

# Early Learning & the Student Success Act

## Frequently Asked Questions

The Student Success Act (SSA) allocates \$1 billion each year in new education funding in Oregon. Funding is divided into three accounts: The Early Learning Account, the Student Investment Account, and the Statewide Investment Account. Funds in both the Early Learning Account and the Student Investment Account can be used to expand early learning opportunities, programs, and services for children under 5. This document is for parents, educators, and K-12 administrators who want to understand why and how to use SSA funds for early learning.



**STATEWIDE  
INVESTMENTS**  
**\$300 Million**



### Why is it important to expand access to early learning?

By connecting early learning to K-12 education for the first time, Oregon recognizes that children begin learning long before their first day of kindergarten. Since every experience is a learning experience for young children, it's essential that children under 5 in Oregon have rich, high-quality early childhood experience that grow their natural love of learning and prepare them for success in kindergarten and beyond.

### What is the Student Investment Account and how can it be used to fund early learning?

The Student Investment Account (SIA) is \$500 million per year in non-competitive grants to Oregon school districts. Districts must use these funds for two purposes: 1) Meet students' mental and behavioral health needs. 2) Increase academic achievement and reduce disparities for students of color; students with disabilities; emerging bilingual students;

students navigating poverty, homelessness, and foster care; and other students that have historically experienced disparities in our schools.

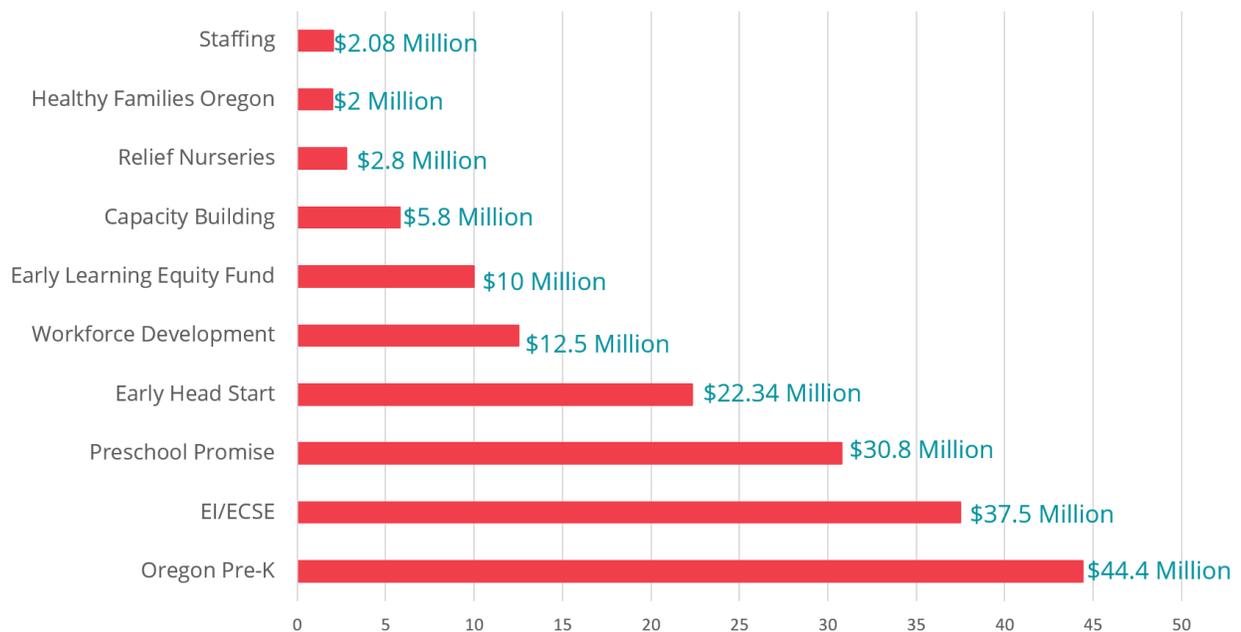
In meeting these goals, individual school districts can decide to use funding from their Student Investment Account to increase access to early learning opportunities.



*Tip for districts:* Partner with your Early Learning Hub to ensure investments are coordinated and meet the needs of children and families. Examples of early learning programs and services that districts could fund with SIA include early childhood play and learn groups, kindergarten transition programs, or preschool.

### What is the Early Learning Account and what can it be used to fund?

Twenty percent of the Student Success Act—roughly \$200 million per year—is allocated to the Early Learning Account to fund programs and services for kids under 5. Funding in this account can be used to fund Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE), Early Head Start, Healthy Families Oregon, parenting education, Relief Nurseries, Oregon Pre-K, Preschool Promise, an Early Childhood Equity Fund, and professional development for early childhood educators. The chart below details how this funding is allocated.



## What can parents do to make sure their voices are heard during the SSA Implementation process?



Both school districts and Early Learning Hubs are required to provide opportunities for parents and other community members to ask questions about Student Success Act implementation and share their priorities.

*Tips for parents:* Consult your school district website or contact your local school to find out when your district's community meetings are. At the meeting, let your school districts know that early learning is a priority for your family and ask whether your district is working with your Early Learning Hub to expand access.

You can also [contact your Early Learning Hub](#) and attend their community engagement events to learn more about what they are doing to expand access to early care and education and let them know what kinds of early learning opportunities you'd like to see in your area.

## What role do Early Learning Hubs play in determining how Student Success Act funds are spent?

Early Learning Hubs play a key role in determining how their area spends some of the Early Learning Account funds. Hubs will review county-level data and gather input from families and providers to identify the early learning needs of their communities. They will identify preschool providers who can best support those needs and funding streams to support the expansion of early learning.

With their understanding of their community's early childhood needs and resources, Hubs are also an important part of school district work determining how Student Investment Account funds are spent. [This document](#) includes helpful timelines for school district and Hub activities and suggestions for how Hubs can collaborate with districts to expand early learning opportunities.

## How can school districts identify what kinds of early learning opportunities their communities need?



*Tips for districts:* be sure to add early learning to their community engagement meeting agendas. Parents need opportunities to share what kinds of early learning opportunities they'd like to be able to access for their children as well as identify area providers that are successfully serving the community.

Districts should also reach out to their Early Learning Hub to find out what they've learned from their review of data and community engagement meetings. Districts should let Hubs know if they are interested in being an early childhood education provider, have classrooms that could be used for early childhood education, and if they plan to use district funds to expand early learning.

### **What opportunities to improve Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) does the Student Success Act provide?**

The Student Success Act fully funds ECSE. This new investment provides an opportunity for families and communities to advocate for strengthening ECSE to increase school readiness and reduce the impact of disabilities and delays on young learners. ECSE opportunities could include more inclusive ECSE classroom settings where children with disabilities and developmental delays can learn and grow alongside their typically developing peers, and longer preschool hours.



*Tip for parents:* Attend one of your district's SSA community sessions to ask for more inclusive preschool options. You can also connect with your local [Early Learning Hub](#) to let them know more inclusive preschool options are important to you and your family.

### **How can the Student Investment Account be used to create more inclusive opportunities for students in kindergarten through third grade who are in Special Education and/or on IEPs?**

The Student Investment Account focuses new investment on increasing academic achievement and reducing disparities for students with disabilities, among other student groups who have experienced historic academic disparities.

Student Investment Account grants can be used to support behavioral and emotional health needs and academic achievement for students with disabilities and delays in kindergarten through third grade and beyond in any of the following ways:

- reduce class sizes, which may include increasing the use of instructional assistance
- provide well-rounded education, for example by offering developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive early literacy practices and programs in preschool through third grade and broadening curricular options at all grade levels including art, music, PE, STEM, engaging electives, Life Skills, TAG, and transition supports

- increase instructional time by adding more hours and/or days, summer programs, and before or after school programs
- support student mental and behavioral health, for example through social and emotional learning and/or trauma-informed practices
- improve organizational structures that lead to better interpersonal relationships at the school
- more school health professionals and assistants
- improve facilities directly related to improving health or safety



*School districts* are required to provide opportunities for parents and other community members to ask questions about Student Success Act implementation and share their priorities.

*Parents* should consult your school district website or contact your local school to find out when the district's community meetings are. At the meeting, share that increasing academic achievement and reducing disparities for children with disabilities and delays is a priority for your family.



### **Where does the money to fund the Student Success Act come from?**

Oregon House Bill 3427 created a new business tax that will generate about \$1 billion per year to fund the Student Success Act. The bill includes a 0.57 percent tax on business that have more than \$1 million in Oregon sales. Only receipts above \$1 million are subject to the tax, and there are subtractions available for capital and labor costs. The package also includes a 0.25 reduction in most personal income tax.

All the money generated by this tax will go into an account outside of the general fund. This account is dedicated to funding education programs and can't be used to fund the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS).