

# NESTUCCA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT SIA GRANT APPLICATION

## Part One: General Information

### Applicant

Nestucca Valley School District

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## Part Two: Narrative

### Plan Summary

Nestucca Valley School District is located in south Tillamook County on the north Oregon coast. Children who attend Nestucca Valley schools live in a number of small, unincorporated communities: Hemlock, Blaine, Beaver, Hebo, Cloverdale, Woods, Pacific City, Sand Lake, Tierra Del Mar, Oretown, and Neskowin. Schools in the district consist of an elementary school with 261 students, and a Jr/Sr high school with 226 students. Demographics of the student body are as follows: 69% white, 24% Hispanic, 5% multiracial, and 2% American Indian. About 81% of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch. We have a small, tightly knit staff. Many would be considered veteran, as they have worked in the district for more than 20 years. And like most small, rural districts, we have difficulty recruiting and retaining new qualified teachers.

Historically, district schools consisted of one high school located in Cloverdale, and three K-8 elementary schools located in Cloverdale, Hebo and Beaver. In 1996, we reconfigured schools so that there was one K-5 elementary school in Cloverdale, a 6-8 middle school in Beaver, with the high school remaining the same. The district passed a bond in 2005 to build a new high school, replacing the old high school at the same location. Unfortunately, we were forced to close Beaver Middle School following the 2008-09 recession, resulting in our current configuration of one elementary school for students in grades K-6 and a Jr/Sr high school for students in grades 7-12. However, after passing a bond in 2018, the district is in the process of upgrading and expanding the elementary facility, creating a school for students in grades K-8. The high school will revert to its original plan of housing students in grades 9-12.

Based on input from the community, disaggregated student achievement data, and other district data, Nestucca Valley School district has identified the greatest needs for additional resources to be supporting students' needs in terms of mental and behavioral

health, improving students' academic achievement, especially that of underrepresented students, and providing students a more well-rounded education.

One major challenge we are facing is adequately providing mental health supports to students. Adding staff who are expert in social emotional learning will be important to improving students' behavior and sense of wellbeing, improving academic performance, and ultimately improving graduation rates.

Another area for improvement is the literacy skills of our early learners, especially students with disabilities and students who are navigating poverty. Currently, the only pre-school option for families in the district is the Nestucca Valley Early Learning Center in Hebo, one which only a relatively small percentage of our families can access. This results in a majority of our students entering kindergarten underprepared for academic success, especially in terms of literacy skills. A portion of our SIA funds will be used to support a new district pre-school program. The pre-school will be housed in our elementary building in Cloverdale, newly expanded and renovated using district bond funds.

## **Part Three: Community Engagement and Input**

### **Overview of Community Engagement**

Being a small, rural district, our ability to engage with our families and community has always been one of our strengths. We began our SIA community engagement process in September 2019, when superintendent Misty Wharton made a presentation regarding the SIA funding process at a school board meeting. All board members and several community members were present. Over five months and through a variety of activities, we engaged: elementary students, secondary students, students with disabilities and their parents, students navigating poverty and their parents, homeless students, board members, parents, all district staff (certified, classified, administrators) and various other community members.

Information was disseminated and collected via presentations, social media, surveys, discussions, focus groups, and empathy interviews. The staff survey included questions regarding time for planning and analyzing student data, and ideas for closing the achievement gap for focal students. Student survey questions referenced how schools are meeting students' mental/behavioral health and academic needs, and suggestions for school improvement. The community survey requested feedback regarding the potential hiring of staff, after school and summer programming, pre-school, and expanding the district's CTE program. Empathy interviews included questions regarding barriers to academic and SEL supports for students and school improvement ideas.

We worked with several partners to engage the community, collect and analyze data, and compile it into this application. Northwest Regional ESD provided up to date

information on the process, guidance, and technical support in developing this plan. In addition, we connected with the Pacific City Chamber of Commerce, the South County Lions' Club, and the Neskowin Women's Club during our community engagement activities.

### **Self-Assessment of Community Engagement**

As previously mentioned, the small size of our district allows us to reach the majority of our stakeholders. Our goal was to make sure our community was informed of this opportunity for their students, and to gain insight in terms of what they believe would be wise investments of SIA funds in ways that meet the needs of all students. Because our parent teacher conferences are highly attended, we felt this was the best opportunity to reach the majority of our school community. The surveys we created were easy to complete and proved to be an effective way to gain insight as to what was important to our parents, students and staff. The small percentage that did not attend conferences were still informed via our other methods of reaching out. Our social media presence was effective in helping us spread information to all community members.

Although we feel like we did an effective job of informing the community about the SIA process, we realize that giving everyone the opportunity to provide input and actually getting feedback from all stakeholders are two different things. While the vast majority of staff members completed the survey, we would have liked to have had more parents and students complete their surveys. Similarly, it would have been beneficial to have more community members involved in focus and discussion groups, and empathy interviews. However, those kinds of feedback activities are time intensive, both in terms of collecting feedback and analyzing results. Another factor to consider is how best to gather feedback next year regarding the effectiveness of the investment activities we will be implementing. As a district, we are committed to maintaining the strong relationship we have with our community, and will work hard to improve ways for them to provide feedback to us.

In the future, Nestucca Valley will cultivate additional community partnerships to enhance the community engagement process, and further address the needs of our students and community. As we develop our own pre-school program, partnering with local pre-school providers will be crucial to serving our families well. In the same way, connecting with the ESD's Early Childhood Special Education group will help us build a strong program.

A resource that would help us continue to effectively engage our community is the continued regional support from Northwest Regional ESD. This could be in the form of sample surveys and other engagement tools, data computing and analysis services, and facilitators. Another area that would be helpful is to provide resources that help build strong relationships with higher education teacher preparation programs. We need more engagement with higher education programs in order to help us recruit and retain teachers.

## **Who was engaged?**

- Students of color
- Students with disabilities
- Students who are emerging bilinguals
- Students navigating poverty, homelessness, and foster care
- Families of students of color
- Families of students with disabilities
- Families of students who are emerging bilinguals
- Families of students navigating poverty, homelessness, and foster care
- Licensed staff
- Classified staff
- Community-based organizations
- School volunteers
- Business community
- Community leaders

## **How did you engage your community?**

- Surveys
- In-person forums
- Focus group
- Roundtable discussion
- Community group meeting
- Website
- Email messages
- Newsletters
- Social media
- School board meetings
- Partnership with unions
- Partnering with community-based organizations
- Partnering with faith-based organizations
- Partnering with business

## **Evidence of Engagement**

Parent Empathy Interview example

Special Board Meeting Agenda October 2019

All district Staff Meeting Power Point October 2019

Parent Survey

Parent Teacher Conference Sign in sheet Example (Redacted phone numbers and emails)

## **Strategies and Activities for Engaging Focal Student Populations and Their Families**

### Strategies:

As a district, we value the relationships that exist between our schools and community. Being a small, rural district it was important that we gathered meaningful, genuine feedback from our entire community. We did not want to go through the motions just to “check the box” for this application, but wanted our community to have a voice in how the SIA funds will be invested.

One strategy that we used to engage parents was to bring activities to places and events that already exist and that typically get high participation. We held Parent/Teacher conferences in November last fall, and had 100% participation. By providing space and time for parents to complete the engagement survey at conferences helped get high response rates. We received more than 300 survey responses.

One strategy that we used to engage students was to create feedback avenues that were both general and specific. On the one hand, we needed to hear from as many students as possible in order to understand what overall themes emerged from their responses. A survey was created for this purpose that was given to all students. On the other hand, it was important to hear from an individual perspective from some of our students from focal groups. In order to collect this feedback, a small number of focal group students were interviewed individually in order to gain their perspective.

### Activities:

The district administered three surveys in the course of our recent stakeholder engagement process. One survey was designed for students, one for district staff, and one for community members. The surveys could be accessed online, and were available in paper. Although specific questions varied slightly from survey to survey, depending on audience, each survey were designed to assess priorities in the four key areas of instructional time, student health and safety, class size and a well-rounded education. The district received over 300 responses to the surveys.

In order to get specific feedback from parents of focal group students, we conducted a series of empathy interviews. This included parents of students with disabilities, parents of students navigating poverty, and parents of students of color. Interviews were conducted over the phone by various district staff members. Interviewees responded to questions about supports for students in terms of academics and mental/behavioral health, students’ overall educational experiences, and ideas for improvement.

### **Strategies and Activities for Engaging Staff**

#### Strategies:

One strategy we used to collect staff feedback was to provide opportunity during contract time for staff to express their input. We understand that working in schools is demanding, and that most staff members feel as though there aren't enough hours in the day to do everything required to do a good job. To post a survey online and then expect staff to take it during their off hours is to ensure a low response rate, and probably one that is not representative of the larger population. In order to gain higher levels of response and fair representation, we offered staff the opportunity to complete the survey during staff meetings or team meetings.

A second strategy that we employed was to include different types of engagement activities, both anonymous and personal. The survey given to all staff, and responded to by most, gave staff members the opportunity to express their feelings anonymously, and hopefully honestly. In a small district like ours, where "everybody knows everybody", it is important to provide an avenue through which staff can express their feelings and ideas without being identified. At the same time, hearing individual staff voices is critical, especially from those teachers who work with students from our focal groups. The district held two all-staff meetings to inform, discuss and answer questions regarding the SIA process.

#### Activities:

One activity we employed to collect staff input was the survey described above.

Additionally, the district held two all-staff meetings to inform, discuss and answer questions regarding the SIA process. All staff participated in these meetings, and provided feedback through small group discussions and then reporting out to the whole group. In addition, time was given for staff members to ask any questions they might have about the SIA process, and how funds might be invested. Finally, staff who work directly with our focal group students were asked to share in ways that helped all staff understand how best to support our target students.

#### **Collecting and Using Input**

Not surprisingly, input from the community engagement process reflected a combination of areas the community appreciates about our district and areas they feel can be improved. People appreciate the small school atmosphere in Nestucca Valley, where staff know students as individuals, and parents feel they can approach teachers and administrators easily. It is clear from the engagement process that improving students' mental and behavioral health is important to all sectors of our community. This theme emerged from every group who provided feedback. Other themes emerged as well. A strong message from district staff was the need for children to enter kindergarten better prepared for success in school; i.e. having a formal pre-school experience. In terms of adding staff, the ideas that emerged were hiring more counselors, adding academic "success coaches", and hiring elementary specialists, such as science or art teachers. Students expressed the desire for increased CTE experiences.

The themes that emerged from the community engagement process were parallel to the results of the needs assessment and district leadership conversations leading up to the formation of the most recent district CIP. We clearly see the need to increase supports for students' mental and behavioral needs. Providing more academic supports and offerings to all students is a high priority as well. Students need to be better prepared for school as they enter kindergarten. Another priority is to increase help for students in two focal groups – students navigating poverty and students with disabilities. Students in those groups regularly underperform in relation to all students. The plan to invest our SIA funds target support for students in those two focal groups, and at the same time increase help for all students' behavioral, mental, and academic needs.

## **Part Four: Data Analysis**

We reviewed the following data: ODE data sources – district and school report cards from 2014-15 through 2018-19, suppressed and unsuppressed student data; Nestucca Valley SD data sources – EASY CBM K-8 math and ELA data, behavior referrals, ELL and SpEd progress report notes, CIP; community input – survey results, empathy interviews, round table discussions. All these data points were reviewed in summary, but were also disaggregated to highlight disparities between groups. From examining this data and applying our equity lens, areas of improvement for the district became apparent. The needs that arose from our community engagement process largely mirrored the needs that emerged from reviewing data related to student achievement, behavior, and mental health. That alignment created clarity in how to invest our SIA funds for the next three years.

## **Part Five: SIA Plan**

### **Outcomes**

Based on disaggregated data, community engagement feedback, QEM recommendations, Nestucca Valley School District CIP, the Equity Lens, and evidence-based educational practices, the following Outcomes emerged:

**All students will graduate from high school on time, ready for college, careers and civic life.**

**All PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will demonstrate typical or higher growth and achievement in reading.**

**Students and staff will experience an equitable increase in feeling safe, connected, supported, and valued.**

### **Strategies**

**Provide academic and career/college readiness supports to students with disabilities and students navigating poverty.**

This Strategy supports Outcome #1, directly for students of focal groups, but will be beneficial for all students as well. It will help increase early learners' literacy skills (Outcome #2), and will help improve students' sense of feeling connected and valued (Outcome #3)

### **Develop and implement a district pre-school program.**

Currently, the only pre-school options for families in the district are private pre-schools. In this Strategy, the district will create space for a pre-school in their new PreK-8 building using bond project money. Pre-school staff will be hired using SIA funds. This Strategy will support early learners' literacy skills (Outcome #2). It will help students and staff connect (Outcome #3), and will eventually help students be more successful in high school (Outcome #1).

### **Increase supports for the physical, mental and behavioral health of each Nestucca Valley student.**

The feedback from students, staff, and families is clear: the district needs to increase support for students' mental and behavioral health. SIA funds will be used to hire three additional staff members who will provide these supports across all grade levels. This Strategy advances Outcome #3 by helping students and staff feel supported and valued. It will help secondary students be more successful in high school, and be more prepared for next steps (Outcome #1). Additionally, meeting students' social/emotional needs will result in higher academic achievement (Outcome #2).

### **Activities**

#### **Hire a 1.0 FTE secondary College/Career counselor; aligns with Strategies #1, #3.**

The district currently has a single counselor to support students in all grade levels. This Activity hires a counselor to serve secondary students as a College/Career advisor, and to provide other academic help to students. The secondary principal is responsible for implementing this Activity. This investment is for school years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23. Priority level: High

#### **Hire a 1.0 FTE elementary counselor/SEL Specialist; aligns with Strategies #1, #2, #3.**

This person will provide valuable social/emotional and academic support to students in our elementary building. The elementary principal is responsible for implementing this Activity. This investment is for school years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23. Priority level: High

#### **Hire a 1.0 FTE elementary Intervention Specialist/Science teacher; aligns with Strategies #1, #2, #3.**

This person will provide academic intervention support to elementary students who are not meeting grade level standards. In addition, they will teach "Science Specials" to elementary students, building a foundation for the district's strong secondary Science program. The elementary principal is responsible for implementing this Activity. This investment is for school years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23. Priority level: Mid



**Hire a 1.0 FTE Pre-school teacher; aligns with Strategies #1, #2, #3.**

The district will implement a full day pre-school program in tandem with the current Pre-school Promise Program (currently at Nestucca Valley Early Learning Center in Hebo). The new program will be housed at the new Prek-8 Nestucca Elementary School facility. This person will be the certified pre-school teacher. The elementary principal is responsible for implementing this Activity. This investment is for school years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23. Priority level: High

**Hire two 1.0 FTE Pre-school IA's; aligns with Strategies #1, #2, #3.**

This Activity is to provide two IA's for the new district pre-school program described above. The elementary principal is responsible for implementing this Activity. This investment is for school years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23. Priority level: High

**Purchase CTE Resources for grades 6-12; aligns with Strategies #1, #3.**

One theme that emerged from the community engagement process was the desire from students and families for the district to offer more high interest, hands on learning experiences. This Activity will provide resources to support the district's current CTE programs at the secondary level. The secondary principal is responsible for implementing this Activity. This investment is for school years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23. Priority level: Low

**Priorities**

Plan A: The following are our highest priorities for Year 1:

- Hire a 1.0 FTE secondary College/Career counselor
- Hire a 1.0 FTE elementary counselor/SEL Specialist
- Hire a 1.0 FTE Pre-school teacher
- Hire two 1.0 FTE Pre-school IA's
- Hire a 1.0 FTE elementary Intervention Specialist/Science teacher

Plan B: Should the district not be able to hire qualified staff into the positions listed above, SIA investments will include the following:

- Purchasing resources for CTE programs in grades 6-12

**SIA Integrated Planning Tool**

**Budget**

**Equity Lens**

**Longitudinal Growth Goals**

## **Part Six: Use of Funds**

### **Allowable Uses**

- Increasing instructional time
- Addressing students' health and safety needs
- Evidenced-based strategies for reducing class size and caseload
- Expanding availability of and students' participation in well-rounded learning experiences

### **Meeting Students' Mental and Behavioral Health Needs**

- Increasing instructional time
- Addressing students' health and safety needs
- Evidenced-based strategies for reducing class size and caseload
- Expanding availability of and students' participation in well-rounded learning experiences

### **Describe how you will use SIA funds**

The district plans to use SIA funds to add personnel who work directly with students, and to create additional learning experiences for students by creating a new pre-school program. To provide for students' mental and behavioral health we will use funds to hire two additional counselors, one at the elementary level and one at the secondary level.

To support students academically we are planning on using SIA funds to hire an elementary Science teacher who will also provide academic support to students. We will hire a secondary College/Career counselor, and create a new pre-school program at our PreK-8 elementary school. In addition, if funds allow we will purchase CTE resources for students in grades 6-12.

### **Addressing the Needs and Impact on Focal Student Groups**

In a district the size of ours (about 30 students per grade level), any system change impacts all students. So even though the focal student groups we are targeting are students with disabilities and students navigating poverty, all students in our district will benefit from the investments we are making with SIA funds. Adding counselors at both the elementary and secondary levels will certainly provide target students with valuable mental/behavioral health and academic support, but will help all students feel safe and more connected to school. Similarly, hiring an elementary teacher to provide academic interventions will boost all students' academic achievement, but will be especially helpful for students from focal groups.

The same can be said for the additional learning experiences that SIA funds will help create. Focal group students will benefit greatly from having the opportunity to attend

the new district pre-school, especially since they are the ones whose families can least access the current pre-school program. But the nice thing is, with the new program all students will enter kindergarten better prepared for success in school. Similarly, the new science and CTE learning experiences students will have because of SIA investments will benefit all students, including students from focal groups.

### **Barriers, Risk, Choices**

The primary barrier we see to the success of our SIA Plan is a possible reduction in funding from ODE because of the COVID-19 shutdown. With that being said, we have prioritized our plan listing what our high priorities are. We will strive to fill these positions first and if funds are reduced only fill high priority positions.

Another barrier could be qualified applicants for positions. For instance we may be unable to find a counselor applicant that is a fit for our vision. We would then shift to placing for of our resources in the early learning focus. We have created flexibility in our plan to account for barriers that may present themselves, leaving us with viable choices to guide our work.

### **Part Seven: Documentation and Board Approval**