

Continuous Improvement Process, Planning and Practices

1. Standards Aligned Curriculum

a. How will the LEA ensure the defined curriculum includes clearly defined scope and sequences and learning objectives aligned to state and / or national standards?*

The Rainier School District (RSD) adopts research-based programs that align with Common Core State Standards (CCSS). When adopting curriculum, the District researches sound programs that align with the CCSS and national standards with a clearly defined scope and sequence. Teacher teams pilot textbooks and online resources, pore over existing materials to figure out which units are aligned to the standards and collaborate with each other to discuss the best options to meet students' needs. Teachers meet monthly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to analyse and plan sequential lessons that align with CCSS ensuring students meet benchmark. Future focus will address vertical curriculum alignment district-wide.

2. High-quality Instruction

a. What is the LEA's process for ensuring classroom instruction is intentional, engaging and challenging for all students?*

Professional development is a key component in developing and implementing a successful district plan. Collaborative professional development promotes increased staff engagement and PLCs PreK-12th. This year, districtwide, we have shifted our focus to the successful implementation of quality PLCs. Rainier Junior Senior High School (RJSHS) is focused on PLC groups based on topics. HPE is focused on grade-level PLC work. The Special Education department is focused on classroom-based PLC work (academic or behavioral) and districtwide professional development is related to advisory and morning meeting models. The District as a whole is adding consistency to schedules across schools and common instructional frameworks to increase rigor and support the prioritized initiatives. This foundation will help stakeholders embed learning which aligns with the District goals and objectives within this CIP.

b. How are feedback and coaching used to guide instructional staff towards research-based improvements to teaching and learning (such as formative assessment practices, culturally responsive pedagogy and trauma informed practices)?

Professional development calendars are created collaboratively as a district to address formative assessment practices in PLCs, social/emotional learning, culturally-responsive practices, literacy, and math. Feedback and coaching are an embedded practice through evaluation and supervision cycles and peer mentoring in RSD. After District provided professional development, literacy/math coaches, Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRESA) partners, and staff specialists model, support teachers, and provide targeted interventions for small student groups to ensure implementation of the learning. Administrative walkthroughs and formal/informal observations ensure accountability to application of the learning.

3. Talent Management and Professional Development

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a. How does the LEA align professional development and learning activities to the needs of teachers?*

RSD incorporates professional development aligned with specific content areas to support teacher and student learning gains. Active learning encourages teachers working together studying student work, and scrutinizing texts to identify potential challenges for learners. High-quality professional development creates space for teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning in school context that relates to new instructional strategies. Coaching offers the opportunity to see what good practices look like and implement new strategies in the classroom. PLCs provide time for teachers to think about, receive input on, and make changes to their practice by facilitating reflection and soliciting feedback. Ongoing professional development affords the opportunity for teachers to apply the content to their classroom between sessions.

- At RJSHS, a needs assessment was completed by the teachers during professional development. The PLCs are each working on the teachers' chosen priorities (teacher led). The administration is doing professional development around restorative justice and the social emotional needs of our students (identified by our teachers). This will be our 3rd year in trauma informed care work.
- The School Board and Superintendent meet quarterly with the teacher union and representatives from all three schools to hear and discuss both what is going well and opportunities for improvement. This conversation helps to give the District a guide of what practices to continue and what practices to reassess.

b. What processes are in place to identify and address any disparities that result in students of color, students experiencing poverty, students learning English and students with disabilities being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers?*

- RSD actively recruits highly-qualified, diverse staff in order to address any disparities of underserved students. Priority is given to experienced staff by offering competitive hiring wages, providing moving assistance, mentor program, mentor teachers, tuition assistance, and access to graduate coursework on campus through partnering universities. Additionally, we post national searches through contracted services for hiring to reach a wide range of educators across the country and ensure our teachers are effective, experienced, and qualified.

4. Safe and Inclusive Climate

a. What has the LEA done to ensure students, parents, caregivers and community members experience a safe and welcoming educational environment?*

RSD ensures a safe and welcoming educational environment through ongoing professional development focused on Trauma Informed Care (TIC). TIC work has been a focus of the district for the past three years. All the staff have been trained on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) work. New staff members in the District are provided two extra days to attend TIC

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introduction training and certification. This was provided across the county to all school through NWRESA community collaborative wellness grant.

In addition, the District is a pilot site for mindfulness training and has had a huge impact on the overall climate of the District. Staff have made a concerted effort to make stakeholders, students, parents, caregivers feel welcomed. The Superintendent has conducted community engagement and CIP meetings throughout the year as part of our strategic plan and the community has stated via multiple surveys that the buildings are generally welcoming.

At the secondary level, there are student supports in place to support all students through the student success center and advocacy program. These two programs support a safe and supportive community at all levels.

In addition, the following steps have been taken to ensure a safe and welcoming educational environment:

- Restorative justice practices embody discipline centered around equity.
- Equitable opportunities are in place for students signing up for classes at RJSHS.
- Professional development on equity was provided in the spring, for all staff. This was related to transgender training.
- Significant Disproportionality training with board and community members
- Implemented new curriculum (Naviance and DESSA) that emphasizes social emotional learning.
- Monthly safety meetings with community and staff participation address multiple safety priorities.

b. What efforts has the LEA undertaken to remove barriers that impede equity of opportunity for all students, specifically for Native American students, students of color, students learning English, students experiencing poverty and students with disabilities?*

Special Education Mission Statement: The Rainier School District Special Education Department is dedicated to helping each student reach their potential in an inclusive, unified environment where their individual strengths are recognized.

RSD prioritizes removing barriers impeding equity of opportunity for all students. For Native American students, we offer tutoring with specialized instruction, support in finding and applying for grants, and a cultural enrichment program. For students experiencing poverty, we work to ensure food is available through community partnerships and the backpack program, which sends food home for the weekends with students who qualify for the free and reduced lunch program. One way we are working to remove barriers to support equity for students with disabilities is through our Youth Transition Program, which offers post-secondary counseling, work-based learning, job coaching, vocational rehabilitation, and connections to community resources.

The Rainier School District Special Education Department focuses on student needs when determining placement and services for students with disabilities. Dr. Candice Pelt, ODE, has called on all districts to “Dwell in the Possibilities” and to move from offering a “Free Appropriate Public Education to a Free Inclusive Public Education” (Pelt, 2019).

The District responds to Special Education student needs in the following ways:

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- IEP Teams make decisions based on the Least Restrictive Environment by following a continuum of services model
- Professional Development provided related to inclusion plans, partner teachers, equity-based decisions and language
- Professional Development and ongoing training is provided to ensure all team members understand student rights and regulations

Rainier School District considers equity and inclusion across all student supports. Student need drives decisions and opportunities for students. The Trauma Informed Care District Plan, Inclusion Plan, and Professional Development promotes student need.

Equality and inclusion are both priorities in our district. The Special Education Department is committed to make decisions that support ALL of our students through collaboration, addressing student needs, and being part of co-curricular opportunities district-wide. It is our goal to use common instructional frameworks for ALL children through common instructional practices.

Student Assistance teams consult with specialists and special education teachers to ensure a Multi-tiered System of Support is in place to support the needs of all students across all tiers and that quality tier I, II, and III supports are in place and that they support student needs.

Rainier School District is in the process of creating a Significant Disproportionality plan to support equity of all students, including students who qualify for special education services. The administrative team is accessing training through Resolution Northwest on Restorative Practices. A review of procedures and policies will take place as part of this training. Additionally, the Special Education Director has presented information about this indicator to the board. Finally, the Significant Disproportionality plan will result in improved systems and procedures. This will result in supporting student needs and improving equity for all.

Native Voices is a club that is lead by a local non-registered, Native American and employee. Our district has established parent advisory group that works collaboratively with the this leader to increase opportunities and support the needs of students prek-12 students. Some current activities that are taking place are:

- Coordinated partnership with district maintenance and Career Technical Education (CTE) partners.
- Creation and maintenance of a Native Garden on the district campus.
- Pk-12th grade student teams to provide club activities and instruction in a meaningful way.
- After school club activities.

In addition, RSD partners with OEA Choice Trust for staff wellness. When our staff is focusing on wellness there is a trickle effect for our students. Our students see our teachers filling out monthly challenges and participating in wellness walks, showing all students that wellness is important in their lives.

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English Language Learners (L1/L2 students) have access to school Identified indicators of effective schooling practices. Student support include:

- High expectations for all L2 students. Full access to a wide variety of classes and not just to the most basic level content classes.
- Use of cooperative learning, instructional conversations, and cognitively-guided instruction to create a permeating, purposeful use of language in classrooms.
- Use of technology to enrich instruction.
- Language and subject matter development integrated, rather than being taught in isolation.
- Concept development supported in L1. Even in programs that use English as the language of instruction, the use of the native language is found to be an indicator of program effectiveness.
- Comprehensive staff development for all faculty and staff.
- The entire school environment supports L2 learners. Instructional leaders assume responsibility for planning, coordinating and administering program for L2 students.
- The native language is used and home cultures are valued as resources to build upon.
- Family involvement builds supportive environments at home and home-school connections.
- Systematic student assessment adjusts instruction to students' needs and improves program practices.
- EL programs (GLAD/SIOP, Content Shelter English) aligns in all aspects with the District's school improvement plan to help limited English proficient students attain high levels of academic achievement and to have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet state/national standard.

RSD partners with several community organizations to support students experiencing poverty. We partner with HOPE of Rainier food pantry, Eagles, and USG (local business) to provide food for students on the weekends (Backpack Program) who qualify for free and reduced priced meals. These organizations provide the support for food and school supplies for students. Our Youth Transition Program helps with the Backpack Program by teaching our students with disabilities job skills including inventory management, how to bag groceries, and transportation of the food to the distribution site.

Our Family Advocate for students works with our McKinney-Vento families to ensure the students are receiving free meals, transported to school, monitoring progress at school, and ensure they have access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and Medical benefits. We have partnered with Day Breaker Kiwanis to provide food for the

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unaccompanied minors around long school breaks and gifts for these students during the holidays. This is organization provides other support as needed during the year. When we had transportation issues for several families to get signed up for Oregon Health Plan (OHP), our Health Department was able to send the person to our district to help families. This removed the barriers for several families.

c. How will the LEA support efforts to reduce the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom, which may include identifying and supporting schools with high rates of discipline, disaggregated by each of the subgroups of students.*

RSD adheres to SB 553, which was created to dramatically reduce the rates of suspension and expulsion of Oregon students in grades K-5. Suspension and/or expulsion is only considered when:

- The student causes serious physical harm to a student or school employee through non-accidental conduct.
- An administrator determines that the student's behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of students or school employees.
- When required by law.

RSD is in the process of creating a Significant Disproportionality Plan to support equity of all students. The administrative team is accessing training through Resolution Northwest on Restorative Practices. A review of procedures and policies will take place as part of this training. Additionally, the Special Education Director has presented information about this indicator to the Board. Finally, the Significant Disproportionality Plan will result in improved systems and procedures. This will result in supporting student needs and improving equity for all.

5. Family, Community and Stakeholder Engagement

a. What steps have been taken to engage parents, caregivers, communities, stakeholders and partners regarding continuous improvement efforts?*

RSD has taken many steps to engage parents, caregivers, community members, stakeholders, and partners regarding continuous improvement efforts. There have been empathy interviews with both students and families; online surveys for the community, parents, staff, and students; community meetings both on and off campus to accommodate stakeholders who may not feel comfortable on campus; and the District has held teacher focus groups and has quarterly meetings with both unions.

b. Where necessary, how has the LEA consulted with Oregon's nine Federally Recognized tribes?*

RSD has found the most effective method of consulting with Oregon's nine Federally Recognized tribes is by having a parent advisory board that includes parents and guardians from the different Federally Recognized tribes represented in the District. These parents/guardians act as liaisons to bring input to the conversation in a more honest and open

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fashion than we were able to get when reaching out directly to leaders.

6. Leadership Development

a. How does the LEA recruit, onboard, and develop quality leaders?*

As a rural school district, it can be challenging to recruit, hire, and retain licenced staff. Consequently, our school district works collaboratively with staff to create supports for new staff. New staff participate in mentor classes, mentoring from seasoned teachers, team meetings, and ongoing professional development to refine instructional practices. Adult self-care is prioritized and accessed through resources provided by the OEA Choice Trust grant. In addition, teacher leaders provide on-going training for all staff. The District continues to find novel approaches to recruit and retain qualified and effective staff.

b. How does the LEA align professional growth and development to the needs of school and district leaders?*

RSD recognizes leadership qualities in all staff. Professional development opportunities include weekly Late Starts, monthly PLC meetings, peer coaching, and mentoring support. In addition, specialists are consulted for ongoing professional development support that aligns with the District's long-term initiatives including TIC, math, literacy, and attendance. RSD encourages professional growth in all staff and offers generous tuition reimbursement for graduate course work.

7. High-quality Data Systems

a. How does the LEA review data aligned to demographic, student performance, staff characteristics and student access to and use of educational opportunities to inform strategic planning and resource allocation?*

RSD conducts a comprehensive needs assessment to build a strong foundation for the school improvement plan. Assessment is necessary for baseline reform. The focus of the plan is student learning and the impact on instruction. Both quantitative and qualitative data is reviewed to triangulate analyses and ensure accuracy. Multiple sources are considered including test scores, teacher reports, student work samples, attendance reports, SWIS data, and surveys to identify unique strengths and needs of student gaps between current outcomes and goals, and areas for improvement. Decisions are informed by data, research, and best practices to shape plans, and programs.

RSD worked collaboratively with the Organizational Assessment Team for three years to develop including six pillars aligned with our mission and vision. We align resources (such as learning technologies, staff, time, funding materials, trainings and so on) to achieve RSD's vision, mission, and goals. Systematic reviews of our action plans guide progress toward goals. RSD has identified math achievement, school climate, and attendance as priority areas.

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Rainier School District's Mission Statement:

A spirited learning community that is student-centered, safe, academically focused, and dedicated to preparing every student for success in the global society in which we live.

Pillar Number One:	Student Success
Pillar Number Two:	Effective and Consistent Communication
Pillar Number Three:	Respectful and Positive Culture
Pillar Number Four:	Effective, Collaborative, Professional Development and Staff Acknowledgement
Pillar Number Five:	Facilities and Technology Development
Pillar Number Six:	Safe and Healthy School Environment

8. Continuous Improvement Planning

a. How does the LEA use data to set goals, making ongoing decisions about instructional practices and supports, and prioritize resources to schools with the highest needs?*

Rainier School District analyzes multiple data sources throughout the school year to make ongoing decisions about instructional practices and supports needed. For example, district STAR assessments are administered three times per year (beginning, middle, and end) and data is analyzed in order to guide instructional support and interventions. When reviewing SBAC and STAR math data in recent years, it became evident there is an urgent need for students to improve their math proficiency. As a result, a math interventionist was hired to provide support through small group instruction, after school tutoring, co-teaching with Algebra One with small group pullouts, etc. In addition, student progress is monitored through Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) and in-program assessments to determine next steps for instructional practices and supports. Staff is able to prioritize resources to the areas of highest need.

b. Describe the LEA's process for monitoring continuous improvement processes, including updating the school board and other stakeholders on progress.*

At each school, administration and staff meet bimonthly to review data and goal progress. There are quarterly meetings and contract maintenance meetings with both unions. Monthly updates are shared at School Board Meetings regarding progress toward goal completion. A timeline for task completion has been created and reviewed during bimonthly meetings. Plan review guides next steps for plan implementation. In our bimonthly meetings, the following questions are addressed:

- What does the evidence show?
 - What is/is not working?
 - What adjustments are needed?
 - What supports are being provided? Are the supports working? What more is needed?
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9. Supports and Interventions for under-achieving Students

a. How will the LEA support and / or integrate early childhood education programs at the local educational agency or individual school level, including plans for the transition of participants in such programs to local elementary school programs?*

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Currently, RSD has a PreK program on campus, which includes two Rainier Preschool classrooms and one Head Start classroom, servicing approximately 60 students in all. On a monthly basis, the PreK teams meet with the local Educational Service District (ESD) specialists to collaborate regarding the needs and support of the preschool students in all three programs. In the spring of each year, the PreK team meets with the kindergarten teachers, ESD specialists, and Special Education team to prepare for the students transitioning to kindergarten. The PreK program in RSD has provided a smooth transition for approximately two-thirds of the incoming kindergarten students. In addition, grant funding has allowed for a kindergarten transition program (Kindercamp) for the last four years. Two weeks prior to the start of school, incoming kindergarten students can attend school to acclimate them to the school setting and to learn the school and class expectations and routines.

b. What strategies does the LEA use to facilitate effective transitions for students from middle grades to high school and from high school to postsecondary education? (Examples: coordination with institutions of higher education, employers, and other local partners, access to early college, high school or dual or concurrent enrollment opportunities, career counseling, etc.)*

Sixth grade students participate in a Stepping Up program, which includes a parent night and visits to the Junior High. Students and families join coordinated evening events in which Junior High School routines and expectations are shared. Students also participate in forecasting schedules in the spring before they transition to the Junior High in the fall. The Columbian Crew, a group of high school student leaders, provide support for incoming seventh graders on the first day of school. Transition plans are created for Special Education students. In addition, dual credit college classes and three Career Technical Education (CTE) courses are offered.

c. What policies and procedures are in place to ensure that activities carried out by the agency will not isolate or stigmatize homeless children and youths?*

The District has a homeless liaison. Our homeless liaison works with HOPE, an organization that works to help provide food to send home on weekends for students who qualify for free or reduced lunches, to ensure food on non-school days. The liaison also provides a list of everyday items to HOPE, who then works to collect the items students need to succeed, such as school supplies and winter gear. Other local agencies work to provide food for holiday meals, as well as holiday gifts of both wants and needs for students. Our schools also work to ensure students and their families know about OHP and health benefits, through conversation and outreach programs. Additionally, the schools work to provide financial assistance for field trips and sports fees.

d. How does the LEA support the academic needs of students who are not yet meeting or exceeding state and national standards as well as those who have exceeded state and national standards?*

Title I funds received provide services to students who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet challenging State academic standards. Title I funds provide additional academic support and learning opportunities to help low-achieving students master challenging curricula and

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meet state standards in core academic subjects. For example, funds support Tier II and Tier III reading and mathematics, as well as preschool, after-school, and summer programs to extend and reinforce regular school programs. Free transportation is provided for after-school programs and tutoring. Students exceeding academic expectations are offered accelerated learning opportunities including Talented and Gifted Programs, dual credit college classes and three CTE courses. Additionally, RJSHS has a student success room with an instructional assistant to support students on a one-on-one basis when they are struggling academically.

e. How does the LEA support the academic needs of historically underserved students who are not yet meeting or exceeding state and national standards as well as those who have exceeded state and national standards?*

To increase the achievement levels of minority and low-income students, RSD focuses on high standards, challenging curriculum, and good teachers. All students can achieve at high levels when presented with rigorous coursework. Also, some students require more time and instruction. RSD prioritizes academic core with clear and high standards, assessments aligned with standards, accountability systems that demand results for all students, intensive efforts to assist teachers in improving their practice and extra instruction for students who need it.

10. Library Program

a. What steps have been taken to ensure all students have access to strong school library programs?

The Rainier School District and the City of Rainier of Rainier are entering their third year of a joint partnership running the community library. The school district has libraries at both the elementary and secondary levels. Each building has a school librarian and the city librarian is also a District employee. The librarians work together to:

- Ensure that every student in the entire community has access to the three libraries and that the locations are user-friendly.
- That every student in the District and community is provided a free library card for all three locations.
- Grades Pre-K-6 participate in at least one field trip to the city library for special programs and general access to the city library.
- Each summer there are five special reading activities. The summer reading program has been a huge success and had over 100 students attend these special programs.
- The three libraries are also tied with the other four county libraries to share and exchange books and special programs.
- Teachers are able to request research materials for special classroom projects and topics.
- The city library partnership also allows us to provide tutoring for our students after hours and on Saturday. This extra program also provides free high-speed internet access, which some of our families currently do not have.

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- The City/District program provides family passes to use at the zoo, various city museums, and OMSI.
- Transportation is available for these programs.

Our librarians attend summer professional development programs that are designed to improve rural library services. Our last state audit reported that our programs are compliant and up to date.