

2020 Clackamas County Educators' Legislative Forum: STUDENT SUCCESS UPDATES

Engagement

To recognize and honor our broad and diverse communities, our districts collectively have spent thousands of hours engaging with those communities over the past several months to explore the educational needs of our underserved students. Activities included:

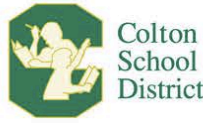
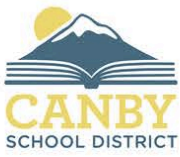
- Dozens of community meetings and listening sessions, including partnering with multiple stakeholder groups to reach out to underserved populations
- Multiple focus groups and small-group sessions with students of all ages and affinities, families, staff and community members
- Intensive digital outreach that generated thousands of responses, including community and student surveys, and social media strategies such as Facebook Live sessions
- Intensive efforts to reach out to underserved families and community members by meeting them "where they are" (apartment complexes, faith communities, personal phone calls) in one-on-one or small-group conversations, often incorporating translation assistance

Specific examples of successful and meaningful outreach efforts in individual districts included:

- Coordination with the local Catholic Church in **Molalla** to meet with Spanish-speaking families after Spanish Mass on Sunday
- An online survey in **Lake Oswego** that attracted more than 3,000 participants, including strong representation from historically underserved individuals thanks to personalized outreach efforts
- One-on-one empathy interviews and focus groups with historically underserved populations in **Oregon City**
- Multiple affinity group meetings with middle and high school students in **Estacada, Colton, Oregon Trail, Gladstone and Canby**

Our entire education communities – from administrators to teachers to students – have been engaged in planning and implementing our outreach efforts. We also have heavily used our existing stakeholder groups within our schools and communities (sometimes even paid consultants) to help us brainstorm and facilitate outreach – their involvement has helped tremendously in getting excellent quantitative and qualitative feedback.





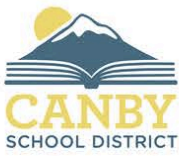
We invested in comprehensively analyzing existing data to augment/compare what we learned in our community outreach efforts. In particular, we collaborated with Clackamas ESD to develop a complete picture of the current student experience in each of our districts that includes data on:

- Academic achievement
- Chronic absenteeism
- Discipline
- Culture and climate
- Early learning metrics
- Social-emotional learning measures
- Self-regulation measures
- Essential skills

We have engaged many of our stakeholders in helping us study our findings to help prioritize our community needs. Key learnings below have strengthened our commitment to ongoing community engagement to ensure continued conversations about our planning and implementation:

- Existing structures for communication create a solid foundation that can be coupled with innovative approaches for best outreach results
- Connecting with underserved populations and building their trust is a challenge and will take a long-term commitment
- Personal interaction (face-to-face or on the phone) where real dialogue can occur is exceedingly meaningful, but very time-intensive
- All of those who have participated in this process – especially students – have provided rich, thoughtful feedback that will make our Student Investment Account plans truly reflective of the most critical needs in our community





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Accountability

We are grateful for the enormous investment in our public schools that the Student Success Act is making possible, and are equally aware of our responsibility to steward SSA resources wisely to ensure they are achieving the aspirational results expected of our education system.

True systemic change will occur over a period of years, but even as we focus on long-term results we will monitor all stages of success, sharing our progress with our communities. We are committed to the practice of “targeted universalism,” in which all students can benefit while focus is placed on specific student groups. We are dedicated to pursuing a range of outcomes, such as:

- Changes in policy and practice
- Changes in student participation and access to programs and courses
- Changes in adult behavior, practices or beliefs

Strong communication will be critical to helping our communities understand the multiple investments being made through the SSA to improve access and opportunities for traditionally underserved students.

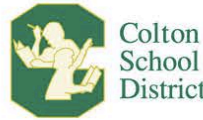
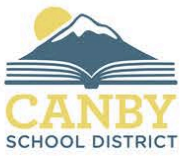
Our districts already are planning many ways to keep stakeholders informed of progress, and to continue to build understanding, partnerships and trust. Specific communications will include:

- Digital tools, such as websites, online crowdsourcing sites and social media forums
- Regular community engagement opportunities at meetings of school boards, city councils, service organizations and parent advisory councils
- Student newsletters, staff meetings and other communications
- Regular engagement with news media to share stories of impact

In addition, we will continue to focus on time-intensive, customized outreach to underserved communities, as we develop our Student Investment Account grants and action plans.

Our individualized outreach plans – from measuring mental and behavioral health through the Healthy Teens Survey in **Molalla River** and **West-Linn Wilsonville**, to developing individual leader scorecards that monitor and measure results in **Estacada**, to documenting improvements in specific areas such as increased student attendance and staff diversity in **North Clackamas** – will focus on highlighting strategic, methodical progress that is making a daily difference in the lives of students.





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Equity

Our collective community engagement processes over the past few months have deepened our knowledge about existing needs to reduce academic disparities and improve mental/behavioral health, and also exposed new areas of focus. Key themes that emerged:

- The use of an equity lens and the support of community partners who can help us engage with historically underserved populations are critical supports in gathering information and building trust
- Clear populations of focus include students experiencing disabilities, English language learners, students navigating poverty, and students in underserved races and ethnicities
- The need for additional mental health and behavioral support is strong across our student populations

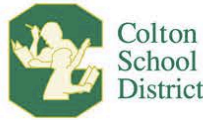
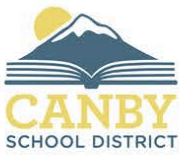
A few specific examples of what our individual districts have learned about improving academic outcomes for underserved students:

- How increased use of disaggregated data (discipline rates, absenteeism, college application rates, etc.) can better inform teaching, learning and leading in **Colton** and **Gladstone**
- The difficulty in finding a consistent pattern for SSA support needs in **North Clackamas**, based on comprehensive input and data
- How blended and online learning options may provide new avenues to skill proficiency in **West Linn-Wilsonville**
- The need to do more equity training **across our region**

Attempts to improve equity are not new to our districts, but the SSA will allow us to dramatically expand our efforts, and more purposefully implement supports that will help students thrive. In particular, our staff, students and communities are excited about opportunities to:

- Eliminate achievement gaps in all areas, from improving reading and math at the elementary level to raising graduation rates
- Increase the diversity of our teachers and workforce to reflect our school communities
- Expand culturally responsive pedagogy and curriculum, and offer more professional development that fosters high-quality instruction and personalized relationships
- Increase individualized attention, and expand learning opportunities and alternative pathways to success (such as through enhanced CTE)
- Offer more academic and extracurricular activities that develop social wellbeing





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Funding

The Student Success Act represents an historic investment in Oregon's K-12 schools. It also is a promise we have made to our students and their families; they are now expecting enhanced education funding that delivers results, and we are obligated to deliver.

Our districts have invested thousands of hours over the past several months in explaining this new investment to our communities; generating excitement about the opportunities it will provide to improve academic achievement with key student groups and enhance students' mental and behavioral health; and creating Student Investment Account grant applications. We are taking an "equity stance" with this funding and have set high expectations for results, and we cannot backtrack.

There remains uncertainty about how much funding will be released to districts in summer 2020 (making it difficult to plan for significant investments), and whether the state will fulfill its promise to our students.

Toward that end, we believe:

- It is critical to fully fund the SSA to better meet the needs of each of our students
- Funding must allow us to achieve short-term results while we are aiming for long-term goals
- Funding must not be subject to economic or political cycles, so that we can sustain the efforts we are instigating to develop more inclusive educational practices, expand mental health support and eliminate academic disparities
- The state must develop reasonable expectations to access these funds to ensure they are focused on students and achieving results, not on administrative functions

