

# SUMNER-BONNEY LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN.



**Date:** April 21, 2021  
**To:** Sumner-Bonney Lake School Board of Directors  
**From:** Director of Equity, Engagement and Homeless Services, Marilee Hill-Anderson  
**Re:** Community Engagement and Partnerships

**Purpose of Report:** This report will review the scope of current work, challenges and opportunities regarding partnerships supported by the District’s Office of Community Engagement. Specific projects highlighted include the Sumner-Bonney Lake Family Center, Sumner-Bonney Lake Communities For Families (CFF) Coalition, and special initiatives.

**Relationship to Sumner-Bonney Lake School District’s Strategic Plan – Vision 2020:** Goal #3 states, “We will fully engage parents, community partners and staff to support quality education for all students by motivating and empowering active participation, a spirit of involvement and a culture of mutual respect.” Current measurements of success for this goal include an: (a) increase in number of Business and Industry Partnerships; (b) increase in number of Higher Education partnerships; and (c) increase in use of the Sumner-Bonney Lake Family Center for resources.

**Background Information and Current Status – Overview:** The broad scope of Goal #3 encompasses the description of partnerships across many divisions, departments and schools, including Career and Technical Education (CTE), Instructional Services, as well as the Office of Community Engagement. In 2018, we conducted a series of over 30 interviews with principals, parent/teacher association leaders and department directors to capture the number and breadth of our partnerships with outside organizations. At that time, we developed that *a conservative baseline estimate of 158 groups and businesses were working with our schools and District*, knowing that this number did not include hundreds of other individual donors and volunteers. Additional surveys and interviews will be conducted, post-pandemic, to assess number of partnerships when schools can reopen to volunteers. Specific work occurring through the Office of Community Engagement and Family Center includes:

Sumner-Bonney Lake Communities For Families (CFF) Coalition		
Mission	Activities	Impact and Outcomes
+ This coalition focuses on the mission of increasing the health and well being of children, youth and families in the greater Sumner, Bonney Lake area. We meet to learn from each other.	+ Activities pivoted to online networking meetings when group gatherings were restricted. + Meetings featured monthly presentations on local, state and federal resources to help families meet basic needs. + Planning 1-2 online (Zoom) youth forums in May. + Generated volunteers to assist agencies in meeting needs of local families (food bank volunteers, etc.)	+ <b>Meeting participation is up 25% from 2019-20 to 2020-21, with an average of 32 monthly attendees.</b> + Education & Networking bolstered local holiday programs benefitting students. + Generated information for school counselors about utility/rental assistance, P-EBT, food resources, vaccine efficacy and safety.

# SUMNER-BONNEY LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN.



Sumner-Bonney Lake Family Center		
Mission	Activities	Participation / Outcomes (2020)
<p>+ Provide support, education and resources to families in partnership with the greater Sumner-Bonney Lake community.</p> <p><b>Staffing:</b>                      + One Center Coordinator                      + Part-time support for family casework                      + Outreach help through YMCA                      + Over 32 partnering agencies and donors</p> <p><b>Note:</b> In the last 2 years, the Center moved from 6 staff to 1.</p>	<p>+Providing information and resources, case management and advocacy for families facing crises in meeting basic needs.                      +Work to leverage and maximize community contributions.                      +Provide and promote knowledge of parenting, child development and family management.                      +Increase social connections.                      +Provide concrete resources in time of need.                      + Bi-lingual classes on distance learning/Chromebooks for Spanish speaking parents (16.)                      + NEW - Pop Up Resource Fairs (<b>reaching 228 families in March/April.</b>)</p>	<p>+<b>1829</b> individual contacts with local adults (parents/family) of SBLSD students in 2020.                      + Distributed over <b>1700 backpacks</b> and school supply sacks to students (August.)                      + Coordinated referrals for over <b>700 families</b> to be served at Big Give.                      + <b>423 students</b> assisted at winter holiday/coordinated referrals.                      + Assisted Sumner Grade Fire victims.                      + <b>Awarded \$30,000 in CARES Act funding to local families (2019)</b> to meet rent/utility needs.</p>

Special Projects and Programs		
Name/Description	Activities	Participation and Outcomes
<p>+ <b>US Census Grant / GTCF</b></p> <p>* Received \$30,000 grant to fund outreach strategies.</p>	<p>+ Developed simple strategies to reach marginalized groups and advertise the US Census.                      + Volunteers were CFF Coalition volunteers.                      + Future work will focus on learning to use Census data for program planning &amp; grants.</p>	<p>+Subcommittee of CFF Coalition;                      + Marketed the Census through Food Bank outreach. Provided thousands of grocery sacks w/Census info. to food banks &amp; schools.                      + Exceeded 2000 Census participation in all but one census tract within the district. Supports federal grant funding to schools.</p>
<p>+ <b>Liberty Ridge Family Opportunity Center</b> – staff time through Prairie Ridge Community Coalition &amp; Pierce County Youth Violence Prevention Grant</p>	<p>+ Prairie Ridge Coalition staff allocated 6 to 8 hours/week to assist LRE staff with families who need community support.                      + Activities included onsite support and resource distribution at ‘Grab and Go’ lunch sites, and meeting families at school.</p>	<p>+ Prairie Ridge staff <u>pivoted</u> to distribute packets of resources to over 1000 families between three Bonney Lake school lunch programs from April through June.                      + 2021 funding has been approved and workplan is pending.</p>
<p>+ <b>Homeless Student Stability Grant / Partnership with REACH</b></p>	<p>+Referrals to multiple agencies and staff. REACH Center has</p>	<p>+ 12 families with 16 teens have received case management</p>

# SUMNER-BONNEY LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN.



Center & ACT Program: WA State Dep't of Commerce Funding	funding specifically for SBLSD and Bethel SD. + Case management & paying for shelter. Helps teens and their families develop a plan for ongoing housing.	support. (Families contact the agency directly.) + App. 6 months of hotel-based shelter has been provided to teens/parents at Sumner Motor Inn. +Program evaluation in process.
<b>+Pierce County Youth Violence Prevention Grant Project</b> with Puget Sound ESD – Readiness to Learn/Latinx* Family Support Worker  *Intersects with SBLSD Equity Initiative	+Office of Community Engagement, Family Center and LAP working with PSED to obtain a part-time bi-lingual/bi-cultural family support worker to serve Spanish speaking parents in Sumner, Bonney Lake and WRSD.	+ Grant is pending. + SBLSD Staff (Marilee/Ida) defending grant application with PSED on 4/20 to Pierce County.
<b>United Way Center for Strong Families Initiative</b>	+Program/grants would offer employment and financial coaching to families through our Family Center. + This ties into program planning for the Rotary funded Multi-Service Center.	+Participating in 2-3 meetings a month with United Way and local CSF site managers to ascertain if we have the capacity to implement this intensive family support program. + Next meeting: April 22
<b>Rotary Multi-Service Center / District Representation</b>	+Working to develop a long-term strategy to house the SBL Family Center and expand services. + Center may evolve to a community-based model while our schools have smaller 'school family opportunity centers.'	+ Next meeting May 4. + Two to three strong community lead agencies that could possibly offer space in the future are emerging.

**How Does This Relate to Board Policy?** Examples of Board policies/ procedures that relate to our community partnerships include:

Policy 2005: Instruction – School Improvement Plans (parent/guardian review)

Policy 4120: Community Relations: School Support Organizations

Policy 4130: Title I Parent (Family) Involvement

**What is the Budget Allocation for This Work?** SBLSD supports portions of two positions from the general fund, in addition to program allocations:

- Director of Engagement, Equity and Homeless Services / .68 FTE + .32 FTE – Title I and Title X
- Family Center Coordinator / .27 FTE.
  - Note: Remainder of this position is funded through partnering organizations:
    - City of Sumner = \$30,000;
    - City of Bonney Lake = \$12,000; and
    - Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department = \$16,500.
- Budget allocations from the general fund are as follows:
  - Community Engagement Office Expenses = \$8500

# SUMNER-BONNEY LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN.



- Family Center Office and Program Allocation = \$11,920

**What are the impacts to student performance?** It is difficult to directly correlate the provision of basic needs with short or long term academic assessments. However, we are seeing an increase in the graduation rates of our students experiencing homelessness, including students our office and Family Center assisted in maintaining shelter and the ability to get to school (up 17% from 2018-19 to 2019-20.) Additionally, models of family support we are emulating in programs (offering family management training (parenting) programs, providing concrete support in times of financial need, developing shelter options, reducing family transitions, and offering coaching to increase resiliency / problem solving skills) are all tied to increased parent engagement in schools and improved student academic outcomes.

**Relationship to Equity:** All families deserve to focus on their child's education without the stressors of trying to figure out where they will be able to seek shelter, keep utilities running or have enough to eat. Our programs build networks of community resources to support families in difficult situations. While program staffing levels are very limited at this time, we are able to provide unique supports to families in the areas of:

- (a) Language/Culture: The SBL Family Center offers bi-lingual/bi-cultural family support services to parents/guardians within the District. Approximately 15-20% of the parents coming to the Center speak Spanish as their first language;
- (b) Financial Assistance: Over 80% of the families currently seeking services through the Center qualify as 'low-income', as evidenced by their prior enrollment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP.) Low socio-economic status has been isolated as a key factor that correlates with poor academic performance and failure to graduate. The Family Center is able to help families get to a more even playing field so they can help their children focus on academic goals versus striving to help their parents meet basic needs.

**Benefitting Parties:** parents of SBLSD students made over 1600 individual contacts to the Family Center in 2020. Programs through the Office of Community Engagement and Sumner-Bonney Lake Family Center serve any family or student within the Sumner-Bonney Lake School District. We receive calls from school counselors and administrators, on a daily basis, who are referring families to us because of financial or other types of hardship. Knowing there are staff in the district that are able to provide trauma informed care and support to families experiencing stress and crisis allows our staff to return to other duties in their buildings. Additionally, the Family Center serves as a home base for service providers outside of our community to offer supplies and programs. The Communities For Families Coalition, through monthly networking meetings, keeps a core group of service providers invested and informed about the local needs of our families.

## **What is working well?**

- Resiliency: Despite a loss of staff positions at the Center, our Coordinator remains committed to serving families with a wide variety of needs. Our utilization rate fell less than 10% between 2018-29 to 2019-20 despite having students at home versus on campus.
- Back to School Events: Grab and Go backpack events served three times as many students in 2020 vs. 2019.
- Generous Community Donors: Many individuals and agencies have contributed financially, as well as with material goods to ensure other families have what they need. The Center has a financial

# SUMNER-BONNEY LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN.



cushion at this time which is allowing us to meet emergency student and family needs for short term shelter (1-2 weeks) and alleviate fines and fees students are unable to pay.

- Stable Locations & Strong District Support: The Family Center and our CFF coalition is enjoying strong support from District leadership, to include: a stable location; assistance in processing outside donations; communication planning; and volunteerism. These in-kind contributions have assisted the Center in serving families and leveraging resources.
- Strong Community Partnerships and Affiliation with CFF Coalition: The Family Center is able to leverage community support for our families and students through their presence at Coalition's monthly meetings.

## **What are opportunities for improvement?**

- Reassess the number, type and scope of partnerships when schools fully reopen : we can't accurately assess the number of partners working to support programs while facing pandemic related restrictions.
- Reassess the scope and impact of volunteers in our schools when buildings reopen without pandemic related restrictions.
- Family Center Staffing: We must find sustainable funding for 1 to 2 additional staff members to help plan and build program offerings at the Center, using both the District's new strategic plan, as well as 'Family Support America' goals as frameworks.
- Communication Plan: Continue to build out a communication plan to advertise Center benefits and needs.
- Implement a stronger client/donor management technology platform (Family Center and CFF Coalition.)
- Continue to pursue affordable emergency shelter and housing options for students and their families.