



SSD Integrated Program

Annual Progress Reflection 2023-2024

Q: As you review your progress markers/overall reflection responses and reflect on plan implementation, how do you see your progress contributing to the Outcomes and Strategies in your plan and your Longitudinal Performance Growth Targets (LPGT)/Local Optional Metrics (LOM)? Discuss at least one Outcome where you have seen progress in implementation.

A: The Sisters School District team is steadily advancing toward achieving the Outcomes and Strategies outlined in our plan, closely aligned with our Longitudinal Performance Growth Targets (LPGT) and Local Optional Metrics (LOM). Significant progress has been made in social-emotional learning (SEL), particularly at the elementary level. Our focus on maintaining small class sizes and fostering strong relationships has enhanced student-teacher connections, creating a supportive learning environment. Additionally, the addition of a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) and other staff members has contributed to increased student engagement and mental well-being, laying a solid foundation for future academic success. Data shows promising outcomes across all levels. Grade Level Student Success teams operate in every building and at each grade level, providing essential support to students. These teams meet regularly, analyzing attendance, grades, and behavioral data to ensure comprehensive support for all learners.

At the elementary level, our targeted practices have supported struggling learners so effectively that we currently have no students in the "at-risk zone" (also known as the "red zone") in kindergarten and first grade. We continue to see reductions in the "at-risk zone" across other grades as well.

At Sisters Middle School, the grade-level success teams meet regularly to implement student-specific interventions across the grade levels and to develop intervention classes for sustained student support. In part due to the development of these programs, Sisters Middle School achieved an 18% increase in reading comprehension scores over a one-year period.

At the high school level, improvements in our graduation rate and on-track status for freshmen are ongoing and continue to remain above 95%. Notably, our students with disabilities and historically underserved students are graduating at nearly the same rate as the overall student population, highlighting our commitment of inclusion.

Q: Where have you experienced barriers, challenges, or impediments to progress toward your Outcomes and Strategies in your plan that you could use support with? Discuss at least one Outcome where you have seen challenges or barriers to implementation.

A: Our School District's experience with the Integrated Program process highlights both our strengths and challenges in preparing students for life after graduation. While the program aims to improve attendance and academic performance through a structured 12-step process with rigorous oversight, it often reinforces outdated models that prioritize compliance and uniformity over creativity and personalized learning.

A key lesson is that our system largely follows external expectations, where curriculum decisions reflect the views of policymakers and advocacy groups rather than students' individual needs and interests. This approach limits our ability to build a student-centered model driven by curiosity and passion, as students are not fully engaged in shaping their own learning journey.

Throughout our allocation of SIA, HSS, EIs, and Early Literacy funds, it became apparent that traditional schooling methods still dominate. Although we aspire to be "student-centered" and "innovative," our actions sometimes miss these ideals. This misalignment isn't due to a lack of desire for change but stems from a system deeply embedded in historical norms, making it difficult to break free from long-standing conventions.

Additionally, strict state and federal regulations restrict our creativity. These guidelines, while essential for accountability, limit our ability to experiment with new ideas that could better serve today's rapidly changing educational needs. Educators often lack the time and support necessary to explore, innovate, and implement strategies that could benefit students more effectively.

Moving forward, we urge the Oregon Department of Education to support districts in fostering educational innovation that values self-discovery and personalized learning. We urge ODE to reach out to other states such as our neighbor, Washington, who allows waivers in instructional time and credits to entice school districts to be creative and explorative. By embracing adaptable, student-driven approaches, we can create environments where students thrive in a world that values adaptability, creativity, and process thinking. To fully prepare students, we must prioritize modern, flexible education systems that build strong relationships and support individual growth.