# Section One: Pulling the Pieces Together

## Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to provide comprehensive guidance for Oregon school districts and eligible charter schools to complete the planning process and prepare to submit an application for Student Investment Account (SIA) funds. Several sections of this guidance have been published as stand-alone documents in the case that sharing or using them in more digestible segments is preferred.

Please closely read this document and refer to it throughout your planning and application process over the next six months. This document is necessarily extensive and is designed to bring clarity and transparency to the application process. It is both user-friendly and detailed and should be helpful in answering questions for applicants and their communities as they navigate Oregon's most impactful education investment in three decades.

## Instructions for Submission

**Eligible applicants must submit a complete application during the application window of March 2 - April 15, 2020.** The only two ways an applicant can lose access to their non-competitive grant allocation is by 1) failing to submit an application by April 15, 2020 or by 2) not engaging and completing work to meet application requirements that need attention following ODE's review.

Applicants can expect to submit via a web-based tool. More information on the application portal is expected in February 2020. ODE will provide support to on-time applicants until they meet requirements, as long as applicants are productively engaged and responsive.

**Essential information to include throughout your application**

As you express the work and planning you've done, please be specific about the roles and ways you've engaged students, staff and families with attention to detail in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and the focal student groups that are named within the Student Investment Account legislation in the Student Success Act (see the ODE Engagement Toolkit for Guidance).

## Application Development and Support

All applicants have access to technical assistance for SIA planning and grant application development. Pre-reviews and peer-reviews prior to application submission utilizing ESD support and ODE staff is encouraged.

## Timeline and Important Dates

These suggested activities and corresponding dates act as a guide to help your district or eligible charter school stay on track to submit your application during the application window.

| Suggested Activity | Dates |
|---|---|
| Review the comprehensive guidance to learn about the component parts of the SIA Application. | December 2019 |
| Continue and complete planning processes while drafting each part of the SIA application.<br><br>Negotiate agreements with any charter schools invited to participate in the district's SIA application. | January 2020 |
| Provide an opportunity for public review and comments on your plan, budget and application. | February 2020 |
| Obtain school board approval of grant application and agreements with charter schools if applicable.[1] | February - April 2020 |
| Prepare application for submission. | March 2020 |
| **Submit complete application to ODE during application window.** | **March 2 - April 15, 2020** |

---

[1] Applicants are required to obtain school board approval of their grant application prior to submitting to ODE. While the grant application will include draft longitudinal performance growth targets, they are for review only.

## Step-by-Step Guide to Meet All Requirements

Here are 13 steps to guide applicants through the strategic planning requirements for SIA funds set out in HB 3427. This section is a resource for districts and eligible charter schools applying independently to use in self-directed processes. You are welcome to adapt or improve upon what is offered here.

### Steps 1- 5: Collecting, Considering and Reporting on Community Input

The Student Success Act (SSA) requires all eligible applicants for SIA funding to engage all staff 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. The steps that follow are designed to support an applicants' process to consider the input received by the broader community.

*Step One*
**Engagement Summary.** Describe who has been engaged. How have and are community member voices being represented or engaged directly? Assess your overall community engagement efforts, both strengths and challenges. During this initial step, revisit your needs assessment and district continuous improvement plan (CIP) to use the input and priorities identified within them to inform your SIA plan.

For Quick Reference: View the SIA Application Preview's section on community engagement and input for what you'll be required to submit.

___

*Step Two*
**Review Your Input.** Review the input you've collected and identify the words, phrases, ideas and suggestions that come up consistently. Identify patterns, trends and outliers. Note where your community identified strengths, challenges, and gaps. Ensure the voices of required engagement groups are emphasized in this review.

___

*Step Three*
**Cluster Your Input.** Organize your input to attend to and examine the connections with the priorities outlined in law. Identify input related or connected to meeting students' mental and behavioral health needs. Identify input related or connected to reducing disparities and increasing academic achievement.

___

*Step Four*
**Check Your Assumptions.** Determine what additional input, educational expertise, research and equity review you might need in order to be confident that the data and themes identified are accurate and representative of the community you serve.

Share back to your community, focal students and families and staff with a summary or consolidation of the input. This could identify "areas of agreement" and "areas of dissonance" or prioritization models to help show needs or places where there is tension that would benefit from continued engagement over the next year or 18 months.

*Step Five*
**SIA Planning**. Use the themes and input generated from community input to inform your district's or charter school's SIA priorities and planning, starting with strategies and leading into activities and investments.

For Quick Reference: View the [SIA Application Preview in Section Two](#) for what you'll be required to submit.

## Steps 6 - 8: Examining Disaggregated Data

You may have applied a similar process during your needs assessment process as a part of the development of your CIP. The purpose of steps 6-9 is not to simply duplicate that work, but to build off that work with attention to the focal population which the SIA calls out, along with the intent of these funds -- to reduce academic disparities and close achievement gaps and improve mental and behavioral health supports for students.

The bottom line: Don't repeat process for process sake; aim to move through similar steps for planning for SIA funds in a way that takes the purpose of the law and focal student populations into consideration throughout the process. If you have taken these steps, do not repeat them.

*Step Six*
**Identify Disaggregated Data Sources**. Select data sources you will review to understand and identify gaps in academic achievement and the focal student groups. Identify data sources you will review to understand more about student mental and behavioral health.

Examples of data sources for academic achievement may include: ninth-grade on-track; third-grade reading; graduation (on-time and 5th year completion); chronic absenteeism; and local data sources you select. Examples of data sources for mental and behavioral health may include: culture and

climate data; disproportionate discipline (behavioral referrals, suspensions, expulsions); early learning metrics; social emotional learning measures, self-regulation measures, Essential Skills, etc.

For Quick Reference: [View the SIA Application Preview's section on data sources](#).

*Step Seven*
**Convene an Inclusive Group to Review Data.** If you don't already have a process for data review, establish an inclusive team to review and make meaning of the data. This could be a district team or you could consider including families and students from focal populations, teachers, community-based organizations, service providers, administrators and school board members. Ensure a member of your team has data literacy expertise and intimately understands the data sources to assist with facilitation of this process.  For very small districts (less than 10 students) this could be a whole school conversation, not focused directly on student data but considering any patterns over time and how the school assesses student learning.

*Step Eight*
**Examine Data.**  Determine where gaps or challenges for focal student populations exist. Identify where the data reveal successes and strengths for focal student populations. Assemble other data sources needed to complete the picture of student experiences in your district or eligible charter school.

## Steps 9 - 13: Developing Your SIA Plan and Applying an Equity Lens or Tool

Your SIA plan must be for three years (2020-2023) and will name the strategies, activities and actions you believe will cause changes to occur and meet the two primary purposes of the SIA fund. Next year you will have the opportunity to update your plan for the upcoming four year time period (2021 – 2025). The steps below provide an initial starting point for how you might go about developing your plan.

*Step Nine*
**Consider the Recommendations of the Quality Education Commission.** Review the recommendations in prior reports to inform your decision-making. The [QEC reports](#) speak to emerging and best practices while naming essential areas of focus for continuous district and school improvement.

*Step Ten*
**Clarify Outcomes.** Specify what your district or charter school is prioritizing and hopes will happen for the focal student groups. Through your proposed investments, what changes do you hope will occur over the next three years by executing your SIA plan?

Consider working with this definition for **outcomes**: Changes in the behavior, relationships, activities or actions of the people, groups and organizations with whom a program or the district works directly.[2] You'll revisit this thinking in the development of longitudinal performance growth targets and a customized evaluation framework for your application.

---

*Step Eleven*
**Develop Strategies.** Identify strategies to support your district or charter school in generating the changes you would like to see. Here's strategy questions that can be helpful in your planning process:
- What will be done to produce an immediate output?
- What will be done to build capacity? What infrastructure is needed to succeed over time?
- How will sustained support, guidance or mentoring be provided? By whom?
- What will or needs to be done to change the physical or policy environment?
- How will you use media or publications to promote your work?
- What networks and relationships will be established or used for this to work?
- What strategies or practices do we need to add?
- What strategies or practices do we need to give up (those that have produced no results or require too much effort or too many resources relative to the results obtained)?

---

*Step Twelve*
**Funding SIA Plan Activities.** Define priorities to focus on for the next three years. Name the specific activities and investments you think will advance your strategies and priorities.

---

[2] Taken from "Outcome Harvesting" by Ricardo Wilson-Grau and Heather Britt and published by the Ford Foundation, May 2012. Located online at http://www.outcomemapping.ca/download/wilsongrau_en_Outome%20Harvesting%20Brief_revised%20Nov%202013.pdf

*Step Thirteen*
**Apply an Equity Lens or Tool.** Carefully think about the strategies and activities proposed and how they will impact the focal student populations. Apply an equity tool or lens to think deeply about unintended impacts on these groups and which needs may still be unaddressed. The Oregon Department of Education Equity Lens can be used or adapted if you don't have your own tool or policy for examining policy and planning decisions. This guide from Race Forward is also a useful starting point.

For Quick Reference: View the SIA Application Preview's section on your equity lens.

## Essential Notes on Allowable Uses

As you work to "pull the pieces together" in order to move through the process to apply for SIA funds, ODE recommends each applicant review the following notes on allowable uses for SIA funds.

### Very small districts are supported to apply for SIA Funds in Consortia

We hope that every school district in Oregon will participate in the Student Investment Account and benefit from the Student Success Act. For very small districts, those who meet the qualifications of 'floor funding' (at or below 50 ADMw) and where they see benefit in partnering with neighboring districts, ODE will allow for applying in consortia for SIA funds. If a consortia will reach a number higher than 100 ADMw in total, a request to apply in consortia must be received and approved by ODE's Office of Education Innovation and Improvement prior to application. Applications from a consortia still must be approved by each partnering school district's board and meet all other application requirements.

> ### *Entering in Consortia*
> Districts who meet the requirements to receive 'floor funding' are supported to join in consortia with districts that are within a shared ESD service area.

### Investments in Early Literacy and Social Emotional Learning
SIA funds can be utilized to make investment in early learning.

There is a significant body of research on interventions and supports to improve early literacy outcomes. This evidence suggests that there are strong benefits to supporting children's early literacy development as early as possible, before a child arrives at school. The evidence also suggests that lasting, positive effects on children's early literacy skills only occur when the interventions, or models, used are of sufficient quality and implemented with fidelity to support children's outcomes and to have lasting effects. The research also points to the importance of alignment of early literacy approaches across the pre-k to 3rd grade continuum, and underscores the importance of supporting emerging bilingual students' early literacy development in their home language in addition to English. Models that include families as partners in early literacy, like Kids in Transition to School (KITS) and Juntos Aprendemos, have proven to boost children's language and literacy skills, including in their home language.

Models that support children in the weeks or months prior to the start of kindergarten - like KITS, Ready Set Go or district-run kindergarten readiness programs – can boost children's ability to transition to school and learn literacy skills.

Questions regarding how SIA funds can be used for specific investments in preschool programs remain and are being considered by ODE, the Early Learning Division (ELD), the Governor's Office, and K-12 and community partners. Flexibility will be offered in the first year with encouragement that districts consider all ELD recommendations regarding effective investments and how to approach quality standards. What isn't clear at this time are any state planning or budget requirements regarding how SIA funds must be developed towards meeting shared quality learning aims and standards statewide. More information will be released as available.

## Evidence-Based Strategies for Class-Size Reduction

Class Size Reduction (CSR) refers to the practice of decreasing the student-teacher ratio as a way to increase the number of individualized student-teacher interactions in order to improve student learning. Numerous studies have been conducted on the effects of class size reduction, and while district and school leaders may question the cost-effectiveness of this strategy compared to other strategies they may employ, there is demonstrable evidence that CSR has a measurable impact on academic and non-cognitive outcomes for students, and in particular for historically underserved students when implemented well.

- Class Size Matters, a non-profit clearinghouse for information on smaller class size, articulated the following benefits of smaller classes in its 2016 publication Summary of Class Size Reduction Research.
- Large reductions in class size in grades k-3 (class size of 15 or less) had academic impacts evidenced four years later (Tennessee Study of Class Size - STAR).

- Four years of small class size in grades K-3 improved odds for graduating from high school by about 80% (Finn et al 2005).
- Students of color and those navigating poverty receive especially large benefits from reduced class sizes in terms of test scores, school engagement and dropout rates (Achilles 2012); (Wilson 2002).
- Positive effects of class size reduction are twice as large for students of color and those navigating poverty (Mathis 2016).
- Smaller class sizes significantly increase the probability of a student attending college, earning a diploma and earning a STEM degree (Dynarski et al 2013).

The majority of the research on class size reduction has been conducted in the early grades, particularly k-3. However, there exist a few controlled studies, including longitudinal studies, showing gains in student outcomes for smaller classes up through the eighth grade. In one example, (Mathis 2016) CSR at the intermediate grades are described to have shown gains in:

- Persistence and self-esteem
- Engagement
- Lower drop-out rates
- A possible correlation to performance on NAEP assessments

It is important to note that CSR, in and of itself, is not a silver bullet. Districts that choose to explore CSR must continue to provide professional development to support teacher efficacy, including ensuring that teachers are prepared to use techniques that are particularly suited to small class environments.

## Mental and Behavioral Health

At the heart of the SIA, (detailed in Section 13 of the Act) is the purpose of the grant funds, to:
1. **Meet students' mental or behavioral health needs**; and
2. Increase academic achievement for students, including reducing academic disparities for the focal student populations.

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Behavioral health is a general term used to refer to both mental health and substance use. Learn more here.

ODE and OHA anticipate jointly releasing a collection of potential investments and optional local metrics focused on supporting and addressing mental and behavioral health for SIA applicant consideration in January 2020.