

## Student Investment Account Grant Application WCS

A special acknowledgement to Clackamas Education Service District for creating the initial version of this form and sharing it for modification and use as a statewide tool.

Part One: General Information (Application)	
School Year	2020-21
District	Wahtonka Community School
Webpage <i>(Where SIA Plan will be Posted)</i>	<a href="https://www.nwasco.k12.or.us/domain/151">https://www.nwasco.k12.or.us/domain/151</a>
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### Part Two: Narrative (Application)

Wahtonka Community School is an independent charter school in The Dalles, Oregon. Our fiscal sponsor is North Wasco County School District 21. We are applying for SIA grant funding independently and directly with the Oregon Department of Education. We have identified the following areas for improvement:

- 1) Chronic absenteeism- we have a goal to increase our regular, full day attendance for all enrolled students. This goal is identified in our CIP plan and we have made significant progress on this goal, which we want to build on for further success.
- 2) Graduation Rate- We have an identified goal to increase the graduation rate for both 4- and 5-year cohorts.
- 3) Wahtonka is a CTE/STEM focused charter school, and both charter school status and our CTE/STEM focus are new, so we have a need to build and develop our CTE/STEM curricula/courses, internship/mentorship opportunities, community and business partnerships, and to promote the new focus and offerings of our school.

**Demographic Data:**

Wahtonka currently has 26 students enrolled. We have 4 freshmen (three identifying as White, one Latinx; 3 identifying as transgender male, one transgender female). We have three sophomore students (two transgender female, one transgender male; two White, and one multiracial (American Indian/White)). We have twelve junior students (six transgender male, three transgender/gender non-conforming/gender fluid), three transgender female); two identifying as Latinx, two as American Indian, seven as White, and one as multiracial. We have six senior students (one transgender female, one transgender male, and four transgender male); six identifying as White.

We have approximately 67% free low-SES/free and reduced qualifying students and we are a Title 1A identified school.

## Student Investment Account Grant Application WCS

### Part Three: Community Engagement and Input (Application)

#### **Engagement**

We mailed home a paper copy of questions to parents, along with a letter inviting them to share their answers and additional thoughts, ideas and concerns with us. We emailed the questions as well and sent home the invitation to participate via the Remind app to our WCS parent group. We held a Parent Night and we talked with parents in person and invited them to answer the questions at this event if they had not already shared their thoughts with us. We hold family meetings regularly and we are proactive in our relationship building with families and students through regular communication via email, phone and meetings.

We are holding a community wide Open House in early March to meet more community stakeholders and interested families. At this event, we will be available to share information about our school, and we will invite participants to share their perceptions and ideas about Wahtonka Community School, including what they feel are critical needs in our current school ecosystem (in our area) and their experiences in schools to date.

We currently hold regular stakeholder meetings for our after-school program, bringing together parents, teachers, principals, students, program staff, and instructional partners to problem solve and to guide the programming for the elementary age students that we serve daily at our high school campus. During these meetings, we talk about how our high school and after school programs work in the same space, both synergistically and separately, to best serve all students.

We have active partnerships with Columbia Gorge Community College, Story Gorge, LLC, Google, the Petersburg School site/WCS school garden (Dufur School District), Underground Music Station, Gorge STEM Hub, The Dalles Art Center, and other individuals and businesses as needed for student interviews, internships, and career talks.

#### **If the goal is meaningful, authentic and ongoing community engagement, where are you in that process? What barriers, if any, were experienced and how might you anticipate and resolve those issues in future engagement efforts?**

We leveraged our personal and one-to-one relationships with students, parents and staff to conduct empathy interviews and have community conversations about perception of the needs and the strengths of Wahtonka Community School. We hold family meetings regularly and we are proactive in our relationship building with families and students through regular communication via email, phone and meetings. We currently hold regular stakeholder meetings for our after-school program, bringing together parents, teachers, principals, students, program staff, and instructional partners to problem solve and to guide the programming for the elementary age students that we serve daily at our high school campus. During these meetings, we talk about how our high school and after school programs work in the same space, both synergistically and separately, to best serve all students.

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

We will continue to include our students and families in meaningful dialogue to ensure their voice is represented. We have active partnerships with Columbia Gorge Community College, Story Gorge, LLC, Google, the Petersburg School site/WCS school garden (Dufur School District), Underground Music

## Student Investment Account Grant Application WCS

Station, Gorge STEM Hub, The Dalles Art Center, as well as other individuals and businesses. We will continue to actively engage and dialogue with these groups as well as individuals in order to better meet their needs and the needs of our learners and their families.

### What resources would enhance your engagement efforts? How can ODE support your continuous improvements?

We have created an interactive website, for students, families and the community. They can find staff biographies, upcoming events, and school board meetings. This will add to our engagement efforts. ODE can continue to support our continuous improvement efforts through open direct communication and funding.

### Who was engaged, and how did you engage them?

Select all of the community members / groups you engaged for this process:

- 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 (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.)
- Tribal members (adults and youth)
- 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

Other \_\_\_\_\_

### How did you engage your community?

Select all of the strategies / activities you deployed to engage your community:

## Student Investment Account Grant Application WCS

- Survey(s) or other engagement applications (i.e. Thought Exchange)
- In-person forum(s)
- Focus group(s)
- Community group meeting
- Website
- Email messages
- Newsletters
- Social media
- School board meeting
- Partnering with unions
- Partnering with community based partners
- Partnering with faith based organizations
- Partnering with business
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Evidence of Engagement:

- 1) Student interview
- 2) Student interview
- 3) Parent interview
- 4) Staff interview
- 5) Picture of our butcher paper/post its
- 6) Summary Report of 14 student interviews- LGBTQIA+, inclusion & equity focus

### **Why did you select these particular artifacts to upload with your application? How do they show evidence of engaging focal student populations, their families and the community?**

We selected student interview, parent interview, staff interview, and a summary report as our artifacts to upload as they are an accurate representation of engaging with our focal student populations, their families and the community.

**Describe at least two strategies you executed to engage each of the focal student groups and their families present within your district and community. Explain why those strategies were used.**

We used surveys, in person forums and empathy interviews.

## Student Investment Account Grant Application WCS



We are a small community, therefore we leveraged our personal and one-to-one relationships with students, parents and staff to conduct empathy interviews and have community conversations about perception of the needs and the strengths of Wahtonka Community School.

**Describe at least two activities you executed to engage each of the focal student groups and their families present within your district and community. Explain why those strategies were used.**

We had a parent open house and conducted one on one interviews. Our turnout and the information we received was helpful in drafting our SIA Plan. We used these to learn and understand the needs of our students and their families and how our school could better meet their needs.

**Describe at least two strategies you executed to engage staff. Explain why those strategies were used.**

We used empathy interviews and focus groups to engage staff. There are five certificated staff members, and one classified staff. We used these strategies to ensure our staff's voices and views were a part of the plan. Staff went through the entire SIA process to create the plan they were instrumental in synthesizing the information we collected.

**Describe at least two activities you executed to engage staff. Explain why those strategies were used.**

We are fortunate in that we have a small community, of both students and staff, and we can engage individuals through talking with one another and direct communication on a daily basis. Staff were asked to complete questions about their experience teaching at WCS and about their ideas about our needs, thoughts on the school and students/families, and concerns/areas for improvement.

**Describe and distill what you learned from your community and staff. How did you apply that input to inform your planning?**

- **What we learned from student engagement:**
  - 1) Nearly all of our students indicated that they feel safe and very accepted at WCS.
  - 2) We have several students who indicated that they have missed school, or not wanted to come to school due to experiencing depression and/or anxiety.
- **What we learned from staff engagement:**
  - 1) Staff feel that mental health services are of critical importance for our students.
  - 2) Staff feel proud of the work that they do at WCS and they are mission-driven.
- **What we learned from parent/guardian engagement:**
  - 1) Many parents/guardians have seen positive changes in their children that they attribute to the experiences that they are having at WCS.

## Student Investment Account Grant Application WCS

- **What we learned from board engagement:**
  - 1) Our board members feel that WCS is an inclusive and supportive educational environment for WCS students
  - 2) There is a feeling among the board that WCS feels different than other schools, when you enter the school, it feels like a place where students can thrive and there is a real sense of connection and community.
  - 3) The board feels that the board functions well as a team
  - 4) The board wants to support WCS in continuing to provide high quality project-based and hands-on learning experiences for students and to continue to help WCS to grow in CTE/STEM focused instruction.
- **What we learned from community engagement:**
  - 1) There is a need for educating the greater community about how Wahtonka Community School is different than it has been in previous years, and overcoming the perception linked to the name and location as a significant part of the gap in understanding that it is now a STEM/CTE focused charter school (the board gave the same feedback overall).

This information was used to write our SIA Plan, we identified the following areas for improvement:

- 1) Chronic absenteeism- we have a goal to increase our regular, full day attendance for all enrolled students. This goal is identified in our CIP plan and we have made significant progress on this goal, which we want to build on for further success.
- 2) Graduation Rate- We have an identified goal to increase the graduation rate for both 4- and 5-year cohorts.
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### **Describe the data sources you used and how that data informs equity-based decision making.**

- 1) We analyzed empathy interviews from students, staff, families, and board members
- 2) We analyzed attendance data

We learned that there is a general perception of safety, acceptance, and support across all of our historically marginalized student and family groups (LGBTQ+, Latinx, students of color, low SES). We learned that many of our students feel that their own mental/emotional state is a barrier to full day attendance (identified depression and/or anxiety as a reason school has been missed). We learned that we have greatly increased the number of regular attending students who attend for the full school day, while we still have a critical need to increase graduation rates and enrollment.

**Part Five: SIA Plan**

## Student Investment Account Grant Application WCS

**Your SIA plan must be for three years. It should name outcomes, priorities, strategies and activities that you believe will cause changes to occur and meet the two primary purposes of the SIA fund. It also should reflect the choices you made after pulling all the input and planning pieces together for consideration. Your SIA Plan serves as an essential snapshot of your expected use of SIA funds.**

[WCS SIA Integrated Planning Tool](#)

### Equity Lens

**You are uploading the equity lens or tool you used to inform and/or clarify your plan. Describe how you used this tool in your planning work.**

The staff and board of WCS are committed to equity work personally and professionally. Our executive director, Stacey Shaw is currently a doctoral candidate in the Lewis and Clark College of Education and Counseling Doctorate of Educational Leadership in Social Justice and Equity program. She has dedicated her long career in education on teaching through an equity lens, particularly with regard to Latinx and ELL student advocacy. Two of our three teachers also focus on equity work. Jocelyn Paris, with a particular focus on LGBTQ+ student advocacy and Kieran Connolly, with a particular focus on racial equity. That being said, each staff member has strong skills and is very committed to working for equity for all students and families and all members of historically marginalized and underserved focus groups. As a staff and board, we spent dedicated sessions of our CIP process specifically on our personal and school equity work using the Oregon Department of Education's Equity Tool

### Part Six: Use of Funds (Application)

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

**Describe how you will utilize SIA funds to meet students' mental health needs, increase academic achievement and reduce academic disparities for the focal student groups called out in the law.**

SIA funds will be used to contract with existing mental health providers and local agencies to offer social emotional education to our students, including self-regulation strategies, to provide education and access to community resources, and to provide mental health support. Funds will also be used to increase student engagement and increase academic achievement through the creation and ongoing delivery of high quality project-based classes, particularly focused on CTE, STEM, and content area

## Student Investment Account Grant Application WCS

courses focused on supporting all students to meet graduation requirements while also developing life skills, growth mindset, and the skills and plan needed to be career and college ready after graduation.

**Describe the potential academic impact for all students AND the focal student groups based on your use of funds in your plan.**

WCS has a culture of support and safety for all students, including and in particular historically marginalized students (LGBTQIA+, second and multiple language learners, low SES, non-White and non-dominant culture etc.). Our entire student population needs assistance to address and overcome multiple barriers to access to high-quality education. These barriers include, but are not limited to lack of transportation, food scarcity, unstable living conditions, dual or multiple language barriers, low SES. Our students are also resilient and highly capable. We will use SIA funds to assist our students in addressing and overcoming barriers to graduation and to post-high school success. We will use funds to support internship placements, college course tuition/dual credit opportunities, and attendance support, including home visits/family liaison activities as needed. If we provide these supports with SIA funds, then students will feel and be more supported and engaged in their learning. If they are more engaged in their learning, then their academic performance will show growth.

**What barriers, risks or choices are being made that could impact the potential for focal students to meet the longitudinal growth targets you've drafted, or otherwise experience the supports or changes you hope your plan causes?**

Please note that due to the small size of Wahtonka Community School, we are not required nor will we be submitting Longitudinal Growth Targets.

At this point Covid 19 would be the biggest barrier to our being able to meet our goals. The pandemic limits the in class interactions with other students and teachers, particularly with anyone outside of their cohorts. In addition, it could impact attendance, in the event students and staff contract the illness.

Part Seven: Evidence of Board Approval  
(Application) (Application)

[Board approval.](#) Minutes of Board Meeting