

Q: What are the requirements for developing a complete SIA plan?

A: The SIA requires eligible applicants to engage in a planning process to inform the SIA plan and application development. The SIA planning process must:

1. Take into account the input from the community, including school employees, and the focal student groups named in the act along with parents and families of those students; and
2. Include data collected to make equity-based decisions that is disaggregated by focal student groups; and
3. Include an analysis of the potential academic impact on all students and the focal student groups identified in the act; and
4. Consider the [recommendations from the Quality Education Commission](#) (QEC).

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In addition to documentation of the planning process above, the SSA requires eligible applicants to develop a 3-year SIA Plan in the first year of implementation¹ that includes:

1. A plan for the use of SIA funds
2. Which Allowable Uses in [section 9](#) will be funded with grant moneys; and
 - a. Which of the allowable uses will be designated to meet student mental and behavioral needs; and
 - b. A description of how the allowed uses will be used to meet students' mental and health needs; increase academic achievement for students; and reduce academic disparities for focal student groups in [section 9](#).
3. A Budget for how funds will be used
4. Alignment with your Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)

Q: Does my school board have to approve my SIA Plan?

A: Yes. The SIA requires eligible applicants to obtain approval of the SIA Plan by the school board at an open meeting following:

- a. An oral presentation of the SIA plan at an open meeting;
- b. Opportunity for public comment; and
- c. The availability of the SIA plan on the district webpage and at the district office.

This process must happen before the SIA plan and application is submitted to ODE and also include any sub-agreements with any charter schools being included in a district's application. Once an application is accepted by ODE and longitudinal performance growth-targets are co-developed and agreed on, the final plan and growth-targets must again move through the same process of board approval.

Community Engagement & Needs Assessment

Q: What are the requirements for community engagement?

A: The Student Success Act requires all eligible applicants for Student Investment Account funding to engage their communities, including school employees and particularly students of color; students with disabilities; emerging bilingual students; and students navigating poverty, homelessness, and foster care; and other students who have historically experienced disparities in our schools and the families of students within these focal groups.

¹ In 2020-2021, eligible applicants will develop their first four-year SIA plan, to be reviewed every two years.

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Q: My district has an established process for engaging stakeholders. What should we consider as we move forward?

A: Begin by finding ways to create the conditions for meaningful and authentic engagement with your community and amongst the staff, educators, students, families, and leaders in your district. Review your existing plans and priorities. And use the opportunity to determine where you want to share a focus for the next three years and how you can best support and improve the health and learning conditions for students.

Q: My district recently collected input through a district-wide visioning and/or strategic planning process. Is it necessary to engage my community again in order to meet the requirements to apply for Student Investment Account Funds?

A: In order to meet the requirements outlined in the law, your district may wish to consider conducting additional engagement of the focal students and families that are the focus and priority of the Student Investment Account and broadly, your staff. You'll want to take the "focal engagement" input and integrate it with your overall community input you gathered initially along with the other process steps outlined in the bill to develop your SIA plan for funds.

Q: What are the requirements for my district to facilitate a needs assessment?

A: The SIA requires eligible applicants to conduct and use the needs assessment process within your Continuous Improvement Plan. School districts are encouraged to show evidence for how they collected community input in the five priority areas²:

1. Reducing academic disparities;
2. Meeting students' mental or behavioral health needs;
3. Providing access to academic courses;
4. Allowing teachers and staff sufficient time to collaborate, review data and develop strategies to help students stay on track to graduate;
5. Establishing and strengthening partnerships.

Q: What's the best way for school districts to build capacity around this work?

A: We encourage school districts to identify staff, students, parents, families and community partners who are interested in joining a core team focused on implementation of the Student Investment Account plan in your district to build support for this work

² HB3427 establishes these priority areas within the CIP process beginning July 1, 2020.

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Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)

Q: I'm a little confused about how the CIP and the SIA Plan intersect. Can ODE clarify?

A: The CIP is a state requirement as described in ORS 329.095 that was historically submitted through a tool known as Indistar. CIP submissions had been on a “pause” since the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The “pause” was intended to reduce administrative burden on school districts and support ODE’s stewardship of state and federal funds while promoting continuous improvement processes for school districts. The key relationship of the CIP to SIA applications is the use of the CIP needs assessment as one of the inputs to review in the development of the SIA plan.

Q: What are the components of a Continuous Improvement Plan? And what exactly do I need to submit to ODE to meet state requirements and access federal funds?

A: Oregon law requires school districts to develop a continuous improvement plan, often referred to as “the CIP.” The Continuous Improvement Plan submission process requires all districts to submit three discrete inputs:

- [Priority Implementation Plan](#) (the Big 5)
 1. Vision
 2. Mission
 3. Goals/Strategies
 4. Action Steps; and
 5. Routine to Monitor Progress
- [Supplemental Questions](#) (the Supplemental 10)
- CIP Budget Narratives ([accessed through the district portal](#))

Q: How and when do I submit the components of my CIP?

A: Your district will need to take the following steps to submit a CIP no later than December 5:

- Step 1: Download and complete your [Priority Implementation Plan](#) and the [Supplemental Questions](#)
- Step 2: Click on [Smartsheet Submission Form](#) to submit your CIP
- Step 3: Upload your Priority Implementation Plan
- Step 4: Enter your responses for the 10 supplemental questions
- Step 5: Enter the [district portal to complete the budget narratives](#) for access to federal funds

Q: How will I know my CIP has been approved?

A: Districts will be notified when their Priority Plan (the Big 5) and Supplemental Questions (the Supplemental 10) satisfy federal requirements. For districts with CSI / TSI schools, the Big 5 will be

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reviewed alongside a submitted budget; the supplemental questions will be reviewed alongside Title IA budget narratives to ensure they meet federal requirements. If additional information is needed, ODE staff will contact districts. For questions about the CIP, contact Tim Boyd at tim.boyd@state.or.us. For questions about federal funds, contact Deb Lange at deb.lange@state.or.us.

Q: Does my school board need to approve my CIP?

A: Boards are not required to approve CIPs. It is a suggested best practice. Boards are required to approve SIA Plans ahead of application submission.

Q: Can you help my district understand the distinction between goals that my district develops for the CIP and the longitudinal growth targets needed for the SIA plan?

A: CIP goals are broad and district wide and beyond the focused scope of SIA. They are related but not directly tied to each other. The longitudinal performance growth targets will help measure academic growth of students within defined metrics. Further guidance will be provided by ODE on this process. ODE will ask that applicants submit *draft* longitudinal performance growth targets at the time of application but review of applications will not be contingent on these targets and school boards will not be required to approve these targets until they are mutually determined by districts and ODE.

Charter Schools

Q: Are charter schools eligible to apply for SIA funds?

A: Virtual charter schools are not eligible to apply for SIA funds. Non-virtual charter schools must meet certain criteria to apply for funds independently or as a part of a school district's application for funds.

Q: What is the process for charter schools to participate with their school district?

A: We encourage charter schools interested in participating in their school district's SIA grant application to begin conversations now. To meet requirements for SIA funds, the district and the charter school(s) must enter into an agreement for the distribution of SIA funds or the provision of services. The agreement may also include any accountability measures for the public charter school required by the district. Components of these agreements may include:

- Whether the charter school will receive funds or services
- Allowable expenses and activities
- Documentation and retention requirements
- Whether the district will withhold any percentage of the SIA funds for administrative purposes
- Performance metrics and reporting requirements

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- Accountability provisions if the charter school does not meet the performance metrics

Any agreements entered into by a district and charter school regarding the SIA grant will become part of the district's SIA grant agreement with ODE.

Q: What guidance and/or resources are available about charter schools?

A: ODE has developed and posted a [webinar](#) to respond to initial questions about eligibility and requirements outlined in law. The rule-making process is underway and more guidance will be available and posted on the SIA webpage. For immediate questions, contact Kate Pattison, ODE's Charter School Specialist at kate.pattison@state.or.us

Funding

Q: How is funding calculated and awarded?

A: House Bill 3427 establishes a corporate activity tax to be collected and deposited in the Fund for Student Success which is created as a part of the Oregon Department of Education. Section 13 in the bill describes how the Student Investment Account grant budget will be allocated to sub-recipients based on extended weighted Average Daily Membership (ADMw) of the school district as calculated by the State School Fund, with adjustments as outlined. Extended ADMw compares the current and prior school year's ADMw and uses whichever year is greater.

Category	State School Fund Additional Weight	SIA Fund Additional Weight	Total Weight
IEP (Special Education)	1.0	-	1.0
ESL (English as a Second Language)	0.5	-	0.5
Pregnant and Parenting	1.0	-	1.0
Poverty	0.25	0.25	0.50
Foster Care	0.25	-	0.25
Neglected/Delinquent Students	0.25	-	0.25
Small School Correction	Variable	-	Variable

Q: Where can I find an estimate of my district's grant amount?

A: We anticipate estimates and projected allocations to be formally released by ODE in December 2019 and will update when they are released.

Q: When can my school district expect its first payment in EGMS?

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A: First payments are expected for August 15 and will be released on a quarterly basis with funds flowing ahead of expenses. This is not a reimbursement model. Districts will share a quarterly expenditure report which will be reviewed ahead of the next quarter's release of funds.

Q: How can I better understand the SIA distribution formula?

A: The State Board of Education passed temporary rules on the distribution of SIA funds for the 2019-21 biennium. The temporary rules are under [OAR 581-014-0004](#) and in summary include:

- **Clarification on the use of extended ADMw count.** ODE will use the most current finalized ADMw from the State School Fund from the prior year.
- **A prudent reserve.** Given the new source of revenue and the proposed payment structure, a prudent reserve will be established based on fiscal standards that mitigate risk of revenue fluctuations.
- **Minimum grant size.** A school district with an ADMw of 50 or less, will receive an allocation based on an ADMw of 50.
- **What happens with the funds when an eligible applicant does not apply.** If an eligible applicant does not apply for grant funds by the close of the application submission window, the amount of their grant funds will revert to the Student Investment Account and be reallocated within the grant award cycle.
- **Percentages and timelines for payment installments.** Applicants will receive payments on a quarterly basis.
- **Carry-forward and other rules on expenditures.** Any allocated funds that are not used by a grant recipient by June 30, 2021 will be returned to the Student Investment Account for distribution in the next biennium. Grant recipients may request an extension to spend funds until September 30, 2021. The request must be submitted and approved by ODE.
- **Setting minimum fund accounting practices.** SIA funds must be separately accounted for and must be used in accordance with the recipient's grant agreement for the SIA.
- **Resolving administration issues not addressed.** The Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction shall resolve any issues not addressed within the rules for SIA Distribution.

Q: Can my district use SIA funds for indirect costs?

A: ODE is working to determine a cap on indirect costs with options ranging from a) using district's federal indirect rates, b) a flat 3% or 5% cap, or c) a tiered model based on size of SIA allocation. Determinations may be made through rule-making and will also be reflected within final IGAs. More information will be shared in the Winter of 2020.

Role of Education Service Districts (ESDs)

Q: What is the role of the ESD in school districts' development and implementation of SIA plans?

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A: Oregon's 19 Education Service Districts serve as key partners for school districts in their region. To support the SIA plan and grant application process and implementation of Student Investment Account funds, the legislature dedicated \$24 million to ESDs. A portion of the funds must be spent on at least .25 FTE of dedicated staff to serve as a Student Success Act Liaison – a pivotal point of contact and collaborator – between the Oregon Department of Education and the districts within the ESD service region.

Streamlining and Aligning Existing Efforts, Plans and Requirements

Q: Is there a process in the future to align the CIP and SIA applications? How should districts proceed in reconciling expectations and/or existing district plans and processes required by state and federal law?

A: Over the 2019-2020 school year, ODE will provide further guidance and support to consolidate state processes and, possibly, federal processes in regards to what districts are asked to produce, track, and report on. For now, while not ideal, we do hope districts will look to build coherence across different initiatives and processes within their plans for SIA, CIPs, ESSA planning, and other important programs ranging from Perkins plans to High School Success (Measure 98). Please feel encouraged to pursue directions that meet the aims and spirit of the Student Success Act and advance a more seamless system within schools, districts, and at the state-level.