

River's Edge Academy Charter School

Items funded through SIA:

Community Engagement Position
Instructional Assistant
Food Service Manager
Mental Health Support

Reporting Questions:

1. What changes in behavior, actions, policies or practices have you observed related to SIA implementation during the 2021-22 school year? How do you see these changes contributing to the goals and outcomes in your SIA plan?

One of our goals is to create a culture of safety and well-being where students' basic needs are met, so that they can focus on academics and learning. To support that goal, we partnered with the Rogue River School District (RRSD) to hire a mental health counselor to work with students in crisis. Though we ended up replacing the counselor (see challenges, below) having someone on campus to support fragile students was key in getting those students to attend and perform in class

In addition, we hired a food service manager and implemented our own food service program, serving breakfast and lunch on campus. Offering meal services, especially given the high rates of food insecurity among students, is an important step in creating feelings of security and helping improve attendance and academic performance.

Another goal is to improve students' connection to school which, we believe, will lead to higher academic success. To help us achieve that goal, we hired an instructional assistant to support K-2 reading. With the additional support, we were able to provide more individualized and small group instruction. We also hired a community outreach liaison to connect families to our school (see question 3). That person's role is to deepen and sustain relationships with the community, families, students, and staff. Finally, to better connect students to school, we wanted to provide more learning opportunities.

2. What barriers or challenges to SIA implementation have you experienced that are helpful for your community and/or state leaders to be aware of? What adjustments, if any, did you make to your SIA plan as a result of these challenges?

Though we experienced challenges in implementing our strategies and activities, we were able to overcome them by making adjustments. For example, we found that we were spending too much time keeping track of receipts for food and supply purchases. To solve that issue, we moved food purchasing to our general fund where it's easier to track and draw from. That change freed up approximately \$10,000 to support a higher salary for a highly qualified instructional assistant who had experience working with younger children in reading.

In addition, due to few candidates, we weren't able to hire a mental health counselor until April. Once hired, we discovered that the person was not a good match with our school community. We decided not to partner with the RRSD and, instead, hire on our own. We were fortunate to find a person that met our needs. That person started in May, and completed the school year.

3. SIA implementation includes ongoing engagement with all students, focal students, families, staff, and community partners. How have relationships with or between those groups changed and/or been maintained throughout this academic year? Consider the Community Engagement Toolkit [https://www.oregon.gov/ode/StudentSuccess/Documents/69236_ODE_CommunityEngagementToolkit_2021-web\[1\].pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/StudentSuccess/Documents/69236_ODE_CommunityEngagementToolkit_2021-web[1].pdf) and where your efforts might land on the spectrum as you complete your response.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) activities were conducted with parents, community members, staff, board members and students. Our Community Engagement Director organized listening opportunities for parents, community members, and students. Those opportunities took place at local coffee shops, classrooms, and Zoom meetings. Surveys were designed and used based on guidance from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). Parents, students, and staff participated in surveys. Through those activities, we learned the food program was a high priority and that lunches were both delicious and appreciated. Students were even sharing pictures of their lunches with friends from other schools. Participants also wanted a more well-rounded education that includes more in-person learning opportunities for their child and more stability in staffing. Through our efforts, we have been able to bring families back to campus and have seen greater community engagement through various events and opportunities. We also hired a Community Engagement coordinator to help us develop and implement a Community Engagement plan. Finally, when we look at one of the matrices in the ODE Community Engagement Toolkit, we see ourselves fluctuating between a “3” and a “4” (Consult and Involve; page 10). This year, we will continue to use the Toolkit to reflect on and improve our community engagement efforts.

4. As you think about what guided your choices and prioritization efforts in this year of SIA implementation, what stands out? How will what you’ve learned this year impact future SIA implementation efforts?

It was a high priority to have a highly qualified instructional assistant supporting our K-2 reading program. We partially funded food purchases with SIA and the remainder from the general fund. The plan for the following year is to fund the food and supplies from the general fund and community donations. This will allow us to hire a more experienced instructional assistant with a higher salary who’s helping to make an impact on student reading scores. We have learned the importance of providing a safe and nurturing environment for students and the importance of healthy school meals in providing that environment. Also we discovered the value in listening to and deepening relationships in our community. Asking for community input into how SIA funds are spent was instrumental in how funds were allocated.

Budget:

	21/22 Budget	21/22 Spent
Allocation	\$134,756.86	\$134,756.86
Part-time Food Service Manager	30,200.00	29,526.65
Food Program - Food & Supplies	14,256.86	4,267.21
Community Connection	44,300.00	73,050.38
Mental (shared with RRSD)	20,000.00	2,999.98
Instructional Assistant	26,000.00	24,912.93
	134,756.86	134,756.86