Redmond School District
SSA Stakeholder Feedback

Summary Report of Feedback
2019-20

Intro

This report highlights the themes from student, family and staff feedback collected for the *Student Success Act* in Redmond School District. The report summarizes what is working well, what the challenges are and suggestions for improvement in two key areas: 1) Academics and 2) Behavior / Mental Health.

Redmond's approach included two rounds of stakeholder surveys distributed to families and staff. The first survey which had 463 respondents collected feedback in regards to Redmond School District's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in two areas, 1) student mental and behavioral health and 2) academic opportunities and disparities. The second survey, which had 700 respondents, provided stakeholders the opportunity to rank priorities that emerged from the comprehensive listening session process.

The district also conducted 18 face-to-face listening sessions with students and families with affinity spaces created for Latinx families and parents of students navigating a disability. Additionally, student focused listening sessions included over 100 middle and high school students, representing all focal groups, and took place during the month of October. Specific affinity groups were created for Latinx students, students navigating a disability and students experiencing homelessness. District leadership listening sessions were also held with all school district administrators. Finally, business and community listening sessions were conducted with the following groups: Redmond Executive Association, Redmond Rotary, Redmond Ministerial Alliance, Crooked River Ranch Senior Center, Redmond Chamber Board of Directors, Redmond Economic Development, Inc. Board of Directors.

This report is not a comprehensive list of everything stakeholders shared, but an analysis of the strongest themes that recurred within and across groups. A more detailed analysis of common themes and differences across groups is provided in the final section of this report.

Methods

In partnership between local school districts, the Better Together organization, and Redmond School District, a protocol for affinity group listening sessions was created and used to gather input in face-to-face listening sessions. The student group sessions were generally conducted during the school day, and included 4 general student groups comprised of students from across various backgrounds and lived experiences, 4 sessions with Latinx students, 1 session with linguistically diverse students, and 4 groups comprised of students in special education. In addition, the district held 3 listening sessions during the Juntos sessions at 3 schools. At each of these events, a listening session was held with students present, and a separate session was held with parents facilitated by Latinx, Spanish-speaking community members. The focus questions used during the family and student listening sessions covered topics including:

- Student and family perceptions of their school community
- Participation at school
- Communication
- School fit and belonging

A grounded theory approach was used to analyze the listening session records in order to approach the data from a place of curiosity and empathetic understanding about student and family experiences in Redmond Schools. To complement this approach, a structured inductive coding method was used to name, categorize, and track concepts and themes as they were encountered during the analysis.

Data from surveys was coded and analyzed to identify themes from various perspectives. The summary of those themes is organized into two areas: Academics and Behavioral / Mental Health. In each category, three questions were asked: 1) What is working well? 2) What is challenging? 3) Suggestions for improvement. The themes and examples listed below were those that occurred most frequently across the set.

Summary of Themes: STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Themes from student listening sessions:

- **Good Quality Teaching**
    - Students value teachers using multiple teaching strategies to ensure that they are learning content.
    - Students value getting feedback on their work and learning so that they can adapt, ask questions, and work toward mastery.

- ○ Students want their teachers to demonstrate a passion and interest in what they are teaching. Teachers that show their love for teaching and their subject are better at engaging students in the classroom, which leads to an overall better school experience.
- ○ Students appreciate the future oriented culture of Redmond schools.
- ○ Students cite group project, project-based learning, and opportunities to engage and learn side-by-side with their peers as the most engaging and motivating activities they do in school.
- ○ Students requested that they be included in decision-making within their school.
- **Relationships Lead to Engagement**
  - ○ Students expressed a call for the importance of genuine and caring relationships between teachers and students.
  - ○ Knowing students' identity and needs are also important in building strong teacher to student relationships.
    - ■ Students with disabilities described wanting their teachers to take the time to understand their accommodations, so that they didn't feel like they were having to advocate for their unique needs.
    - ■ Students of color and Latinx students said they felt like their teachers should take the time to know their identity and understand their racial background and why it matters.
  - ○ Students discussed the importance of peer relationships. However, while they value connections to peers, students also discussed the importance of the school and teachers in facilitating these connections.
- **Non-Academic Issues Create Barriers for All Students to Learn and Participate**
  - ○ Facilities, Equipment, and Materials: Students shared concern about the state of bathrooms, the need for newer, more modern sports equipment, and they requested more materials for the hands-on classes they enjoy so much, particularly art.
  - ○ Numerous students discussed the challenges that large class sizes pose to their ability to learn.
- **Social Emotional and Mental Health Support Helps Students Cope**
  - ○ Students referenced a need for more attention on student mental health. One student said: *push on mental health - we don't have enough support.* Students had a number of practical suggestions for how schools could provide support.
- **Empathy for Student Experience**
  - ○ Students want school staff to have empathy for the diverse situations that students navigate. Many students cited examples of teachers or cases when school staff extended empathy to them and it made all the difference.

Key Take-Aways from Historically Underserved Groups:

- **Students of Color and Linguistically Diverse Students**
  - Discussion about racial bias, divides, and discrimination was present in every session of students of color and linguistically diverse students and appears to be a consistent experience across schools. The experiences shared by students can fit into two concepts within this theme.
    - One, students discussed a feeling of both division and exclusion. Students discussed that they felt like their social groups were generally divided by race and ethnicity.
    - The second concept in this area relates to racially discriminatory language that students use and a lack of awareness about the impact of racism at school.
  - Students also brought solutions to the conversation.
    - Discussion included the need for student implicit bias training - *being aware of biases could be a good way for students to get along with each other.*
    - Students also expressed a desire for their teachers not to take a neutral stance. They talked about how current events related to race impact them, and they wished the teachers were better prepared to talk, incorporate, and confront charged issues when they came up at school.
  - Students are seeking: belonging, inclusion, and acceptance among their peers at school.
  - Discussion included attending to the individual needs of students in order to help them learn and succeed.
  - Students requested additional options to learn world languages and ASL; these seem to be highly valued electives.
  - A few students mentioned wanting more diverse, multicultural, multilingual staff.

- **Students with Disabilities**
  - Students called out the importance of scaffolding learning to support their success.
  - Students mentioned the importance of flexibility for them to do their best work. Students described this flexibility as follows: More time to complete projects, no set due dates, and understanding from teachers.
  - Students discussed personal challenges they experience in using their available accomodations. Students wished their teachers would approach them about their accommodation. Needing to ask or advocate for their accommodation seems to be a barrier for some students.
  - Students articulated their desires to increase connection and relationships with their peers. These relationships can be divided into two categories, one a

positive inclusive school environment and two, connections in the classroom that facilitate learning.

- **LGBTQ+ Identifying Students**
  - In sessions where issues for LGBTQ+ students came up, they either explicitly mentioned the presence or lack of a GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) to create inclusion and belonging for LGBTQ+ identifying students.
  - Some participants noted that they experience anti-LGBTQ harrassment and discrimination at school.

Summary of Themes: FAMILY PERSPECTIVES

What is working well?
- Academic
  - **Educational Programming / Opportunities** (Examples include: electives, AP classes, music, P.E., STEM, CTE, Dual Language, Early Learning, AVID, Charter School, technology, before/after school programming, and field trips)
  - **Climate / Culture** (Examples include: great teachers, strong school leadership, positive relationships, equity, inclusion, focus on attendance, safety)
  - **Student Supports** (Examples include: small group instruction in reading, intervention, personalization, behavior/mental health support)
- Behavioral / Mental Health
  - **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) / Positive Behavior Supports** (Examples include: explicit teaching of positive social skills, growth mindset, tools for problem solving, SEL instruction, counselor instruction in the classroom)
  - **School Culture** (Examples include: positive relationships, trusted adults, caring teachers, school-to-home communication, open dialogue)

What is challenging students and families?
- Academic
  - **Educational Programming / Opportunities** (Examples include: variety and frequency of course offerings, lack of music/art at elementary, more time for P.E., different course offerings between HS campuses, differentiated instruction for proficient learners)
  - **Class Size** (Examples include: higher class size can hinder student success, teachers over-burdened by higher class sizes, results in less personalized focus for students and more time on classroom management)

- Behavioral / Mental Health
  - **Behavioral / Mental Health Supports** (Not enough resources to address student mental health/behavioral needs, examples include: specialists, counselors, teacher training)
  - **Chronic / Severe Behaviors** (Examples include: disrupted learning for all students, frequency and types of significant behaviors are increasing)

What suggestions do families have for improvement?
- Academic
  - **Educational Programming / Opportunities** (more course offering variety, more music, P.E., art, STEM)
  - **Reduce Class Size**
- Behavioral / Mental Health
  - **School Culture and Systems** (Examples include: strengthen teacher-student / student-student relationships, opportunities to build connections, discipline practices, SEL/Mental Health instruction, more physical activity)
  - **Increase Staff** (to support students with significant behavior / mental health needs)
  - **Staff Training Resources** (training for school staff on the identification and support of students impacted by trauma and mental health issues)

Key Takeaways for Linguistically Diverse Families
- **Welcoming School Cultures Matter**
  - Some Spanish-speaking parents stated that they feel welcome at school, while others stated felt alone, isolated, not welcome, discriminated against.
- **Cultural and Linguistic Representation in School Staff**
  - Participants stated a need for more teachers, counselors, and mentors who are people of color and who speak Spanish. Representation matters, and parents feel at ease and affirmed when they are able to connect with people who understand and share their culture and experiences at school.
- **Barriers to Engagement**
  - Schedules: Work during the day is a barrier for some parents to be more involved.
  - Language: Language was discussed as a barrier for parents to know about opportunities, to be included at events, and to feel confident in communicating.
  - Level of education: A handful of parents cited their own educational attainment as a barrier to getting more involved at school.
  - Volunteer requirements: Parents mentioned the new requirements that parents provide a social security number in order to volunteer as a significant barrier to getting involved at school.

- **System Navigation**
  - Acronyms: Some parents discussed the challenges in understanding what services were available to them and how to access them because the names didn't make sense (e.g. FAN, IEP, etc.).
  - Translation: There appear to be gaps in what information and materials are available in Spanish. Ensuring that all families are getting all information is foundational ensuring access and equity in their child's education.
  - Digital Divide: Ease of accessing information online can pose additional barriers to spanish-speaking parents who may be unfamiliar with the system.

Summary of Themes: STAFF PERSPECTIVES

What is working well?
Elementary Level
- Academic
  - **Educational Programming / Opportunities** (Examples include: high quality curriculum value of music and P.E. where both are offered, Dual Language, Early Learning, technology)
  - **Student Supports** (Examples include: small group instruction, intervention, personalization, Title IA supports)
  - **Educators**: Quality, dedicated, caring teachers, administrators, leadership, specialists, support staff...all invested in student success
- Behavioral / Mental Health
  - **Support Staff** (Trained behavior support, examples include: District Behavioral Specialist, Counselor, nurses, SpEd staff, Instructional Assistants,)
  - **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) / Behavior Supports** (Examples include: SEL lessons, explicit teaching of pro-social skills, morning gathering, positive behavior support systems, Growth Mindset, Character traits promotions, kindness campaigns, PBIS, calming strategies)
  - **Staff Training** (Trauma-informed awareness/practices, Collaborative Problem Solving, Social-Emotional Learning, CPI training, Envoy)

Middle and High School Levels
- Academic
  - **Educational Programming / Opportunities** (Examples Include: AVID strategies, College and Career Oriented Strategies, CTE, Technology, Art, Music, Extra-Curricular offerings like Clubs, Activities, Athletics)
  - **Climate / Culture** (Examples Include: Caring / student-centered staff, positive relationships, focus on positive attendance)

- - ○ **Teacher Supports** (Examples Include: Professional development opportunities that enhance classroom instruction, SIW time for collaboration and professional growth, support from administrators, involvement in curriculum selection and development)
  - Behavioral / Mental Health
    - ○ **Support Staff** (Examples Include: Counselors, supportive administrators, Mental Health professional on campus, Deans, Instructional Assts.)
    - ○ **School Culture** (Examples Include: Caring staff, positive relationships, communication)
    - ○ **Staff Training** (Examples Include: SIW time for SEL and Trauma-Informed Care professional development)

What is challenging students and educators?

Elementary Level
- Academic
  - ○ **Class Size** (Examples include: large class sizes - especially at primary level, impacts adequately meeting student needs and relationship development)
  - ○ **Mental / Behavioral Health** (Examples include: increase in intensive student behaviors / mental health issues disrupts learning and feeling of safety for all students, not enough support - or the right kind of support for students with extreme behavior needs)
  - ○ **Educational Programming / Opportunities** (Examples include: not enough time in day and year, lack of music/art instruction, lack of flexibility in schedules, lack of culturally responsive practices universally applied, not enough time for play)
- Behavioral / Mental Health
  - ○ **Severe Behaviors** (Examples Include: increase in intensive student behaviors / mental health issues disrupts learning and feeling of safety for students and staff, not enough support - or the right kind of support - or consequence - for students with extreme behavior needs, impacts teacher ability to provide adequate support for all students)
  - ○ **Staffing** (Examples Include: High number of students requiring intensive support compared to staff trained to support them like: counselors, special ed. staff, instructional assistants, school psychologists, nurses, administrators...and this puts significant load on other staff, resulting in burn out)
  - ○ **Behavioral / Mental Health Supports** (Examples Include: not enough qualified staff to deal with significant mental health needs, lack of counseling and mental health resources in schools, multiple barriers to accessing mental health resources for students and families, not enough support for unsafe / disruptive behavior, lack of adequate community resources and programming to support students who require significant mental health support).

Middle and High School Levels
- Academic
  - **Class Size** (Examples include: unbalanced class sizes, too many students impacts learning for all, difficult to provide personalized attention and build relationships and rapport, can result in student disengagement)
  - **Mental / Behavioral Health** (Examples include: disruptive behavior / mental health issues impacts the learning environment)
  - **Educational Programming / Opportunities** (Examples include: limited staffing prevents offering of learning options, limited elective choices)
  - **Student Supports**: (Examples include: staffing is limited: counselors, instructional assts., large special ed. caseloads)
- Behavioral / Mental Health
  - **Staffing** (Examples Include: not enough staff to cover the needs of all students who require behavior supports like: counselors, mental health specialists, trained specialists, full time nurses)
  - **Behavioral / Mental Health Supports** (Examples Include: classroom teachers are not trained to meet the mental health needs of students, teachers feel overwhelmed, not enough counselors, more support for students in need)

What suggestions do educators have for improvement?

Elementary Level
- Academic
  - **Reduce Class Size** (Examples include: lower class size, especially in primary grades, then elementary intermediate grades)
  - **Educational Programming / Opportunities** (Examples include: add music, art and drama, STEM, technology, SEL, PreK, more play time, K back to boundary schools)
  - **Increase Staff**: (Examples include: more staff to support students with lagging skills, more Instructional assts., behavior / mental health supports on site, add teachers to lower class sizes, music teacher, asst. principal or dean)
- Behavioral / Mental Health
  - **Increase Staffing** (Examples Include: hire behavior specialists, lower counselor-to-student ratio, hire licensed counselors, more instructional assts., full time nurse, mental health specialists)
  - **Increase Behavioral / Mental Health Supports** (Examples Include: trained mental health professionals, community mental health services that can be accessed at school, behavior support for every school, more counselors at larger schools, licensed counselors, support staff)

Middle and High School Levels

- Academic
  - **Educational Programming / Opportunities** (Examples include: more art and music, more elective opportunities, more CTE options, outdoor education, after school support, more leveled small group instruction, alternative ed options)
  - **Reduce Class Size** (Examples include: at all grade levels and areas, cap HS class sizes at 30 and 25 at elem., reduce caseloads for Special Ed.,)
  - **Increase Staff**: (Examples include: more instructional assts., more staff representing diverse populations, staff, more teachers to lower class sizes, more counselors, additional special ed. teachers, more bilingual staff)
- Behavioral / Mental Health
  - **Increase Staff** (Examples Include: more funding for StepUP, more counselors at middle school level, hire behavioral / mental health specialists, more nurses, full time school psychs, more instructional assts., more Special Ed. teachers)
  - **School Culture / Systems:** (Examples Include: more elective options, field trips, consistent systems for dealing with behavior / mental health issues, time for teachers to meet with students in small groups)
  - **Increase Behavioral / Mental Health Supports** (Examples Include: more mental health professionals on site, more counselors, teaching toward mental health issues and skill building for healthy response)

Survey I: Top Theme Summaries
Not in Priority Order

- Educational Programming
- Climate/Culture
- Class Size
- Behavioral/Mental Health Supports

Survey II: Ranked Investment Priorities
In Priority Order

- Class Size
- Behavioral/Mental Health Supports
- Educational Opportunities

Areas of Greatest Need

This section highlights the areas of greatest need identified by students, staff and families. While there may be multiple areas of need, these are themes that emerged that were shared among the groups.

Where do students, families and staff align?

Support for Students' Mental Health and Well Being: Students, families and staff acknowledged student mental health / social-emotional issues as a barrier to learning. Stakeholders shared the need for additional supports for students' mental health and well-being. Ideas included: adding counseling, mental health, or behavioral support staffing / resources.

Class Size: Students, families and staff all agree that lower class size enables teachers to provide more personalized supports.

Educational Programming / Opportunities: Students, families and staff all named specific program offerings as positive (e.g. CTE, Sports, Clubs, College-Oriented Offerings), but all agree that more course offerings would enhance educational experiences for students. Ideas included: music and art at the elementary level, outdoor experiences, and additional electives. Students talked a lot about the quality of education, placing high value on high quality, engaging instruction that provides opportunities for them to work collaboratively.

Communication-Connection-Relationship: All stakeholders agreed that Redmond School District has some amazing student-centered, caring staff. Students expressed a strong desire for their teachers to know them. Latinx parents expressed a desire to feel more welcomed in school.

Where do students, families and staff differ?

Inclusive School Culture / Belonging: Students representing focal groups desire a school environment that is authentically inclusive. They expressed concern over experiencing discrimination and feeling marginalized. They want their teachers to address discrimination and they welcome a dialogue that focuses on bias and helps students understand each other better.

Staff Diversity: Students of color and Latinx parents expressed a desire to see greater diversity of staff (multicultural and multi linguistic).