



South County Collaborative 12-month Report

This 12-month Report on the operations of the South County Collaborative (SCC) reflects another old adage of “two steps forward and one back” although as you will see below, we believe the ratio is actually much better than that! One of the primary goals of the South County Collaborative was to be able to secure additional funds and support – effectively leveraging and sustaining the initial SRWC funds - to keep the community focused on the educational needs of our youth and making impactful investments to help them graduate from high school. Probably the biggest news over the past six months is that we were able to secure a major grant (Integrated Community Partnership Grant from the Oregon Department of Education) that moves that effort forward immensely. Here is a more detailed rundown of recent activity:

Sunriver Women’s Club allocated funds (\$50,000 allocated)

Mentoring (\$16,000 total allocated, \$16,000 total spent)

Friends of the Children Central Oregon (\$8,000) – FCCO is a relatively new organization with a unique mentoring model that hires full-time mentors who work with a caseload of eight children starting in kindergarten and stays with them until they graduate from high school. They used the \$8,000 of SCC funds to help hire one of two full-time mentors which will allow them to provide high quality mentoring services for 16 students in La Pine. FCCO is currently raising funds to secure another two full-time mentors for South County which will give them the ability to serve a total of 32 students. SCC submitted a letter of support for a successful grant application to the Ford Family Foundation.

FCCO will receive \$10,000 of funds through the Integrated Community Partnership grant and they will use that to support their new Education Program Manager position. This position was created/hired in April 2023 and continues to expand their capacity to provide academic support by supporting youth with 1:1 tutoring and serving as a liaison between caregivers and school staff. They are fortunate to be able to use the Hawks View community room for their activities and have hosted several events for youth like cookie decorating and gift making. Starting in January 2024, our EPM hosts a weekly drop-in tutoring club for youth at the Hawks View community room. During this time youth engage in math and literacy-based games in addition to individual tutoring in literacy with the EPM.

2023 was the first attempt at a summer literacy camp. They successfully built important partnerships in the community of La Pine, improved processes to serve our newly enrolled youth and families more effectively. The camp will continue during the 2024 summer, building

on earlier successes that showed all youth made improvements in at least one of the pre assessment areas: Phonemic Awareness, Decoding and High Frequency Words.

Big Brothers Big Sisters (\$8,000) – BBBS continues to make matches in South County and has a high retention rate of 77% which is above the national average. This is largely due to Match Support Specialists (this is where the \$8,000 of SRWC funding was utilized) who make sure that the Little and their families are receiving support for basic needs (food, housing assistance, energy assistance referrals, etc.), mental health referrals, and academic assistance (tutoring services, IEP assistance and support, academic materials, etc.). They are seeing some challenges in finding male mentors (this is a problem nationally) – and – in some cases it has been difficult to find a mentor from South County. In those instances, they are recruiting Mentors from Bend or Sunriver, but the goal is always to try to find a mentor within the student's home community.

They have officially launched the BIG Futures program in South County and are now in Phase One. They have begun with current Littles in the program identified as needing additional educational assistance and support and in either middle school or high school. They are focused on utilizing the local tutoring program through La Pine Middle School and High School (Night Hawks) to advocate for the Littles to be selected for this tutoring and they are continuing to look for additional tutoring support in South County. BBBS will receive \$20,000 from the Integrated Community Partnership grant and it will be used in a variety of ways to support the BIG Futures program.

After- and Out-of-school activities (\$20,000 total allocated, moved \$12,000 in funds to support YCC internships (\$4,000/internship x 3), \$12,000 still to be spent in this category)
COIC's Youth Career Connect program raises and distributes funds to support internship wages for students living and working in South County. The SCC Steering Committee determined that this was a concrete way to support at-risk youth and keep them engaged in learning and planning for their future.

Enrichment materials for BRYT/Student Success rooms (\$4,000 total allocated, moved \$4,000 to After- and Out-of-school activities)

It was determined that most of the BRYT/Student Success rooms were adequately stocked and supported by the school district, so these funds were shifted with SRWC board approval to areas with greater need.

Parent engagement (\$5,000 total allocated, \$2,133 spent, \$830 budgeted to be spent)

- La Pine High School (\$1,908) utilized funds at the La Pine HS Open House (September 13, 2023) and the La Pine Harvest Fest Resource Fair (October 4, 2023). At the Harvest Fest there were about 300 people/150 families who attended the event. There were a variety of community partners with booths for families to engage with them.
- Rosland Elementary (\$225) utilized funds to support the Winter Family Festival
- La Pine Middle – budgeted \$830 for a Sources of Strength Family Night
- La Pine Elementary has not used any of the funds but is aware they have access to them.

Youth-led activities (\$5,000 total allocated, \$2,732 spent)

Funds have been/are being spent on a student intern, promotional materials (for an Anti-Vaping project), meeting incentives (food), and a holiday party for the GSA/Inclusion Club. This has been a transitional time period for the La Pine Youth Action Council as several key teens dropped out of their identified role at the beginning of the program, so they did not make as much progress as anticipated. This was not a complete surprise as youth-led projects require perseverance and that is part of the growth / learning for these students. Any unspent funds will roll into next year's program.

Integrated Community Partnership (ICP) Grant – Oregon Department of Education

With the assistance of Better Together – who served as the grant applicant and fiscal sponsor – we were able to secure an Integrated Community Partnership grant for \$299,000 (see attached Project Description). The grant contains the following elements that are related to and advance SRWC priorities:

- SCC Project Coordinator - \$75,000 over 18 months
- Social Worker/Mental health position for La Pine schools - \$120,000 over 12 months
- New mentoring program from Big Brothers Big Sisters (BIG Futures) - \$20,000 one-time
- Support for Friends of the Children - \$10,000 one time
- Family Engagement Council support for South County - \$15,000 over 18 months
- Support for La Pine Night Hawks afterschool tutoring - \$5,000 over 18 months
- Flexible Funds program for La Pine students - \$25,000 over 18 months

This is incredibly exciting news as this grant provides significant financial and staffing support for key strategies, and the SCC Project Coordinator will help make the whole SCC concept sustainable as that is an important part of the new job description. We have had some new learning in implementing the ICP grant as the school district is not allowed to hire/oversee any of the positions listed above so it has occasionally been a challenge trying to find compatible partners. AS a result, one thing we are considering is whether the South County Collaborative might want to pursue its own 501(c)3 designation and have these types of activities above a formal part of our mission so there are no difficulties moving forward.

Strategic Outcomes

The SCC Steering Committee met several times and tweaked the initial SRWC goals/pillars a bit to reflect what we are learning and hearing in the community. These modifications include:

- Development of DRAFT Strategic Outcomes for the SCC (see attached)
- Agreed to allocate a portion of undesignated campaign funds toward hiring a consultant to help key stakeholders go through a strategic planning process for the SCC. The goal is to develop a Strategic Plan that can improve sustainability of the initiative by attracting private donors, larger grants and guiding our fundraising and distribution of funds. (Expected expenditure of ~\$1,500 out of \$5,500 unallocated funds, none spent to date)

Additional School and Community efforts that complement the work of the SCC

Fortunately, there are a number of additional efforts and initiatives that complement the work of the SCC and will help us meet our ambitious goals of strengthening the network of services benefiting at-risk youth in South County, supporting their school and community engagement, improved quality of life, improved mental health and ultimately positively impacting the graduation rate in South County. Through networking and outreach we now have key individuals on several community organizations and initiatives that complement the work of the South County Collaborative.

New position around Family Engagement – the Bend-La Pine School District identified attendance in South County Schools as a critical issue so utilized funds (\$84,500) from its Student Investment Account allotment for the 2023-24 SY to hire Cheyenne Lefever as the South County Family Engagement Specialist. This new position will work to enhance relationships between all four South County schools, students, and families. Specific tasks include researching and providing strategies for academic support, leading efforts to increase parental knowledge on the importance of attending school and assisting with organizing and coordinating parent engagement activities at school. Ms. Lefever had previously been the FAN Advocate for La Pine HS, so she was well connected and able to hit the ground running.

La Pine HS Site Council – the Site Council is a state-mandated body comprised of school personnel (administrators, teachers, classified staff) along with parents and other community members. The Site Council is charged with looking at student data and school information, identifying student needs and areas for improvement, and participating in the creation/revision of the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). The La Pine HS Site Council is facilitated by Scott Olszewski (South County Administrator) and right now, there are several LPHS Site Council participants who are formally part of the SCC and strong supporters (this includes Bruce Abernethy, Larry Marston, Kathy DeBone and Angela Groves).

Newberry Regional Partnership - La Pine is a service center for many people in the South County metro area (including Lake and Klamath County), but the City of La Pine can't really help people outside of the city boundaries. There is also a lot of concern about the rapid growth. In response, COIC applied for a USDA "placemaking" grant in 2022 and was able to secure it the second time around in 2023. They brought in over 15 community partners (key stakeholders) to discuss what they wanted to do. They formed an initiative called the Newberry Regional Partnership, conducted a community survey in July 2023 that featured 1,200 respondents and over 3,000 comments, and are in the process of securing 501(c)3 status as a nonprofit.

The Newberry Regional Partnership is focused on these six dimensions of community vitality:

- Public Safety
- Economic Development
- Health and Human Services
- Arts and Culture

- Environment and Natural Resources
- Education

There are several SCC supporters who are closely aligned with the Newberry Regional Partnership and/or its education arm (this includes Val Stensland, Kathy DeBone and Angela Groves).

Perseverance Awards expansion - the Perseverance Awards is a program that began in 2014, is run by the Bend-La Pine Schools Education Foundation for, and is designed to help support those students who have overcome significant obstacles and challenges just to graduate from high school (e.g. family or parental issues, extreme poverty, enrollment in the foster care system, significant health or disability issues that impacted attendance, sexual or physical abuse, etc.) A recent bequest/investment into the program has brought about the creation of the Axel F. Hoch Legacy Scholarship, a life-changing, renewable scholarship for up to 6-8 students per year who wish to attend college/university or a trade school in Oregon (see info sheet in Appendix). Our sense is that this opportunity can help to change the culture within a school setting, encouraging disadvantaged students to try harder at an earlier age. What other similar scholarship programs around the country have discovered is that even if a student doesn't receive that particular scholarship (since they will be very competitive), because of the additional effort they have put into their schooling and the improved grades and student participation, they are often able to get other sources of financial aid.