# STUDENT SUCCESS ACT

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Student Investment Account Grant Application

**Q: When will the SIA grant application process be rolled out and when will districts be expected to submit applications to ODE?**

**A:** ODE will provide guidance on the SIA application process by the third week of January 2020 and anticipates the deadline submission to ODE will be March 2020. Rulemaking and other variables of early implementation need to be resolved for the date to be firm. Refer to the SIA Planning Guide for additional information.

**Q: What will be required in the SIA grant application submission?**

**A:** As required by the SSA, ODE will review all applications that:

- Identify which allowable uses will be pursued
- Describe how the allowed uses will meet student mental and behavioral health needs; increase academic achievement; and reduce academic disparities for students called out in the law.
- Describe how performance growth targets will advance outcomes for student populations called out in the law.
- Show evidence of how determinations have been made by engaging in strategic planning that includes input from the community (including school employees, students, and families from historically underserved groups)
- Describe how the application is informed by a needs assessment process and stakeholder engagement.
- Are aligned to your district's continuous improvement plan (CIP).
- Include data for equity-based decision making.
- Identify and addresses resource inequities.
- Describe how early stakeholder input was solicited and used in plan development.
- Are informed by the Quality Education Model Report.

ODE anticipates districts needing to provide: the inclusion of relevant budget plans, demonstration of approval by the governing body of the applicant at an open meeting following public presentation and opportunity for public comment, and showing connections/integration with local district Continuous Improvement Plans.

For this first SIA grant cycle, plans are for three years.

**For more information:** https://www.oregon.gov/ode/StudentSuccess

OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

## Staying on Track to meet all Requirements

**Q: How can districts stay on track to meet all requirements outlined in the Student Success Act (House Bill 3427)?**

**A:** For now, we recommend districts and eligible applicants create a filing system to hold documents and artifacts that would be helpful for completing an application process that is not yet finalized and will be shaped by stakeholders across Oregon. Here's one example of a folder structure and the kinds of files that we encourage be maintained until further guidance is issued:

| FOLDER | TYPES OF FILES |
|---|---|
| Needs Assessment | Survey data, meeting dates, sing-in sheets, photos/video, efforts to include specific communities, notes from meetings, any input collected, evidence of how information collected was included in the needs assessment. |
| Continuous Improvement | Long-term goals and metrics, strategies and action steps. |
| Strategic Planning | Show and document how determinations have been made through a process for consideration by engaging in strategic planning that includes input from the community (including school employees, students, and families from the focus groups identified). |
| Performance Growth Targets | Process notes for setting, data-considered, data monitoring tools for future tracking. |
| Considering QEM | Notes on considerations related to QEM. |
| Equity-based Decision Making | Any documents or other artifacts that demonstrate how decisions are made using an equity lens or equity decision tool. |
| Budget Planning | District and/or project plans that show budget structure, alignment to the plan, and monitoring systems. |

**Q: Does my school board need to approve my Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)?**

**A:** Prior to the Student Success Act (House Bill 3427), CIPs did not require board approval though board engagement and review was highly desirable and a best practice. The SSA does not require that CIPs be approved by school governing boards but it does require that applications for SIA funds show connections/integration with local district CIPs *and* that the application and strategic plans for SIA be

OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

presented to the school board at a public meeting with opportunity for public comment before being submitted.

**Q: We want to do this right. And we want to do this well. Where should we start?**

**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 create the strategic plan (CIP) and SIA application 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.

## Streamlining and Aligning Existing Efforts, Plans and Requirements

**Q: Our district is doing authentic community engagement and needs assessment work in ways that are actively informing strategic planning. How will we be asked to document or explain that work in our grant applications?**

**A:** Districts and eligible charter school applicants should gather documentation and files as suggested above to help review and consider where they are and how they may deepen engagement, particularly with staff, students and families as required by law.

**Q: What other processes should be considered for the strategic planning process outlined in the SSA and how should that be reconciled with other expectations or existing district plans and processes?**

**A:** Over this 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 strategic plans for SSA, CIPs, ESSA planning, and other important programs ranging from Perkins plans to High School Success (Measure 98). All that said, please feel encouraged to pursue directions that meet the aims and spirit of the Student Success Act and advance towards a more seamless system within schools, districts, and at the state-level.

**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.

**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 for Student Investment Account Funds

**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 (increasing instructional time, decreasing class size and caseloads, addressing student health and safety, and implementing a well-rounded education), contributes to meeting the required performance growth targets , and is informed by the community engagement, needs assessment, and strategic planning processes described in this toolkit and the law. Students should be receiving additional support through the use of these funds.