

## Portland Public School Year Two SIA Plan

### Narrative Response to Questions for Community Engagement, Equity, and Input June 30, 2021

#### 1. Describe how you engaged your focal student groups, their families, your staff, and your broader community to inform the SIA plan update for this cycle. (500 words)

PPS is in continuous partnership with its community through a variety of strategies, which include engaging advisory groups as well as culturally and linguistically specific community based partners, conducting focus groups, and integrating student intern and student council leadership and voice into decision making and planning processes.

This past year, PPS conducted engagements to inform Forward Together: PPS's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, Inclusion and Excellence (Strategic Plan), which is foundational to our SIA plan. The Strategic Plan engagement was grounded in the tenets of critical race theory (CRT) and included both qualitative and quantitative data using surveys, assessments, and focus groups.

During October and November 2020, PPS conducted focus groups with Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students. The focus groups were facilitated by staff of color, and in some cases BIPOC student interns to create a trusted and connected space. Students were asked the question: "what is not working for you?". Additionally, PPS staff partnered with the District Student Council to administer and bolster response rates for student surveys.

Staff focus groups were facilitated by staff of color and asked educators for input on the Strategic Plan. About 90-95% of educators in the focus groups were of color. The educators included a range of experiences as well as staff providing social, emotional, and mental health supports to students, such as counselors and social workers.

Additionally, there was a Strategic Plan Advisory group that included about 100 district and community leaders, including BIPOC students interns who facilitated and supported various parts of the feedback sessions. The PPS staff spanned a broad range of functions, levels, and departments across the district.

Another notable engagement that informed SIA planning is the LIPI/hybrid study (*A Qualitative Analysis of Portland's Multilingual and BIPOC Students' and Families' Lived Experiences During COVID*, March 2021.) To better understand how to adapt and improve our services, PPS administered a census of our K-5 families and incorporated one question that asked families to indicate, "any additional needs [their] students may have." PPS used interview and focus group protocols with questions about barriers faced during comprehensive distance learning, barriers and feelings about returning to in-person learning, and recommendations for the district from families regarding accessibility to services and supports. PPS researchers, community agents, and student engagement specialists completed focus groups with multilingual and BIPOC families receiving language access services with 19 family members, 12 students, and 88 family phone interviews in November and December 2020.

Eight program staff serving students through PPS RESJ partnerships were also interviewed in February and March 2021. The interviews covered exploratory questions about how students and families were impacted by COVID-19 and school closures, and the overall implications for students' social, emotional, and mental well-being. We intentionally did not interview families in January due to the ice storm, socio-political climate, pandemic surge, and other engagements underway.

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Finally, the Successful Schools Survey, which is a measure of school climate and culture, was used as a broader measure of social-emotional health and safety.

#### **2. How did you build or adjust on your community engagement efforts from last year? (500 words)**

The [RESJ Equity Lens](#) and tenets of Critical Race Theory were applied throughout the engagement process to center racial equity in our decisions and approaches in order to create increased opportunities for all students by evaluating burdens, benefits, and outcomes to underserved communities.

There was a particular focus on elevating BIPOC student voices. We continuously asked ourselves how we can engage more deeply with students, especially those who have been disproportionately impacted by systemic inequities. We also challenged ourselves to remove adult filters through student partnerships.

Adjustments in the community engagement process are elevating/centralizing roles for BIPOC student interns and the District Student Council, providing additional supports for staff of color to engage students, and working with students to generate questions and guide the conversations with their peers.

Improving the feedback loop was also important. We focused on crafting the Strategic Plan and now the implementation process to create ongoing feedback loops that reflect learnings from our engagements and track progress over time.

We will continue to adapt our engagement strategy. By student request, we are looking into ways to bolster centralized supports for student affinity groups rather than just relying on schools with affinity groups in place.

For the LIPI/Hybrid survey, phone banking allowed broader reach with our multilingual families and resulted in an 85% response rate.

PPS also built capacity for community engagement through professional development, formalizing new systems, and expanding the community engagement team.

#### **3. Who else did you engage with this year who you didn't engage with last year? (500 words)**

As described in the previous questions, there was more centering of students through a variety of one-time as well as ongoing formal and informal roles integrated into the process.

We were able to more broadly reach multilingual families through phone banking.

#### **4. Did you use the same equity lens/tool as last year (yes/no)? If no, please upload your new equity lens/tool**

-YES

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**5. Summarize how the equity lens/tool was used, by whom, and when it informed the SIA plan adjustment or amendment. (500 words)**

The PPS RESJ Equity Lens was used as an anchor for senior leadership throughout the strategic planning process to make decisions and inform approaches used to finalize the plan.

Leaders continuously checked biases, analyzed questions and narratives for unintended impacts and reflected on positional authority, safe spaces, and other approaches to empower and elevate voices from bottom to top. Responses in previous questions outlined various approaches with student, family, and staff voice.

PPS leaders had to continuously balance the use of the lens with burn out and limited capacity to do more.

**6. Optional: Please include any other information or input that informed any adjustments or amendments to your SIA plan for the next two years.**

Due to the closure of Opal Charter School, ODE instructed PPS to submit an amendment to the SIA plan.

Additional changes in the PPS Year Two SIA Plan include:

- Shifts in language represented in the June 2021 draft of the Forward Together: PPS's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, Inclusion and Excellence (Strategic Plan).
- Passage of the bond that has allowed us to purchase several of the curriculum materials that we had previously earmarked in the year one SIA plan.
- Clarified language in our key activities so they represent a sustained three year investment instead of one year.

Please see the 2021-2022 Integrated Planning Tool for a detailed crosswalk between our March 2020 SIA Plan submission and the updated Year Two SIA Plan.

**7. Optional: Please share how you're prioritizing using SIA funds to support the Legislature's encouragement to address student's mental and behavioral health needs. Please also include the actual amount that you're allocating for this purpose.**

Addressing social, emotional, and mental health needs remain one of the three PPS SIA priorities. This priority was identified as part of a comprehensive needs assessment that has included ongoing community engagement. The other two priorities are racial equity and social justice and closing the achievement and opportunity gaps for our historically underserved students.

For year two, PPS is investing over \$10 million of SIA grant funds (or the equivalent of 32% of the preliminary allocations) in activities directly supporting student's mental and behavioral health. There are additional investments in community-based partnerships and other activities that are supporting mental and behavioral health needs as part of an integrated system of supports.