



## **Student Investment Account Year 2 (2021-2022) Annual Report**

### **Items Funded through SIA:**

- Diversity Advocate
- Counselor
- Educational Assistants
- Heritage Celebrations

**What changes in behavior, actions, policies or practices have you observed related to SIA implementation during the 21-22 school year? How do you see these changes contributing to the goals and outcomes of your SIA plan?**

### **Highlights from our SIA funding:**

- School Counselor working directly with students on site three days a week.
- Educational assistants have supported teachers and provided additional support in the classroom and during unstructured times (recess, lunch, hallways, arrival & dismissal).
- A fourth educational assistant has allowed for a full time kindergarten aid. This provides opportunities for more individualized and focused instruction and a 1:11 staff to student ratio.
- Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Coordinator (Diversity Advocate) has been instrumental in creating a space where all students belong.
- Staff receive on-going training on culturally responsive teaching and practice.

Cottonwood ended the 21.22 school year feeling more settled back into in-person learning and pleased that we have been able to continue to uphold and invest in our top priorities. With the support of SIA funding, our student to staff ratio went up (19:1 to 14:1) which supported our students as well as our staff, resulting in strong staff retention for the following year and full enrollment. We were able to increase the hours of our much celebrated part time counselor, add two educational assistants and bring on a diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging coordinator for the 22.23 school year.

The Cottonwood School is committed to improving students' mental and behavioral needs, increasing academic achievement and reducing academic disparities through the SIA investments. The mental and behavioral needs of students increased during the pandemic and due to SIA funds we were able to directly address the needs with a caring wrap-around approach. Our staff felt prepared and supported

with new resources provided by SIA funding. Studies show that the increase in social emotional support given by highly qualified staff improves the social emotional and mental and behavioral health of students.

**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?**

The greatest barrier we faced in implementing our SIA Plan as originally designed was the reduction of outside support. We had planned to secure a daily food service at Cottonwood with SIA funds, but have not been able to find a service ready or willing to expand and add us to their deliveries. We do not have the space for a kitchen on site so we are reliant on outsourcing. Our plan is to continue to promote this opportunity in hopes of finding a meal service to partner with.

**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?**

Our engagement with multiple stakeholders is continually improving. This year we improved our outreach to focal student families with direct outreach to our BIPOC families and students with IEPs. We also used a greater variety of activities to get input: survey, personal contacts, affinity groups, interviews, Zoom Q&As and listening sessions. In addition we formed an indigenous advisory board that we met with 4 times over the course of the school year to support our place-based mission.

As we have been able to bring families back on campus, we have seen the desire for the community and families to get involved. Through various events and opportunities, we have reengaged more families throughout the year. Our reopening of school last year with open house, parent conferences, an all school sing-along and essential volunteers were a wonderful way to reconnect with our community.

**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?**

Cottonwood continues to center our commitment on our school mission, building strong relationships, minimizing screen time, getting outside, emphasizing active, hands-on learning and celebrating diverse voices. We have learned to place more efforts on building our family outreach opportunities and to continue to focus on what opportunities we can bring to the Cottonwood School community for every student to feel like they belong and can find their success.

