

2020-2021 was the first year of the Student Investment Account funding and this allowed for Amity School District to add and supplement a number of programs and support systems for our students.

1. The 2020-21 school year was a challenging one to implement new programs and strategies as the response to Covid changed how we were delivering instruction. For the first semester, we were in Limited In Person Instruction, which changed to half-time school (every other day) in the second semester. Also, due to economic constraints, we did not receive full funding from the state in year one. As such, we have to prioritize which strategies and activities we would implement, which was heavily influenced by two things, what would actually serve our students in an abnormal school year and which ones we either had or could get personnel for.
 - a. Our primary focus was the finishing and equipping of a Building Trades Program facility, hiring of a teacher and CTE director (one person), and beginning of instruction for this program in the second semester. This program immediately reached several of our focal populations and shows great promise to have an even greater impact going forward.
 - b. We were able to acquire equipment and non-consumable supplies for our ES, MS and HS science programs to assist them in better serving all students.
 - c. In the second semester we began to extend our instruction to a couple of Fridays per month, focusing on those students who were falling behind, struggling to turn in assignments or stay engaged. This benefitted a significant number of students, including those in multiple focal populations, and resulted in less deficiencies than we would have seen without such an opportunity.
 - d. At the high school level, we added equipment to both the Art program and Physical Education, enabling more students to have access to these valuable experiential programs.

Overall we increased the amount of attention individual students were able to get between adding personnel, increasing some contact hours and offering more educational opportunities for all of our students.

2. The biggest challenge, other than the modified education environment due to Covid restrictions, was the lack of available personnel to hire. We have in our budget to add Instructional Assistants at the early elementary level, as well as an elementary science specialist, but we have struggled to fill existing positions due to the lack of qualified applicants. This has continued to be a challenge this year as well. The next most significant challenge was probably just trying to balance adding educational opportunities and supports for students while our staff is struggling with morale that is negatively impacted by the detrimental changes to the educational system due to Covid restrictions. It is often hard to motivate staff to put in extra hours (even when

compensated) when they are already feeling burnt out. Interestingly, when masking restrictions were lifted over the summer, our staff was re-energized to serve students in summer academic and enrichment programs. The masking environment truly seems to wear out staff and dampen enthusiasm of staff and students alike. Another challenge, ironically, was the overlapping grant objectives of SIA and ESSER monies. This created confusion at times, trying to figure out which spending was coming from which pot of money and what the needed accountability for each looked like.

3. Staying connected to students and families over the past school year was challenging. Between disjointed school schedules due to Covid restrictions and the increasingly chaotic lives of many of our families as they navigated the challenges of work, child care, family schedules and the like, our normal means of communicating and developing relationships was strained. Our cultural liaison was able to stay in relatively good contact with our Hispanic community and our Special Education teachers worked hard to keep their students coming to school, especially during the first semester as we utilized LIPI to maintain personal education contact with them. The administration did video Q&As to try and reach as many people as possible with a personal touch, using those to respond to parent questions. Staff also reached out regularly to at-risk student populations to try and keep them as engaged as possible. We are more comfortable now with using a variety of means to communicate and engage our parents and students (when they are away from school).
4. As I mentioned earlier, activities funded by the SIA were prioritized mainly on what we could feasibly implement in a year where we had a plethora of restrictions on our activities and contact with students as well as the struggle to find qualified personnel. This last struggle continues into this year as there are far more employment opportunities than there are people interested in filling them across our economy.