

## Student Investment Act Grant Application Ashwood School District #8

<b>Part One: General Information (Application)</b>	
School Year	2020-21
District	Ashwood School District #8
Institution ID	427
Webpage ( <i>Where SIA Plan will be Posted</i> )	<a href="http://www.ashwood.k12.or.us">www.ashwood.k12.or.us</a>
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### **Part Two: Narrative**

The Ashwood School District is composed of a classic one-room schoolhouse located 30 miles northeast of Madras, OR. Our district serves students in grades K-8, with five students currently enrolled at the school and two students attending Culver schools. Our students are all white, include one boy and four girls, and attend school Monday – Thursday. The parents drive their children to school, with one family traveling 16 miles round-trip and the other family traveling 1.5 hours round-trip. The school district reimburses the families for their mileage. Our two 6-12 grade students are transported by the district to the Culver School District, which is an 81-mile round-trip commute for these students.

Ashwood School is located in a ghost town in Jefferson County. With a city population of 50 and an area population of 1,319, the local residents are ranchers, with agriculture the backstay of the economy. The median age is 42, and 99% of the population is white.

Our families and students value the individualized academic opportunities available in our rural school for K-8. Once the students move on to middle and high school, our students face numerous challenges with learning how to integrate into a larger school and how to navigate the social complexities relevant in schools. Imagine transitioning from Ashwood to a middle school with 280 students. Key challenges include students feeling isolated, lacking skills to approach friend groups, and being unprepared socially for a larger school. All our students are challenged by all the unique attributes of living in a rural community. The current enrollment is 100% white, with no one identified as living in poverty.

The Ashwood School District is committed to equity, inclusion, and diversity. We strive to provide a safe, healthy, supportive learning environment for all students. Our goal is to provide a high-quality education, to create a lifetime love of learning, and to ensure that all students fulfill

their potential, become career and college ready, and meet goals as defined by state and federal standards. We look to our staff, parents, and community to help us support the success of our students as they progress through the educational system.

After extensive efforts to listen to our students, families, staff, and community and study our student outcome data and experiences, the Ashwood School District has committed our Student Investment Act (SIA) funding to increasing social and emotional support and increasing access to a well-rounded education for the students in our rural community.

### **Part Three: Self-Assessment of Community**

The engagement process included a community survey, a meeting with parents, and targeted meetings with students and staff. The tools were offered in English, which aligns with our population, with the goal of making all the participants feel comfortable to share their needs, barriers, and experiences. All the engagement tools were modeled from the SIA Community Engagement toolkit for community engagement.

A community survey was launched in December to 325 residents through emails. The school partnered with the Ash Butte Grange to expand the number of residents surveyed. Grange members include local residents, retirees, and previous residents in the area. On January 20, 2020, all of the parents attended the community input session.

Staff input included our classified staff and principal/head teacher. All staff members were encouraged to participate and provide written and verbal feedback. Students were surveyed through a group input session during the school day and additional comments added to our confidential comment box in the classroom.

This extensive community engagement process, along with staff comments, data, and survey results, helped define themes and areas of need for our Student Investment Account plan. In addition, we reviewed the local metrics and student data, which highlights areas of stability, areas of success, and opportunities for growth to help improve efforts to attain excellence and equity for all our students. The final report will be presented to the community, school board, and staff in March 2020.

The greatest strengths identified were implementation of individual education plans, controlled internet access, supplemental learning opportunities and programs, strong partnerships with the community, and the quick response when addressing problems.

Suggestions for improvement were offered by the parents, staff, and community, and the areas were consistent. The results from the community engagement process were used to establish themes to guide our plans for the Student Investment Account funding.

Common themes identified included:

- Expanding the SEL (social and emotional learning) support systems, including counseling, professional development for staff, and family education opportunities;

- Need for district-provided transportation for all students or extended school day to provide equitable access to education and opportunities;
- Need for additional staff to provide more differentiation and focused time for all students to ensure their academic success;
- Expanding the number of professionals available to interact with students to provide access to courses such as PE and Art;
- Creating a culture of safety and respect for all students and adults that supports their social, emotional, and physical well-being.

**What relationships and/or partnerships will you cultivate to improve future engagement?**

The Ashwood School District has a long history of cultivating partnerships to improve our work. Given the rural isolation of our community, we must rely on our local residents, organizations, and neighboring school districts to improve our students’ success rate. Our solutions must align with local resources. Ashwood plans to explore new partnerships with the Culver or JCSD 509-J School Districts and Jefferson County social service organizations to expand services to our students.

A team composed of representatives from the staff, community, and families will help guide the implementation of the SIA plan. Participation in the High Desert Education Service District’s “Regional Educator Networks” (REN) and the Jefferson County Education Service District REN will also provide resources and collaboration to Ashwood.

**What resources would enhance your engagement efforts? How can ODE support your continuous improvement?**

Ashwood, like many very small, rural districts, has only a few staff members who provide all the education services needed to run the district. As a result of this staffing limitation, and the time needed to plan and deliver engagement activities, it can be somewhat challenging. Fortunately, due to the high amount of community and family involvement in our school, we believe we have opportunities to have authentic engagement and will be able to continue to engage in systematic feedback.

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) can support our engagement processes and continuous improvement by supporting the unique needs of our very small district through outreach and collaboration.

**Who was Engaged? Select all of the community members / groups you engaged for this process:**

- Families of students navigating poverty, homelessness, and foster care
- Licensed staff (administrators, teachers, counselors, etc.)
- Classified staff (paraprofessionals, bus drivers, office support, etc.)
- Community Based Organizations (non-profit organizations, civil rights organizations, community service groups, culturally specific organizations, etc.)
- School volunteers (school board members, budget committee members, PTA/PTO members, booster club members, parent advisory group members, classroom volunteers, etc.)

- Business community
- Community leaders

**How did you engage your community?**

- Survey(s) or other engagement applications
- In-person forum(s)
- Focus group(s)
- Roundtable discussion
- Community group meeting
- Website
- Email messages
- School board meeting
- Partnering with community based partners
- Partnering with business

**Evidence of Engagement**

Artifacts uploaded

**Tell us why you selected the artifacts you did. How do they show evidence of engaging focal student populations, their families and the community?**

The attached artifacts clearly illustrate the Ashwood School District’s efforts to engage our student populations, their families, staff, community organizations, and the overall community on how the district can best support our students. These artifacts show how we offered different ways for our community to provide input into the development of our SIA plans. From ensuring that input was welcome from the population, to offering input instruments that offered anonymity, to a survey targeted at our students, to well-attended public input sessions, our district is working hard to engage the community in our plans.

**Describe the activities (at least two) that you executed to engage each of the focal student groups and their families present within your district and community.**

The Ashwood School District surveyed our students through a classroom interactive group input session during the school day and provided the opportunity to offer additional comments through our confidential comment box in the classroom. Given the small size of our student population, the students also frequently provide informal feedback to staff and their parents.

We also plan to survey our students in March using the CASEL guide to school-wide SEL. These results are incorporated into our Student Investment Act plan and help guide the development of a coordinated strategy across the school, home, and community. In partnership with families and communities, schools play a critical role in supporting young people’s social and emotional development. The SIA Team (staff, board, parents, and community) felt like these engagement tools offered the best method for gathering student input.

As previously stated, the engagement of our parents and families included a community gathering, an emailed survey and email follow-up, and discussion at our school board meetings. A summary of the community engagement process was posted on our website in March.

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

The district hosted a series of engagement activities, including a community online survey, a community meeting, and a targeted meeting for staff. A variety of tools were offered with the goal of making all the participants feel comfortable to share their needs, barriers, and experiences.

Staff input included a group meeting with staff and written and electronic feedback. All staff members were encouraged to participate. A targeted input session for teachers and classified staff was offered.

Our SIA Team, composed of representatives from the staff, community, and families, will help guide the implementation of our SIA plan. Resources for staff development through all stages of implementing our SIA Plan will be available through ODE, partnering with other school districts and the Jefferson County Education Service District, and REN.

This extensive community engagement process, along with staff comments, data, and survey results, helped define themes and areas of need for our Student Investment Act plan. The district's Oregon Report Card student data is very limiting due to the low student population. The SIA Team will work with ODE on the establishment of progress markers. The final report will be presented to the community, school board, and staff in March 2020.

### **Collecting and Using Input Describe and distill what you learned from your community and staff.**

The Ashwood School District learned from our community, students, and staff that overall everyone is happy with the academic opportunities available in Ashwood yet challenged by the reality of the academic disparities that occur in a rural community.

All the results from the community input are being incorporated into our SIA planning. A summary of what we learned from our community and staff includes:

- Expanding the SEL (social and emotional learning) support systems, including counseling, professional development for staff, and family education opportunities;
- Need for student transportation or extended school day to provide for equitable access to education and opportunities;
- Need for additional staff to provide more differentiation and focused time for all students to ensure their academic success;
- Expanding the number of professionals available to interact with students to provide access to courses such as PE and Art;
- Creating a culture of safety and respect for all students and adults that supports their social, emotional, and physical well-being.

For example, one component of our plan includes expanding the SEL support systems. Our SIA plan includes providing counseling services for our students. This service will be offered through contracted services from a neighboring school district or outsourced through a service provider in Madras like BestCare. Another option is offer counseling services to our students when they are transported to Culver schools for school or other activities.

Ideally, the services would be offered on site a few days a month so our students trust the counselor and have the opportunity to interact with the provider in both formal and informal environments. We also plan to expand the professional development opportunities for our staff and education opportunities for our families and community. An integrated, community-wide approach will be implemented.

#### **Part Four: Data Analysis Sources**

##### **Describe the data sources used and how the data informs equity-based decision-making.**

In the fall of 2019, five years of SBAC scores were reviewed by staff and each learner was assessed by the head teacher. Teacher anecdotal information, performance data from software curriculum, DIBELS scores, and student, community, and parent surveys were included in our review. Student outcomes were examined by grade level, gender, SES, and rural location to inform equity-based decision making. Generalizations were provided in engagement sessions to protect the privacy of students in our small district.

Data for our SIA application was obtained through note-taking at community, parent, and student engagement meetings to capture whole group discussions. Individuals submitted individual responses on a two-page questionnaire. A community online survey was offered, with open and close-ended questions. Student input was collected through a classroom group input session and comments left in our confidential comment box in the classroom. Students also frequently provide informal feedback to staff and their parents.

#### **Part Five: SIA Plan**

The Ashwood School District completed the optional SIA Integrated Planning Tool. This tool provides elements for continuous improvement planning, including outcomes, strategies, activities, priorities, and alignment with the budget. Each of those elements is aligned to multiple documents reflecting the long-standing continuous improvement efforts. The district is aligning the SIA planning process with our existing Continuous Improvement Plan. Alignment is highlighted by ensuring that the five strategies developed in our SIA plan align with the goals and strategies identified in our Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).

The district has used the Strategic Investment Priorities (equity planning tool) worksheet to ensure that our strategies also align with the planned equity priorities and available resources. The input and results from the community engagement process are also incorporated into our SIA Plan. All these elements bridge the needs of our district and the investment of funds with the framework required in the SIA planning and application processes.

The district has worked hard to ensure that our SIA plan is realistic, aligns with our resources and CIP, and supports the academic success of our students. These documents support our SIA Plan and explain how the SIA investments strategically align with meeting the needs of our rural students.

The following identifies each of the strategies in our SIA plan and the planned activities to support the specific strategy.

**Strategy #1:** Integrate SEL training into the professional development for staff, implement evidence-based strategies, and build an organizational culture to support staff, students, and community that is critical to academic and professional success.

All aspects of our work support this strategy. Plans include retaining a contracted counselor to support the students at the elementary school and to provide services to students in grades 6-12 who transition to the Culver School District. The counselor will provide up to six hours of services monthly on site at the Ashwood Elementary School and work with the counseling staff at the Culver School District to ensure that our transitioning students are accessing the services they need. The plan also includes professional development training and support for our staff, implementation of our first SEL survey for students in the spring of 2020, and purchasing additional Second Step SEL materials for our staff, families, and students.

The plan is to sustain the counselor at six hours per month and provide ongoing SEL professional development opportunities over the next three years. For example, the Rural Schools Network Consortium plans to offer SEL forums.

**Strategy #2:** Ensure that students have regular, district-provided transportation so that they have equitable access to experience academic achievement and a well-rounded education.

All our elementary school students are transported to school by their families, with mileage reimbursed by the district. The round-trip commute time ranges from 10 minutes to 1.5 hours twice per day, four days a week. All of our parents run family businesses, and the lack of transportation provided by the district causes major conflicts for families and equity issues. The plan includes utilizing one of the two activity vehicles owned by the school and hiring a part-time driver to pilot our new transportation plan in 2020. Our two 6-12 grade students are transported by the district to the Culver School District, which is an 81-mile round-trip commute for these students. If the district is not able to provide transportation for our students or the pilot program is not successful, we will explore extending the school day to allow more time and flexibility for the families over the next three years.

**Strategy #3:** Provide additional staff and professional development to ensure academic success for all students.

The district plans to hire a .4 FTE educational assistant (EA) to increase differentiated and focused time for students and increase the staff resources in the classroom. The EA will also reinforce the lessons presented by the teacher, and help the teacher with other tasks like

administering assessments, record keeping, and tracking attendance. The district feels this position will provide a critical foundation for achieving our SIA plan. This strategy also includes staff training and other evidence-based professional development, training in 6+1 Writing Rubric, and adoption of standards-based ELA curriculum. Both of these activities will help the district achieve the annual growth goals identified in its CIP.

**Strategy #4:** Provide opportunities for student success through expanded access to programs beyond the classroom curriculum.

Planned activities include forming partnerships with other school districts and organizations to offer after school-activities, summer school, field trips, outdoor school, etc. Participation in the new Rural Education Network (REN) being facilitated through the High Desert Education Service District will offer another opportunity for our district to collaborate and share limited resources.

**Strategy #5:** Adopt and implement evidence-based reading foundations curriculum, and assess and monitor student progress to ensure academic growth toward reaching grade level goals.

An identified gap in ELA is the students' acquisition of reading foundations skills and the availability of evidence-based curriculum materials. The head teacher will identify materials that will match learner needs and create instructional time to teach students these critical skills. The inclusion of reading foundations instruction will strengthen students' reading performance and assist them in reaching their grade level goals.

The outcomes included in the integrated planning tool clearly align the strategies with the activities and outcomes.

Outcomes:

- Students will have what they need to develop to their full social, emotional, and academic potential while at Ashwood Elementary School and are prepared to transition successfully to middle school;
- Staff are prepared and trained to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of the students;
- Academic achievement, in reading and writing, will increase, and any disparities in achievement will be reduced for students residing in the rural Ashwood School District;
- District-provided transportation for all students to and from school will ensure that students have equitable access to academic achievement and a well-rounded education.

Implementation of this plan will put equity at the forefront of all our work. Through raising awareness of implicit bias and education around equitable teaching practices, we anticipate improvements in both the planning and delivery of lessons.

### **SIA Integrated Planning Tool**

Integrated Planning Tool uploaded

## **Budget**

SIA budget uploaded

## **Equity Lens or Tool**

The Ashwood School District has completed a strategic investment priority plan to align our SIA plan, budget, priority areas, surfacing equity needs, and academic achievement and mental and behavioral health needs.

The students at Ashwood Elementary are 100% white. The academic disparities our students face are related to a rural community. The resource allocation and strategic investments in our SIA plan will have a positive impact on all our students and reduce the opportunity gap. Our school district intentionally involves all our stakeholders in our work, including the development of the SIA plan. With seven students, the staff and board are aware of all the race, ethnicity, and language data of our students. The staff plans to participate in equity training offered through ESD and other regional networks.

Reference the attached strategic investment priority (equity lens) for specific information on how each investment area advances student mental and behavioral health while increasing academic achievement. The barriers to more equitable outcomes are the geographic location of the rural school and limited resources (potential employees and funds for school) due to the size of the school district.

The district is also utilizing the Oregon Integrated Systems Framework (ORIS) assessment for the Ashwood School District. The assessment showed that the district needs support for teaching social and emotional skills (indicator 4.3) and for assessing and supporting physical and emotional health needs (indicator 5.2). These areas for improvement were also identified in the district's community engagement process, and they are among the district's top priorities for use of the SIA funding and plan, in addition to academic growth and achievement needs in English Language Arts, as outlined above.

Equity Lens uploaded

## **Draft Longitudinal Growth Targets**

Due to the size of Ashwood School District, we do not have the data available to develop these targets. The district will work with ODE to establish progress markers.

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

**Allowable Uses. Which of the following allowable use categories is your plan designed to fund within?**

- Increasing instructional time
- Addressing students' health and safety needs

- Expanding availability of and student participation in well-rounded learning experiences

**Meeting Students Mental and Behavioral Health Needs. Identify which allowable use(s) will be designated to meet student mental and behavioral needs.**

- Addressing students' health and safety needs
- Expanding availability of and student participation in well-rounded learning experiences

**Describe how you will utilize SIA funds to address the needs and impacts on focal student groups.**

The district's largest expenditure is \$26,319 to support academic achievement and growth for our students. We have used local assessments, community engagement, and evidence-based studies to support this investment of funds. Key areas include providing additional instructional support in the classroom and enhancing the use of curriculum to enhance reading and writing achievement. We must improve our partnerships to leverage limited resources and opportunities for our students and staff. New networking opportunities are being planned for the 2020-21 school year for rural school districts in Central Oregon. The district views these networks as an efficient way to share resources and offer new academic opportunities for students and staff. Lastly, providing district transportation for students to and from school will remove the burden on families and address some of the current inequities our students face by living in remote, rural areas.

The district is committing approximately \$6,900 to address the students' mental and behavioral needs. The district recognizes the challenges our rural school district presents for our students and families. Rural families live a unique and different life style than families in larger populated areas. This disparity is further enhanced by academic opportunities afforded to students due to location, resources, and student demographics. Once students complete 6th grade, they can stay at Ashwood K-8 or transition to a larger middle school 40 miles away. These students need the social and emotional support and skills to adapt to their new environment. Offering counseling services for our students and SEL training and resources for our students, staff, and families is a critical step in helping our students achieve academic success. Staff will further develop their SEL training through PD and networking opportunities.

Student Investment Act funding is our district's opportunity to address the significant challenges faced by a rural school district and its students.

**Part Seven: Documentation and Board Approval**

Evidence of Board Approval uploaded

**Part Eight: Public Charter Schools (if applicable)**

There are no charter schools in Ashwood School District #8.

## **Applicant Assurances**

Ashwood School District #8 makes the following assurances:

- Adherence to the expectations for using its Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) needs assessment to inform SIA planning;
- Input from staff, student focal groups, and families was used to inform SIA planning along with other community engagement input;
- Student data was used during the SIA planning process;
- The recommendations from the Quality Education Commission (QEC) were reviewed and considered;
- Ashwood School District's SIA plan is aligned to its CIP; and
- Agreement to provide requested reports and information to the Oregon Department of Education.