

# Superintendent's Budget Message

Our Vision: All students graduate and are prepared for a successful life.



May 3, 2022

Dear SKPS Community, Parents, Students and Staff,

School year 2021-22 has been another challenging year for our students and staff, but this year we also saw such hope and promise in our students. We were thrilled to see the smiles of our students and adults in classrooms and work environments as the state lifted the statewide mask mandate and we shifted to optional use of face coverings.

The statewide response to the pandemic began in the spring of 2020, and students spent most of the 2020-21 school year in remote learning. Throughout the pandemic, many students and their families experienced the stress of economic hardship, the death or illness of loved ones, and the challenge of learning in a fully virtual space. Our students carried these stresses during remote learning and into our classrooms in September 2021. We knew very quickly we would need to address social-emotional health before accelerated learning could occur.

Throughout the pandemic, Salem-Keizer Public Schools strategically supported the mental and behavioral well-being of students, fostered a sense of belonging and the ongoing commitment to safe and welcoming schools, and began to address the effects of unfinished learning.

SKPS experienced a slight decline in enrollment beginning in 2018-19 with a decrease in incoming kindergarten students. Consistent with other districts across the state, SKPS enrollment declined during the pandemic by approximately 2,000 students from 2019-20. Primary reasons for the decline in enrollment include lower numbers of incoming kindergarten students, family decisions to homeschool, enrollment in an online charter school, and family moves outside district boundaries. The per-pupil allocation increased because of the statewide enrollment decline. To maintain stable funding, SKPS will need to regain students at a rate consistent with other districts across the state. Currently, enrollment is approximately 39,500 students.

	Actual Annual Average Enrollment					Projected Enrollment	
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Elementary	19,886	19,797	19,474	18,915	17,271	17,083	16,784
Middle	9,541	9,759	9,907	10,246	9,809	9,514	9,121
High	11,922	11,889	11,869	12,041	12,467	12,670	12,943
Other	289	310	348	368	417	273	273
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41,638</b>	<b>41,755</b>	<b>41,598</b>	<b>41,570</b>	<b>39,964</b>	<b>39,540</b>	<b>39,121</b>

In an effort to offer families options, EDGE (Enhanced Digital Guided Education), the district's fully online K-12 program launched in 2020-21, was continued during 2021-22. Based on the popularity of this program, SKPS plans to continue to offer an online option to all students in grades K-12. EDGE continues to be funded in this proposed budget and includes contractual obligations.

As part of the declining enrollment at the elementary level and increase at the high school level, **12.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) have been realigned from elementary to high school licensed educator FTE.**

As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, it is important to be future focused and provide further implementation of our strategies to improve outcomes for all students. The proposed budget is built on the following focus areas:

1. Services to students learning English and increased bilingualism
2. Social-emotional supports and safety systems
3. Access to rigorous instruction
4. Investment in infrastructure
5. Braided funds to support strategic, equity-based investments and outcomes

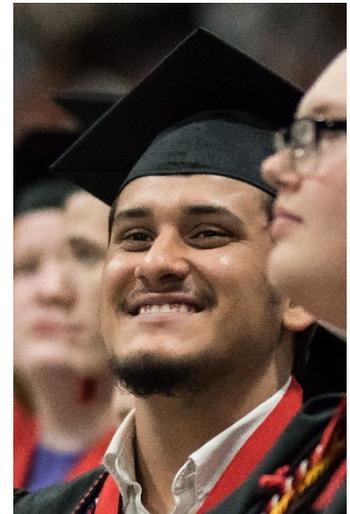
## Strategic Investments

Strategic investments are funded by braiding multiple funding sources. In addition to the general fund, SKPS has multiple large grants that are braided with the general fund to improve equitable outcomes for all students. These funds include both federal and state restricted grants: federal Title Program funding, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Student Investment Account (SIA), High School Success (HSS), Early Learning grants, and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER). These large grants are primarily budgeted outside the general fund and include restrictions that require monies to be spent only for the specific purpose.

### Students Learning English (English Learner)

Salem-Keizer Public Schools places a high value on multilingualism and has a deep commitment to acquisition of English regardless of whether a student begins as an SKPS kindergarten student or arrives as a refugee to our country as a newcomer high school student. With a focus on evidence-based instructional strategies and additional staff in schools with the highest number of students who are currently English learners, the district continues to invest in two key strategies: dual language programming and secondary English Language Development (ELD) redesign.

The district plans to increase its focus on dual language programming at all levels. Internal data show that students who are English learners and attain English proficiency before high school graduate at greater rates than their English-only peers. Most of the students in this category began their SKPS career in one of our many elementary biliteracy programs. In other words, supporting the attainment of literacy in a student's first language and in English generally yields better academic outcomes than an English-only instructional focus. Dual language programming is a high-leverage academic and equity strategy and will be a focus of SIA funding for the district into the foreseeable future.



To support the expansion of dual language programming, SKPS is braiding funds through the SIA and general fund. SIA funds are used for consultation, professional development, two program associates, and for the multilingual coordinator, and this funding extends into 2022-23. To support this expansion, the proposed general fund budget adds an additional **1.0 FTE dual language program associate** for a total of **3.0 FTE program associates**. In addition, **10.0 FTE licensed teachers** at the elementary level will transition from transitional biliteracy teachers to dual language teachers, and five dual language courses are planned at the secondary level with existing FTE in the high school budget. This transition begins an expansion of our existing dual language program, from three to seven schools at the elementary level, from two to four schools at the middle school level, and the addition of one high school.

Salem-Keizer Public Schools is in the second year of implementation of secondary ELD redesign, which is also one of the district's SIA strategies. This strategy supports students who have not exited English language services by middle school and complements the expansion of dual language programming. Built on evidence-based co-teaching models, the secondary ELD redesign through SIA funds **9.5 FTE English language development teachers, 6.0 FTE Newcomer Center teachers, 2.0 FTE instructional support licensed staff, and 7.0 FTE bilingual instructional assistants**. These additional staff provide an intensive focus on tiered and context-rich instruction strategies that support English learners in both their language development and content learning. Investments in professional learning are embedded within the braided general and SIA funding model that supports this strategy.

English learners continue to comprise a significant number of SKPS students, with more than 7,200 students enrolled during 2021-22 in grades K-12. During 2021-22, SKPS welcomed more than 1,700 students newly arrived in the United States, which is approximately 500 more than the previous school year. Slightly less than half of these students arrived from countries on the African and Asian continents, including 76 students who are Afghan refugees. The number of students who are recent arrivers is expected to increase in 2022-23. SKPS is adding **5.0 FTE licensed teachers** to serve English learners at the secondary level.

### Safe and Welcoming Schools

Students in SKPS represent the diversity of the world in language, culture, race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. **We celebrate, honor, and value this diversity.** We also recognize that many of our students regularly experience microaggressions, racism, discrimination, and oppression and we strive to eliminate these conditions in our learning environments.



**Care, connection, and community** are the heart of a healthy education system and critical for inclusive environments that empower students and staff to thrive. In addition, each is essential for promoting student and staff health, safety and well-being, and for creating welcoming schools where students can learn.

To create safe and welcoming school environments, SKPS routinely analyzes and responds to student data. Social-emotional and behavioral health, discipline, and other data inform decisions about opportunities for improvement within our system. For example, district discipline data show that within the district, students of color are disproportionately disciplined more often than their white peers. In response to these data, leaders and school teams from across the district are examining their discipline practices. During school year 2021-22, the district contracted for professional development on restorative practices. Professional development on restorative practices will continue to be funded through the SIA. Restorative practices encompass both accountability for a student's behavior and structures that facilitate relationship repair and restoration. Restorative practices, when fully and well implemented, lead to a greater sense of safety and connection within school environments.

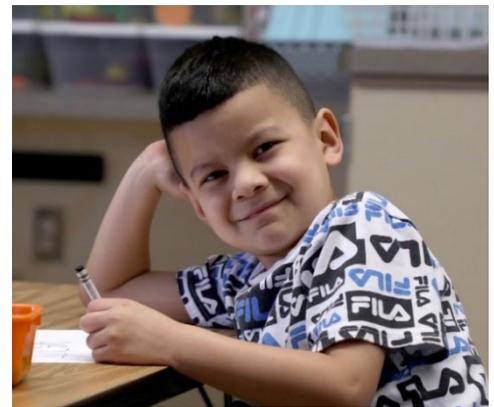
With the use of braided general, SIA and ESSER funds, restorative practices will be expanded to additional schools in 2022-23. As part of the proposed general fund budget, **2.0 FTE instructional mentors** are added to support middle school level implementation. These budget items only reflect very narrow positions. The effective implementation of strong school discipline and restorative practices relies on each and every adult in our school system.

Safe and welcoming schools also encompass secure campuses and systems. SKPS has nationally recognized preventative systems; however, it is having specialized staff who form relationships with and prioritize the physical safety of students that determines the effectiveness of these systems. An analysis of our safety systems led the district to add **9.0 FTE campus safety associates (CSAs)** and **1.0 FTE security field coordinator** during 2021-22, with a plan to add **2.0 FTE CSAs** during 2022-23. These positions are included in the proposed budget and provide an essential foundation of service across all middle and high schools.

Campus safety associates are provided training in de-escalation, relationship building, restorative practices, Mandt training and safe and secure school campuses. They are part of our safety and risk team, which also leads our preventative school intervention systems.

### Social-Emotional and Behavioral Supports

Social-emotional and behavioral health are integral to the education and development of students of all ages. When students exercise skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, they are better able to attend to learning, develop healthy identities, feel and show empathy for others, and make responsible decisions.



The achievement of equitable outcomes is central to the SKPS Strategic Plan. Explicitly teaching social-emotional and behavioral health skills, also known as social-emotional learning, advances equity and academic success. Through partnership between schools and families, rigorous and authentic instruction, and ongoing evaluation and feedback, students are empowered to contribute to their own education and constructive learning environments.

To ensure that all students master grade-level academic standards and attain the behavioral and social-emotional skills needed to thrive, the district invests more than **\$38 million annually in systems and staff to support social-emotional and behavioral health of students**. Through the braiding of general and SIA funds, and since 2016, the district has increased social-emotional and behavioral health spending by **more than \$20 million** and added **more than 100 staff** who provide direct support to students, teachers, and education support personnel who work with students. These roles include school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, instructional support assistants (behavior cadre), and behavior specialists (see Appendices for a detailed overview).



The complex impact of the pandemic reinforced the district's commitment to the social-emotional and behavioral needs of students. Based on 2021-22 data, including student sense of belonging measurements, SKPS plans to realign **21.0 FTE licensed instructional staff** from teacher to behavior specialists at every elementary school, add **2.0 FTE school counselors**, add **1.0 FTE school psychologist**, add **7.5 FTE instructional support assistants** at the middle school level to support student behavioral needs, and realign **\$400,000 for student mental health supports at North Salem and McKay high schools**.

## Athletics, Activities and Academic Extensions (Extracurricular)

A critical part of student engagement is connectedness to the larger school community. Students who are connected to their school community generally perform better academically and demonstrate more pro-social behaviors. Connectedness may be in the form of clubs, athletics, performance arts, after-school academic and mentor support, or pathways toward college and career aspirations. All students deserve access to athletics, activities, and academic extensions that match their interests.

School leaders work hard to provide multiple connection points for students, and across all high schools approximately ninety percent of students participate in one or more high-interest activities that lead to feelings of connectedness. Analysis of social-emotional and behavioral health and discipline data show that additional opportunities for students to connect with high-interest activities, especially at the middle school level, is a clear need. It is crucial we provide more connectedness at the middle school level, an age group for which connectedness is as critical but lacks broad high-interest options.



The budget supports engagement for students in the general fund, SIA and ESSER. There is a clear need for coordination of these opportunities given that areas in our community lack the same opportunity in programming for youth. To address this need, SKPS plans to add **1.0 FTE athletics and activities coordinator** to support the development of middle school level activities that both meet the unique needs of middle school students and provide students an onramp to similar activities at the high school level, with a focus on expanding opportunity in the North Salem and McKay feeder areas.

## Access to Rigorous Instruction and High-Quality Instructional Materials

All students deserve access to rigorous grade-level content instruction and the use of high-quality instructional materials. Rigorous instruction includes strategies and student demonstrations of skill and knowledge that facilitate deep conceptual understanding of state content standards. The district utilizes high-quality instructional materials to support rigorous instruction.

Rigorous instruction is achieved through many means, including specialized programming that provides access to all interested students. SKPS offers dual language, embedded honors courses, Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), and International Baccalaureate (IB) Programmes.

South Salem High School has offered an IB Programme for many years, and most recently SKPS expanded the IB Programme to North Salem High School. The IB Programme requires well-rounded and internationally focused education, including language acquisition, the arts and design, in addition to core content areas. Successful IB Programmes also offer the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP), which is designed for students in grades 6 through 10 and aligns instruction across a feeder area.

During 2022-23, SKPS plans to expand IB-MYP at both North Salem and South Salem high schools and to select middle schools in these feeder systems. Expansion will include both **professional learning for staff and associated rigorous curricular materials for an additional \$250,000.**

One of the best ways to support learning is to use a common curriculum for all students across the system – this is one of the district’s goals. It means that both within and between schools, students experience a common learning path using common resources. To achieve this goal, teachers need time to collaborate, they need access to common resources, and resources need to be refreshed when standards are updated by the Oregon Department of Education. Over the past several years, there has been an increase in high-quality, open educational resources (OERs) – that is, curricula that are available at no cost to districts, schools, and educators. Many of our educators utilize these resources in their instruction. To date, however, the improvement in OERs has not reached the levels needed to replace traditional textbooks aligned to Oregon standards.

To meet the need to provide common resources and refresh existing curricula, SKPS is transferring **\$10 million from the general fund to the asset replacement fund**. Moving these monies to the asset replacement fund allows the district to roll unused monies forward in their entirety to future years and signals a commitment to high-quality curricula by ensuring the funds are not reappropriated for other uses.

### Students with Disabilities and Access to Instruction

As a focal group, students with disabilities include some of the most vulnerable students in our school system, and many students with disabilities face barriers to their education that we must actively address. This proposed budget provides for additional staffing needed in the 2021-22 school year plus additions for the 2022-23 school year.

For students who are medically fragile, the services of a licensed practical nurse (LPN) are necessary so that students may access their education in a general education setting. The return to in-person instruction at the start of 2021-22 while still in the midst of a pandemic highlighted this need because of staffing shortages. This prompted the district to add **6.0 FTE LPN education assistants** to support those students who cannot access their education without nursing services. The development of a district-specific cadre of nurses to support students who are medically fragile will allow the district to provide a more consistent educational experience for these students.

Similarly, students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing require additional support to access their learning, and this support is often in the form of trained American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. The addition of **2.5 FTE sign language specialists** allows the district to meet the needs of students in their resident school, rather than requiring them to attend a school with specialized programs outside their neighborhood boundaries.



Many students who are on the autism spectrum, or students with other developmental disabilities, are able to fully participate in and access their education in a general education setting. Some students, however, need highly specialized education plans that require the expertise of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Registered behavior technicians support the plans developed by a BCBA and collect data necessary to inform adjustments as growth is monitored. In 2021-22, the district began the hiring process for **1.0 FTE BCBA** and **2.0 FTE registered behavior technicians** to provide this level of support so that students with autism may access their education in a general education setting to the greatest extent possible.

## Operational Investments

### Human Resources

Attracting and maintaining a diverse and high-quality workforce is central to achieving the district's mission. Salem-Keizer Public Schools has historically maintained very low employee attrition rates and has been making steady progress hiring more diverse candidates. However, the pandemic fueled higher resignation rates and exacerbated emerging employee shortages, and universities nationwide are experiencing on average a five to fifteen percent decline in enrollment in their teacher preparation programs. The district will continue to seek highly skilled employees and work on diversification of the workforce so staff demographics mirror student demographics.

The employee shortage is both a local and nationwide challenge. There are not enough licensed and non-licensed qualified applicants for many district jobs. To combat this, SKPS has successfully designed and expanded several educator pathway programs. These programs provide economic, logistical, and social support for existing students and employees to gain the necessary credentials and skills to fill classified, teaching, and administrative positions in the district. SKPS is a national leader in this "grow-your-own" educator pathway work and will be refining and expanding these programs in addition to using traditional recruitment strategies. As in previous budgets, the proposed budget continues this investment.

To stay competitive in attracting and hiring high-performing employees, SKPS added **2.0 FTE recruiters** during 2021-22, and these are included in the proposed budget. They focus on supporting the hiring process to make it happen faster and with greater volume without sacrificing the selection of quality employees. The district has also invested in advanced recruiting software and expanded advertising of employment opportunities.

The pandemic created many challenges, including supports for staffing systems and processes. SKPS added **1.0 FTE staffing coordinator** to support this increased need. The district also added **1.0 FTE employee relations specialist** and **1.0 administrative secretary** to support the continued partnership with our associations because of the many operational changes and our joint goal of creating safe working environments during the pandemic.

To incentivize employee retention and honor the work and commitment of current employees, ESSER funds were used to pay employees a **recognition and retention bonus of \$2,250**. The first installment of \$1,250 was paid in March of 2022, and the second installment of \$1,000 will be paid at the end of October 2022. SKPS continues to find ways to support the wellness of employees and is making a number of investments in employee wellness. In addition, we are working closely with our benefits provider to increase timely access to the employee assistance program.



## Equity-Based Asset Replacement Plan

An equity-based asset replacement plan helps ensure all students have access to high-quality equipment from furniture and playground structures to musical instruments. Many times, these are supported by community investments. This practice has resulted in discrepancies in the quality of this equipment within our schools. An annual **\$2 million dollar transfer to this equity-based asset replacement fund** will ensure these district assets are maintained and/or replaced to provide equitable access to high-quality equipment for all students.



The American Rescue Plan, signed into law in March 2021 provided federal funding to replace all the 40,000 student Chromebooks that sustained distance learning during the pandemic. These devices have an expected lifespan of four to five years, so the district will set aside **\$2 million dollars annually into the technology asset replacement fund** to replace these devices in the future.

## Facilities

The district is in its fourth year of construction, fulfilling the 2018 bond promises. The additional classrooms, science rooms, and CTE, library and cafeteria spaces added significantly more square footage requiring cleaning and maintenance. During 2021-22, the district added **11.0 FTE custodians** to provide additional service to schools, and this budget further adds **1.0 FTE field coordinator, 5.0 FTE custodians and 2.0 FTE maintenance workers** to manage the upkeep on these new spaces.

## Transportation

In the fall of 2022, SKPS will open the new transportation facility on Gaffin Road. This budget implements the final phase of the 2020 transportation package, including an additional **21.0 FTE staff (dispatchers, trainers, routers, mechanics, operations manager, and support staff)**. The remaining transportation facility expenditures and bus purchases are included in this budget, including **\$14 million in the general fund beginning fund balance committed for the transportation facility**. Transportation expenses are reimbursed at seventy percent through the transportation grant, so this budget reflects an increase in the transportation revenue to offset these additional expenditures.

## Leadership

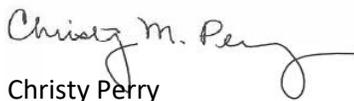
Leadership is critical in strategic investments, instructional outcomes, safety and inclusivity of the school community. Research shows a high correlation between effective instructional leadership and student outcomes. The 2022-23 proposed budget prioritizes the reinvestment of assistant principals to account for **4.0 FTE realignment for the EDGE program and to provide a foundation of leadership at each school site**. It also prioritizes additional **3.0 FTE assistant principals** to assist in leading the changing needs of our schools.

## Summary

The 2022-23 proposed budget is **\$1.4 billion for all funds**, including **\$621 million in the general fund**. The general fund has a 4.6% contingency, which is below the financial policy of five to seven percent. Trend analysis and continued staffing shortages predict this budget, once implemented, will meet the financial goals of the district. Important to note is the proposed budget includes federal funding for ESSER, and many positions are funded through this federal grant. The grant expires in September 2024, and strategic financial planning will be needed to address the future funding challenges.

I remain fully committed to our students, their families, our staff and community. The 2022-23 proposed budget supports the work of our district on behalf of our students. There will always be challenges in front of us, but I am confident in our exceptional staff who support our students each and every day. I continue to believe in the hope and promise of our students, our families and our community, and I am proud to lead Salem-Keizer Public Schools.

Respectfully,



Christy Perry  
Superintendent



