

## Athena-Weston School District Integrated Plan Application, February 2023

### Needs Assessment Summary

**Please offer a description of the comprehensive needs assessment process you engaged in and the high-level results of that needs assessment. Include a description of the data sources you used and how that data informs equity-based decision making, including strategic planning and resource allocation.**

The needs of students in the Athena-Weston School District have shifted significantly following the learning disruption caused by the Covid-19 Global Pandemic. Recognizing this shift, our dedicated District Leadership Team, composed of the school board, superintendent, building administrators, certified, and classified staff, leveraged this opportunity to review and revise the district's Strategic Plan during the winter and spring of 2022. This was a first step in our Comprehensive Needs Assessment. At the forefront of the Strategic Plan work is a commitment to providing equitable services. Our revised Strategic Plan explicitly recognizes and honors the cultural diversity of our community and the needs of individual students. The District Leadership Team identified greater need for social emotional support, multiple school to career pathways, and robust academic interventions and targets prior to high school in order to fulfill our mission to support students to ensure that all students reach their full potential. Data used included iReady and SBAC reading and math scores, staff and parent input, behavioral data, and mental health intervention data. Following the Strategic Plan revision, all staff provided further input around the identified student needs shifts at our August 2022 in-service training.

With a revised Strategic Plan as its compass, the district further examined the needs of its students adding graduation rate and on-track data, participation in college and career opportunities, participation in CTE and college-level coursework, attendance rates, parent surveys, community engagement feedback, focal student group surveys and empathy interviews. Particular attention was given to the needs of our underserved populations: Native American, special education, and poverty-impacted students.

The Needs Assessment process identified district strengths. First, our graduation rate is consistently higher than the state average, and the district continues to attract a large number of transfer students from the surrounding area due to its positive reputation. In general, feedback from parent surveys and community engagement events indicate a high rate of overall satisfaction with the district's service to children.

The district identified several challenges as a result of its Comprehensive Needs Assessment. First, while overall graduation rate remains above the state average, students impacted by poverty and homelessness are lagging behind their peers. Also, attendance rates have dropped significantly post-Covid, particularly for our Native American and Hispanic students. In addition, underserved students are not accessing college-level coursework at the high school. iReady, SBAC, and academic data reveal the percentage of students performing at grade level in reading and math has dropped significantly, particularly for underserved populations. Mental health data indicates a continued high need for social-emotional support that now extends to an increased need for family services. Student, staff, and community input further supports the need to emphasize student mental health and behavioral support services. Finally, student, staff, community, and parent feedback indicates an increased need to expand college and career opportunities and pathways for all students. Using our “*Decision-making with a Purpose Tool*” as a guide, the District Leadership Team prioritized investments most likely to impact opportunity gaps uncovered by this process.

### Plan Summary

**Your plan summary will help reviewers get quick context for your plan and the work ahead. In the coming months, you may also use this process to quickly explain to the community, local legislators, media, and other partners how you are braiding and blending these investments. Please share the exact needs or issues the investments will address as outlined in your four-year plan and as it relates to the purposes stated in law for all applicable programs, and what processes you’ll put in place to monitor progress toward addressing those needs. (500 words or less)**

The Athena-Weston School District is a combined rural district which incorporates the communities of Athena, Adams, and Weston and includes Weston Mountain and the Umatilla Indian Reservation’s lower and upper river regions. Our transportation routes cover an area of 440 miles on a daily basis. As a county, the median household income is \$50,071 with a poverty rate of 17.8%. The Athena-Weston School District’s average household income, which includes reservation households, is \$37,740 annually. The Athena-Weston School District serves approximately 560 students in grades K-12. Demographic data indicate a population that is 72% white, 13% hispanic, and 6% Native American. In addition, 14% of the total student population requires specially designed instruction (SDI) and 55% are qualified for Free or Reduced meals. The Athena-Weston School district receives a large number of interdistrict transfer students desiring a smaller school community. These transfers impact our enrollment on an annual basis.

The following objectives and strategies were developed to address priorities identified in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment in consultation with the District Leadership Team. Building staff also reviewed this plan to ensure it will best serve our geographically, economically and culturally diverse student population over the next four years. Throughout our planning process—from the beginning of our strategic plan revision to now—and at all levels of our school system—from the Board to the bus

drivers— purposeful and thoughtful decision-making is a priority. In addition to programmatic considerations, the district carefully considers the unintended consequences on all stakeholders, but especially those who are historically or consistently underserved.

### **Outcomes & Strategies:**

A: All students in the AWSD will graduate on time with clear post secondary plans.

A1: Promote and expand college and career pathways.

A2: Engage community and business partnerships that support student opportunities and achievement.

B: All students in the AWSD will receive a well-rounded education that meets their individual needs.

B1: Strengthen monitoring and intervention systems K-12.

B2: Provide social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health support to students in grades k-12

B3: Prioritize professional development focused on differentiation and engagement strategies.

In addition to the Longitudinal Performance Growth Targets of the 5 Common Metrics (3rd grade reading, 4-year graduation and 5-year completion, 9th grade on-track and regular attenders) our Student Success and On-Track monitoring and intervention systems will continue to review 6th grade reading and Math iReady diagnostics, participation in college-level coursework, CTE courses and school-to-career and SES data.

## **Equity Advanced**

### **What strengths do you see in your district or school in terms of equity and access?**

Reflecting on our data and stakeholder feedback helped us celebrate our progress and recognize the support we have put in place provides a solid foundation for continuing to address our areas of concern.

At the high school, we celebrate our efforts to increase access to CTE and across the district we have added staff to provide individualized academic and wraparound services. Details follow:

-Increase in Native American and Hispanic and Sped students taking CTE courses compared to last year.

-The percentage of Native American and Hispanic and SPED students taking CTE courses is proportional to the overall percentage of the student population.

-The CTE Revitalization Grant funded Food Science coursework and job-skills training for the SPED population, including employer partnerships. Our YTP Coordinator and Food Science instructor collaborate to serve a total of 37 students, approximately 15% of whom are special education students.

-Fully-staffed Student Support Team levels the playing field by coordinating and providing essential mental health, behavioral and physical services to students and families. This work became possible with prior SIA funding and added the following staff: High School behavioral specialist, Middle School licensed school counselor, Elementary part-time classified support, District School Psych/SPED Director/Student Success Coordinator, and contracted Community Counseling Solutions support.

- Academic support staff member working with 4th-6th graders to achieve grade-level reading performance by the 6th grade to support the transition into middle and eventually high school advanced coursework. This strategy has been successful with Reading and is expanding to Math.
- Fully-staffed credit recovery program at high school to erase pandemic-induced credit deficiencies

**What needs were identified in your district or school in terms of equity and access?**

Both the strengths and continuing needs are bolstered by the district's Strategic Plan, developed by our Board through community engagement sessions and prioritizes providing multiple pathways for kids, access, and meeting basic needs of students. Our focal groups need attention as follows:

- Native American, Hispanic, and SPED students are significantly UNDERREPRESENTED in advanced and college-credit courses
- Comprehensive SPED programming across the district continues to be a challenge for us and districts across the state due to workforce shortages and the level of knowledge across specialties and experience required to manage the workload. Fierce competition for these professionals affects our recruitment and retention efforts.
- Continued need for access to mental health support especially for poverty-impacted, homeless, foster, students living in remote areas.
- Students experiencing homelessness and poverty lag in on-time graduation.

**Upload the equity lens or tool you used to inform and/or clarify your plan & budget.**

[InterMountain ESD Decision-Making With a Purpose Tool](#)

**Describe how you used this tool in your planning. (Referring to equity lens/tool)**

The District Leadership Team utilized the InterMountain ESD's Decision-Making With a Purpose Tool, which reviews both programmatic considerations and equity-focused questions, in its work to revise the Strategic Plan. Particular attention was given to ensuring that the Strategic Plan's vision, mission, values, and commitments reflect a path toward equitable outcomes for all students. An overarching theme of the revised Strategic Plan is meeting the needs of individuals.

Decisions regarding survey questions for stakeholders were also influenced by the equity-focused questions on our decision-making tool, particularly in the area of identifying barriers to equitable outcomes. In addition, the tool's protocol was utilized while developing the Outcomes, Strategies, and Activities in the Integrated Guidance application process and prioritizing investments.

**Describe the potential academic impact for all students AND focal student groups based on your use of funds in your plan.**

Funding will focus on the following: a fully-staffed student mental health and behavioral support team, maintaining and expanding school to college and career opportunities, increasing and strengthening

academic intervention and tracking systems and supports. The intention is to positively impact all students, particularly those experiencing poverty and our historically underserved populations. By providing for all students consistent and targeted academic interventions, behavioral and mental health support, and increased options for college and career readiness, the district can meet its commitment of ensuring on-time graduation with clear post-secondary options.

**What barriers, risks or choices are being made that could impact the potential for focal students to meet the Longitudinal Performance Growth Targets you've drafted, or otherwise experience the support or changes you hope your plan causes?**

We have used our decision-making tool to ensure that our focal populations are not negatively impacted by our Integrated Guidance Plan. High levels of social-emotional staffing and access help to "normalize" rather than stigmatize students in need of services. Increasing access to school to career and college options for all ensures that barriers to success are removed.

**What policies and procedures do you implement to ensure activities carried out by the district do not isolate or stigmatize children and youth navigating homelessness?**

Homeless students in the Athena-Weston districts are served by the same system of monitoring and interventions as all other students. In addition to the Student Success Team and classroom support, the district assigns a liaison to ensure that all duties required by law are carried out, that students are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless, and that they are held to the same academic standards and provided the same opportunities as all other students. A homeless student will be admitted, in accordance with the student's best interest, to the student's school of origin or enroll the student in a district school in the attendance area in which the homeless student is actually living, unless contrary to the request of the parent or unaccompanied student. Transportation will be provided by the attending or resident districts of the student in accordance with law. With the expansion of individualized wraparound services to students and families ubiquitous across the district, the likelihood that these services will isolate or stigmatize students navigating homelessness significantly decreases.

***CTE Focus:***

**What strengths do you see in your CTE Programs of Study in terms of equity and access?**

Over the last several years, the Athena-Weston school district has expanded its existing CTE Programs of Study (Agriculture, Graphic Design and Manufacturing) to increase access and generate interest in career-connected learning. Most recently we added a food science/safety pathway to function as a lab setting for real job experience with coaching from industry partners and in collaboration with our YTP program. Our CTE facilities have also been upgraded to increase lab-based learning opportunities and create viable and robust embedded pathways such as welding, manufacturing, robotics, plant and animal science in the context of the existing programs of study. In addition we started a popular school-to-careers program to provide on-the-job experience for students and support our local workforce. Last, the district was an early adopter of YouScience, a tool specifically designed to erase bias

by matching students to potential careers based on their aptitudes and interests. These investments laid the groundwork for our increase in Native American, Hispanic and SPED students taking CTE courses. We are proud to report that the percentage of these focal groups taking CTE courses is now proportional to the overall percentage of the student population.

**What needs were identified in your CTE Programs of Study in terms of equity and access?**

Students living in more remote locations (mountain, river) are less likely to participate in the out-of-school activities that are regular components of CTE programs due a lack of transportation. Students and families need support connecting the benefits of modern CTE programs (not your grandpa’s shop class) to a variety of high-demand, high-wage career opportunities spanning the education spectrum—from postsecondary workforce training to graduate degrees. In a small district like ours, it is a challenge to provide the variety of CTE programs to meet student interests.

**What is your recruitment strategy, and how does it ensure equitable access and participation in CTE Programs of Study?**

The research supports early introduction to career pathways for all students. We have developed a beginning agricultural science program at the elementary school with the addition of an afterschool program open to all students. Working with our local 4-H group, the district FFA students share the land lab and support the younger students through mentoring and presentations. The land lab also requires a great deal of community involvement which is a great way to welcome and share information with families and community members.

**How will you ensure equal access and participation in your CTE Programs of Study among focal student groups? How will you ensure there is no discrimination for focal student groups?**

We will work with our CTE team to develop new strategies for increasing equitable access and participation. For example, we may be able to both provide transportation after regular bus routes to remote locations for required events or those that may affect student grades, like an FFA banquet. Likewise, instructors and administration may consider methods for including extracurricular activities within the bus route schedule. Further development of YTP services and support for special education students would increase access to CTE programs. Earlier discussions about college and career opportunities with families would likely help. We are slowly adding systems to address these needs as our staff increases and pandemic-related crisis levels return to normal.

**Well-Rounded Education**

**Describe your approach to providing students a well-rounded education. What instructional practices, course topics, curriculum design, and student skills development are part of this approach? Describe the approaches by grade band (elementary, middle, and high).**

Providing students with a well-rounded education, including social-emotional support, is the focus of our strategic plan. We are expanding out-of-school electives to spark students' career and interest-based learning. We have a robust curriculum adoption process to ensure high-quality, culturally responsive and updated instructional materials for all students.

Elementary classrooms support self-regulation using sensory tools and weekly Second Steps lessons. Friendship groups and character focus awards promote positive behavior. Hands-on science is provided through a school garden and Science Kits. iReady reading and math provide individualized practice. We re-introduced music and library and plan to do the same for art with a community partner. Summer learning offers academic support and engagement. High school teaching assistants are supporting teachers, delighting students and exploring future careers in education.

Middle School focuses on exploratory electives and skill development, including YouScience and a special Friday schedule offering workshop-style courses capturing student interests and talents. Our counselor works with students to improve social-emotional skills. Community partnerships with local libraries, churches and the YMCA enhance student learning through the One School One Book project (4th-8th grade), a donation-driven clothing closet and summer learning opportunities.

The High School has added food science, extra-curricular clubs and work-based learning enhanced by YouScience. Our Virtual Learning Academy offers additional courses and students connect to their younger peers through the partnerships described above. Although the pandemic interrupted our special music program, this year we were able to bring back bagpipe performances. Realigned Math curriculum better meets students' academic and career goals.

**Which disciplines (theater, visual arts, music, dance, media arts) of the arts are provided, either through an integration of content or as a separate class?**

The Athena-Weston School District is known throughout the region for its preservation of Scottish culture, particularly through its Pipes & Drums band with uniforms of traditional Scottish dress and performances in parades and concerts all over the region. The Band has traveled across the country and world to perform and are an integral part of the community's annual Caledonian Days celebration, which attracts Scottish and Irish dancers, artists, bagpipers and other musicians, highland game contestants, working sheep dogs and spectators from across the Pacific Northwest.

The district supports this community heritage by prioritizing the Fine Arts from the beginning. Athena elementary offers weekly music classes for students. Every spring students participate in a week-long fiddle instruction program through Art Center East. Weston Middle School offers band, visual art classes, and theater. Weston-McEwen High School has an CTE Arts program of study focused on Graphic Design in addition to the Visual Arts courses, plus floral design, cheerleading (which includes a dance

component) and of course the band program. Maintaining these traditions is a community-wide effort, including students. Many of the W-MHS students have opportunities to put their talents to work in support of Caledonian Days and return during the festivities long after they graduate to participate in class reunions.

**How do you ensure students have access to strong library programs?**

We begin fostering a love of reading through library programming as early as possible. Athena and Weston public librarians visit our pre-kindergarten weekly for read-alouds and we have utilized funds to ensure that they have appropriate books to check out in the library each week. Pre-school parents receive information, too, about the importance of reading with their children to prepare them for kindergarten.

At Athena Elementary, students also have book check-out weekly and access to SORA, an online library. Our regional media specialist provides professional development to support library usage and each building features an up-to-date and staffed physical library for student and staff use. It is remarkable, too, that for such small towns both Athena and Weston have maintained popular community libraries that are well-funded and count among the district's most involved partnerships.

**How do you ensure students have adequate time to eat, coupled with adequate time for movement and play?**

The Athena Elementary School includes 20 minutes to eat and 20 to play during the lunch break. We also provide additional recess and 30 minutes of PE daily. We prioritize physical activity through our Mile club, which all students participate in.

Middle school students have a 30 minute lunch and recess period daily as well as 45 minutes per day of physical education.

High school students have a 30 minute lunch daily, lunch can be on or off campus. Many students walk to local restaurants or the mini mart. Before school weightlifting, after-school sports, as well as the state requirements for Physical Education classes.

**Describe your process for ensuring the adopted curriculum (basal and supplemental) consists of a clearly stated scope and sequence of K-12 learning objectives and is aligned to all state and national standards.**

Content learning teams are led by a district curriculum adoption lead and include teachers from across the district to encourage K-12 vertical alignment. We follow Oregon's adoption schedule and approved texts to ensure that instructional materials are aligned to current state and national standards. With support from the InterMountain ESD we start our instructional materials review by establishing our vision, researching potential materials, meeting with vendors and reviewing physical curriculum. School board and community input are also part of this process before a final selection is made and curriculum

is approved by the board. The final step is to provide instructors with professional development and time for implementing the curriculum.

**Describe your process for ensuring classroom instruction is intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students.**

The Athena-Weston School District established a late-start Friday schedule in 2019-2020 to ensure adequate time for staff to collaborate and participate in professional learning. The administrative team focuses on engagement strategies through the observation process. Vertical alignment teams in content areas work annually to address both rigor and engagement strategies. Content-specific teacher teams are paid to develop curriculum together throughout the summer to ensure engaging, intentional, and rigorous curriculum.

**How will you support, coordinate, and integrate early childhood education programs?**

We are in our third year of offering a Preschool Promise program. We work closely with our Early Learning regional Hub through coordinated enrollment. We will continue our Kindergarten Round-up each spring and host Kindergarten Jumpstart in August to support parents and students as they transition into the K-12 system. Elementary special education staff conduct on-site observations in the multiple early learning programs our community children attend as well as facilitate transition meetings for students with special needs. Our local preschool participates in transition meetings with kindergarten staff as well. Preschool families are invited and encouraged to attend elementary family events and parent training.

**What strategies do you employ to help facilitate effective transitions from middle grades to high school and from high school to postsecondary education?**

Before forecasting for high school coursework, eighth grade students take the YouScience career diagnostic, which helps identify their aptitudes and choose electives. Middle and high school math and language arts teachers meet in June to ensure vertical curriculum alignment, address skills gaps and discuss students' strengths, challenges, and needs. In the spring, high school staff meet individually with incoming freshmen and their parents to register for 9th grade classes, forecast their high school plan and learn about high school credits, on-track metrics, and resources available for academic and career counseling support. The week before ninth grade begins, a freshmen-only registration sets students up with ASB funds, lunch accounts, lockers, and extracurricular requirements. That same week, incoming students participate in a half-day program led by an upperclassman "Link Crew" acclimating them to the building, traditions and resources of the school.

Students learn real-world skills and build 10-year plans through Success 101 and Personal Finance high school classes. Transition supports include both career and college preparation:

- Dual-credit and expanded options courses expose students to the rigor of college classwork
- College Visits
- Job Shadow and Internship opportunities through the School to Careers and Youth Transition Programs.

- Onsite PSAT, SAT, ASVAB, and PRACT entrance exams
- A Postsecondary Support night providing information about the college registration process and financial aid.
- Resources for writing college application and scholarship essays
- A Google Classroom houses links for virtual scholarship applications.
- Ongoing advising by the school guidance personnel

**How do you identify and support the academic and technical needs of students who are not meeting or exceeding state and national standards, and Perkins Performance targets, particularly for focal student groups?**

Teachers participate in monthly on-track meetings where all students are discussed to identify any wraparound supports needed to maintain their academic success. Interventions are personalized to the student based on their needs and what is known about their circumstances. Students may also be referred to the Student Support Team for both academic and behavioral study. Technical support is provided through initiatives such as a school counselor on-site, 1-to-1 Chromebooks, and alternative educational opportunities to help support all students get to graduation. Community partnerships with Umatilla County Care Program, CTUIR, and DHS allow for elevated support to take place outside of school and address attendance and behavior concerns. This past year, trial students that identify in a minority group were enrolled in a college-prep English course that built skills in scholarship and essay writing. This curriculum is now being adapted into the upperclassmen ELA courses.

CTE teachers participate in professional development provided by the InterMountain CTE Consortium which includes a focus on supporting focal groups and reviewing student data annually to guide investment of Perkins and Secondary Career Pathway funds. Student Support Teams at the high school level also consider student achievement in CTE coursework.

**What systems are in place for supporting the academic needs of students, including for focal student groups, who have exceeded state and national standards?**

The district supports the academic needs of students who function above state and national standards. The referral process for Talented and Gifted identification and placement in accelerated courses includes parent and teacher recommendations to ensure all students, including those from underserved populations, are considered. At the elementary and middle levels, the needs of academically talented students are met through curriculum accelerations, modification, differentiation, and by using a variety of teaching and learning strategies. Student needs for adjusted levels and rates of learning in all subject areas are considered. The district's 2022 language arts adoption reflected a commitment to purchasing instructional materials that allow for differentiation at all levels. This is also a focus of our upcoming math curriculum adoption. Students in grades 6-8 have an alternative Friday schedule that includes a robust selection of electives to foster creativity and under-recognized skills and talents. Examples include woodworking, leatherworking, strategy games, robotics and coding, thematic art classes, drama, debate,

foreign language, and math team. All students, including those in special education and other underserved populations, select and participate in these additional electives.

At the high school, twenty-one dual-credit courses are available via two community colleges and one university in english, math, social studies, post-secondary success, science (including agriculture science), and communication. The district hopes to increase participation in dual-credit courses among all students, including focal populations. Currently, 47% of our high school students are enrolled in at least one dual-credit course. Of those, 31% belong to a focal group, including special education.

**How do you provide career exploration opportunities, including career information and employment opportunities, and career guidance and academic counseling before and during CTE Program of Study enrollment?**

The district employs a part-time School-to-Career Coordinator who supports the YouScience career diagnostic, provides career advising and exposure, and coordinates with business and industry partners to offer field trips, job shadows and internships. Middle school students have interest-based electives on Fridays as well as Home Ec and Public Speaking electives in grade 7 and Home Ec and Careers electives in grade 8.

All students are exposed to CTE technical classes and may continue within the scaffolded class offerings as they are interested. CTE courses make up a majority of the elective offerings at WMHS, so all students will be enrolled in at least one CTE course in their tenure. CTE staff enhance their knowledge of careers in their field through ongoing professional development to better prepare and advise students in their classes. The CTE classes all plan field trips that give students an experiential application of their studies. The on-site Career Day that is offered at least once in a student's tenure features multiple speakers representing trades that utilize CTE skills. Eighth grade students are also brought over to attend Career Day. Finally, students go to at least one job site to see their CTE trade in action. Students participate and have access to academic counseling from a dedicated school guidance coordinator.

**How are you providing equitable work-based learning experiences for students?**

WMHS has a Schools to Career Coordinator who sets up both work shadows and subsequent work study release with interested students and when relevant in partnership with CTE. This process supports students by going through preparatory training such as peer etiquette, interviewing skills, and connections with people in those roles in the community. As a student shows interest, the guidance coordinator helps identify what the path may be to the position, such as post-secondary requirements. Throughout the year, representatives visit campus to meet with interested students about job opportunities. These sessions are available to all students and broadcast schoolwide leading up to the visit. All upperclassmen will participate in a job interview training program where they are coached through interview techniques and are provided with real-time feedback from community members. Finally, WMHS has a Youth Transition Coordinator (YTP) who provides transition services for students with disabilities for either employment or career-related postsecondary training. The YTP program is

available to identified students as soon as they turn 16 years of age and consist of opportunities both on and off campus. Only job sites that adhere to state and federal civil rights laws are considered.

**Describe how students' academic and technical skills will be improved through integrated, coherent, rigorous, challenging and relevant learning in subjects that constitute a well-rounded education, including opportunities to earn postsecondary credit while in high school.**

Our approved programs of study work with regional and statewide pathway groups, supported by the InterMountain CTE Consortium, to collaborate with peers on program quality and improvement and include BMCC instructors to ensure alignment to postsecondary credit and degrees. These groups address all elements of continuous improvement using the High Quality Program of Study matrix.

**What activities will you offer to students that will lead to self-sufficiency in identified careers?**

Students work with the Schools to Careers &/or YTP Coordinator to identify fields of interest. All students in their four-year tenure attend at least one on-site and one off-site career fair. They also take the YouScience diagnostic to help identify their strengths and potential career paths in which they may excel. Once identified, the student is set up with a site visit, job shadow, and/or internship in the appropriate field. Students that have an interest in welding are offered scaffolded programming towards union-approved certification. All CTE programs embed career-related learning standards in their coursework and student leadership opportunities. There are military representatives that visit campus as well throughout the year. Finally, students demonstrate self-sufficiency when identifying coursework towards their major of study in the expanded options track.

### ***CTE Focus***

**How will students from focal groups and their families learn about CTE course offerings and Programs of Study that are available?**

The district hosts parent/student meetings for all students prior to registration to help families support students' high school course planning. CTE Program of Study instructors collaborate with our School to Careers Coordinator, administration and registrar to share information about the postsecondary and career pathways related to their programs of study. In addition, the high school assistant principal highlights CTE courses and activities in a monthly newsletter; the district highlights CTE courses on its websites and social media platforms; the FFA advisor shares CTE information at monthly FFA community support group meetings; and products created through CTE courses such as horticulture, woodshop, and welding are promoted for sale in the community.

**How will you prepare CTE participants for non-traditional fields?**

Relevant CTE instructors collaborate with colleagues across the region and state to share strategies for promoting careers and providing access to programs that are non-traditional by gender. At Weston-McEwen High School, this issue was at the forefront during the bond and CTE Revitalization

grant-funded remodeling and re-equipping of the Manufacturing program facilities. Strategies included improving the cleanliness and organization of the shop facility and providing equipment and gear that was inclusive of all sizes.

**Describe any new CTE Programs of Study to be developed.**

We do not have explicit plans to develop another CTE Program of Study, mainly because of the challenge of finding CTE instructors. However, if the opportunity presented itself and the funding aligned we would be interested in discussing the development of an Education and/or Health Sciences program.

**Engaged Community**

**If the goal is meaningful, authentic, and ongoing community engagement, where are you in that process? What barriers, if any, were experienced and how might you anticipate and resolve those issues in future engagement efforts?**

In late 2021, the District engaged school board members, administrators, certified and classified staff to begin a strategic plan revision process. Since then the district further engaged stakeholders as follows: in-person surveys at parent-teacher conferences, targeted online surveys to special education families, focus groups with Native American and Hispanic students, three community “coffee hour” events, two “thought exchange” events between stakeholders and the school board and administrative team, identification of Key Communicators with focal group representation, including special education and Native American families. These engagements were critical to informing our needs assessment as part of the Integrated Guidance Application process. The School Board and administrative team is committed to continuing an annual cycle of community engagement events.

Barriers in our large, rural district center on transportation and proximity to school and community engagement events. Prior to the global pandemic, one School Board meeting per year was held on the adjacent reservation. The Board met at a CTUIR facility and conducted the meeting jointly with CTUIR education leaders. This practice was forced to stop due to the spread of Covid-19, but the AWSD School Board hopes to restart this joint meeting during the 2023-2024 school year. The district alternates meetings between Athena and Weston to support access. The district is considering the designation of a Native American Family Focal Point to remove barriers for our native families to navigate educational access. Finally, the district will consider ways to host events and meetings in its more remote areas.

**What relationships and/or partnerships will you cultivate to improve future engagement?**

The needs assessment process revealed relationships and partnerships in need of further development. First, the lack of participation from tribal families indicates a strong need to find more productive

methods of soliciting feedback and participation from this critical district stakeholder group. The high school is in the process of developing an Indian Club in partnership with tribal leaders to promote Native American culture and to increase access to college and career options for our Native American students. Also, through close partnership with our CTUIR Indian Educator, graduation rates and on-track status are strong among our Native American students. Second, special education parent surveys indicate a need to improve communication and support around services, course offerings, transition programs, and school to career options. Further developing the Youth Transitions Program staff (YTP) to include more job shadow and internship opportunities for high school students will continue. With increased social-emotional staffing, partnerships with county mental health and wraparound services have developed but will continue to expand and improve in order to support our students impacted by poverty, homelessness and foster care in particular. Finally, the district is developing a "TigerScot Treasure Trunk," which is a clothing and necessities donation and exchange program for all students and families. The district has partnered with local churches and businesses to collect donations of clothing, toiletries, and school supplies, and community volunteers staff the TigerScot Treasure Trunk both during the school day and at after-school events to ensure access to all students and families.

**What resources would enhance your engagement efforts? How can ODE support your continuous improvement process? There should be a connection between this response and your planning/budget template. The second half of the question is what Adam and I would focus on after plans have been approved.**

First, providing adequate support and/or reducing the workload for small districts who lack staff dedicated to fulfilling ODE mandates such as this application is critical to ensuring that state initiatives are not an undue burden. The Integrated Guidance Application process is appropriate for large districts who have the benefit of medium to large district office staff. Unfortunately, the unique benefits of small districts, which include highly personalized and individualized support of students, are not reflected in this application process. Recognizing and honoring the value of small districts by creating an alternative process that is less burdensome and more appropriate would better support the continuous improvement process of districts like Athena-Weston. Second, ODE could support "grow your own" opportunities and simplify licensing requirements to reduce teacher and mental health specialist shortages in rural areas.

**How do you ensure community members and partners experience a safe and welcoming educational environment?**

The Athena-Weston School District is small, rural, and well supported by the community. More than 50% of district staff reside here and attended Athena-Weston schools themselves. This level of investment in the school district is a source of pride for students and staff, generating a safe and welcoming environment. Approximately 25% of our students attend our schools through out-of-district transfer agreements, reflecting the positive environment our staff create for students.

The district utilizes a variety of methods to demonstrate hospitality and safety. Volunteers are encouraged at all campuses. District staff and school board members personally invite key communicators and focal group families to community engagement events. The district's Student Support Team ensures bullying/harassment reports and threats are fully investigated and addressed. The team also provides mental health and social skills support to students. Staff carefully schedule parent teacher conferences to promote attendance so teachers and parents can work as a team to support students. Family fun events, open houses, awards assemblies, band performances, an annual Pow Wow, transition/orientation events, sharing facilities with community and youth organizations, after school and summer programs, and active parent groups all further support an open, caring school environment.

The district hopes to improve outreach to disengaged families who may not feel comfortable at school events or in an educational setting. Families experiencing high levels of poverty or homelessness, who lack a positive school experience previously, or who live in the most rural parts of the district's boundaries are a particular focus.

**If you sponsor a public charter school, describe their participation in the planning and development of your plan.**

*Not applicable*

**Who was engaged in any aspect of your planning processes under this guidance? (Check all that apply)**

- Students of color
- Students with disabilities
- Students who are emerging bilinguals
- Students who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+
- Students navigating poverty, homelessness, and foster care
- Families of students of color
- Families of students with disabilities
- Families of students who are emerging bilinguals
- Families of students who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+
- Families of students navigating poverty, homelessness, and foster care
- Licensed staff (administrators, teachers, counselors, etc.)
- Classified staff (paraprofessionals, bus drivers, office support, etc.)
- Community Based Organizations (non-profit organizations, civil rights organizations, community service groups, culturally specific organizations, etc.)
- Tribal members (adults and youth)
- School volunteers (school board members, budget committee members, PTA/PTO members, booster club members, parent advisory group members, classroom volunteers, etc.)
- Business community
- Regional Educator Networks (RENs)

- Local Community College Deans and Instructors; Local university deans and instructors
- Migrant Education and McKinney-Vento Coordinators
- Local Workforce Development and / or Chambers of Commerce
- CTE Regional Coordinators
- Regional STEM / Early learning Hubs
- Vocational Rehabilitation and pre-Employment Service Staff
- Justice Involved Youth
- Community leaders
- Other:

### How were they engaged?

*(Check all that apply)*

- Survey(s) or other engagement applications (i.e., Thought Exchange)
- In-person forum(s)
- Focus group(s)
- Roundtable discussion
- Community group meeting
- Collaborative design or strategy session(s)
- Community-driven planning or initiative(s)
- Website
- CTE Consortia meeting
- Email messages
- Newsletters
- Social media
- School board meeting
- Partnering with unions
- Partnering with community-based partners
- Partnering with faith-based organizations
- Partnering with business
- Other: Regional Briefs

### ***Evidence of Engagement***

You will be asked to upload your **top five artifacts** of engagement. Smaller districts, as outlined above, are required to submit their top two artifacts.

1. [Fall Conference Surveys](#) (Summary)-Focal Groups
2. [AWSD District Leadership Team Priorities](#)
3. [W-MHS Native American Student Focus Group](#)
4. [IEP Parent Survey Summary](#)

5. [AWSD Staff Feedback for Strategic Plan](#)

**Why did you select these particular artifacts to upload with your application? How do they show evidence of engaging focal student populations, their families, and the community?**

The selected artifacts demonstrate that the Athena-Weston School District engaged staff, all parents, community members, and our focal populations. The special education parent survey and the Native American student focus group interviews specifically address the needs of our two largest focal populations. In addition, our parent-teacher conference surveys encompass all focal groups, including Native American, special education students as well as those experiencing foster care, poverty, and homelessness. Finally, the AWSD District Leadership Team Priorities document and the input from all staff regarding the district's newly adopted Strategic Plan demonstrate the high level of staff engagement through our on-going district needs assessment and planning process.

**Describe at least two strategies you executed to engage each of the focal student groups and their families present within your district and community. Explain why those strategies were used and what level of the Community Engagement spectrum these fell on.**

The Athena-Weston School District specifically engaged two focal student groups and their families: special education and Native American students. These two groups represent our largest populations of historically underserved students.

Strategy One

All families, including those in our special education and Native American focal groups, answered in-person survey questions at our 2022 Fall Parent Teacher Conferences. The questions focused on student supports that were working well or that were still needed for students to be successful. This strategy falls under the Consult level of community engagement.

Strategy Two

The district's CTUIR appointed Indian Education Coordinator conducted empathy interviews in small groups with our middle level and high school Native American students. She led discussions using an empathy interview form and tallied responses and added comments to a master copy. The Indian Education Coordinator then reviewed the information with administrators to highlight particular areas of need or concern. This strategy falls under the Consult level of community engagement.

Strategy Three

The district specifically reached out to families of special education students through an online/paper survey. Families of approximately one-third of our special education students responded. This strategy falls under the Consult level of community engagement.

**Describe at least two strategies you executed to engage staff. Explain why those strategies were used. Explain why those strategies were used and what level of the Community Engagement spectrum these fell on.**

### Strategy One

The Athena-Weston District Leadership Team (DLT), which included community members, certified staff, classified staff, and administrators, worked collaboratively throughout the 2021-2022 school year to review and revise the Athena-Weston School District's Strategic Plan. The first step was to identify District Priority Areas. Next, the DLT developed actions that could be taken to address key issues that arose, and identified possible strategic progress metrics. Input from the DLT was then further refined and additional relevant strategic metrics were added. Their hard work and thoughtful input resulted in a Strategic Plan that reflects the values of the community, the current needs of our students, and a commitment to supporting growth and success for all. In addition, the recommended progress metrics demonstrate a willingness to strive for excellence with the focus always remaining on our "why"—our students. This team's work will impact the direction of the district's work for years to come.

This strategy falls under the Collaborate level of community engagement.

### Strategy Two

During the August 2022 Fall Inservice, all AWSD staff met to review and discuss the newly revised 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. Staff worked in multidisciplinary groups that included both certified and classified staff. These teams were asked to do the following with the Draft Strategic Plan document:

- Identify and discuss the key shifts in the revised Strategic Plan as a result of the Covid-19 Global Pandemic
- Provide input regarding Strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan
- Make recommendations for metrics that the District can utilize to measure progress toward the commitments outlined in the plan.
- Identify any District needs not reflected in the Strategic Plan

Utilizing this input, the District updated the Strategic Plan at a September Board Work Session prior to presenting it for Board approval in October, 2022.

This strategy falls under the Involve level of community engagement.

**Describe and distill what you learned from your community and staff. How did you apply that input to inform your planning?**

In general, feedback from parent surveys and community engagement events indicate a high rate of overall satisfaction with the district's service to children. However, our process of staff and community engagement clearly demonstrated that the needs of students in the Athena-Weston School District have shifted significantly following the learning disruption caused by the Covid-19 Global Pandemic. Data

gathered in all engagement events and methods identified a greater need for social emotional support, multiple school to career pathways, and robust academic interventions and targets prior to high school in order to fulfill our mission to support students to ensure that all students reach their full potential. With this information and data gathered through our Needs Assessment, our Integrated Guidance Application focuses on student mental health and social-emotional, academic, and school-to-college and career support for all students.

### **CTE Focus**

#### **How will you intentionally develop partnerships with employers to expand work-based learning opportunities for students?**

The Athena Weston School District has invested in two specific strategies in order to expand work-based learning opportunities for students. First, the district started a new School-to-Careers program developed and coordinated by a part-time employee with deep ties to the regional business community. She facilitates partnerships between CTE teachers, students, school guidance staff, families and

### **Affirmation of Tribal Consultation**

If you are a district that receives greater than \$40k in Title VI funding or have 50% or more American Indian/Alaska Native Students, you are required to consult with your local tribal government. As evidence of your consultation, you will be asked to upload documentation of your meeting(s) containing signatures from tribal government representatives as well as School District representatives. As this consultation includes all aspects of the Integrated Plan you will be asked to upload the "Affirmation for Tribal Consultation" within this application.

*Not applicable*

## **Strengthened Systems and Capacity**

#### **How do you recruit, onboard, and develop quality educators and leaders? How are you recruiting and retaining educators and leaders representative of student focal groups?**

Attracting qualified staff to a small, rural school district such as Athena-Weston is challenging. To support recruiting and retaining quality educators, the district first works to “grow their own” by encouraging graduates to enter the field of education. The superintendent and building principals attend teacher recruitment events at area colleges and universities. The district supports certified staff with up to \$3000 annually and classified staff with up to \$500 annually in tuition reimbursement. The district also dedicates up to \$1,000 per certified teacher annually to support participation in professional development opportunities. Additionally, the district created a New Teacher Cadre to support early service teachers and also encourages their participation in the Oregon Trail REN’s new teacher cadre as

well. In our area, most high-quality professional learning requires overnight travel, and therefore dedicating adequate resources to support professional development is critical to improving teacher quality. Finally, the district supports the hiring of qualified teachers who may be earning teaching credentials through an MAT program.

**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 more often than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers?**

The Athena-Weston School District educates approximately forty students per grade level. In general, there are two teachers per grade in grades K-8. At the high school level, there are one or two teachers per content area. For this reason, all students have access to all teachers in the district. Our focal group students are not disproportionately taught by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. In addition, our average teacher experience rate is higher than that of the state average.

**How do you support efforts to reduce the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom, particularly for focal student groups?**

The district has established a Student Support Team, made up of administrators, a behavior support specialist, a special education program coordinator, a licensed school counselor, and a mental health support specialist, to identify students in need of a variety of supports, including behavior support. Administrators regularly review discipline data and work with the Student Support Team to develop behavior support and safety plans for students who struggle. In addition, the district provides on-going professional development in trauma informed practices, Conscious Discipline, and the impact of poverty to help staff understand the needs of our foster, homeless, trauma-impacted, and poverty-impacted students. The high school staff plans to engage in Restorative Justice training during the 2023-2024 school year. Finally, the specific needs of our high-needs special education students are identified and training is regularly provided to staff to ensure a proactive and preventative approach to behavior issues rather than a punitive approach.

**How do you align professional growth and development to the strengths and needs of the school, the teachers, and district leaders?**

Ensuring student success is the driving force behind identifying professional growth needs and development for schools, teachers, and district leaders. Teachers and administrators review district, school, and classroom academic data to set annual student growth goals. As needs are identified, professional learning opportunities are aligned. As an example, third grade SBAC reading scores plummeted following the disruption in learning as a result of the global pandemic. In response, the district increased professional development in reading and writing instruction, created a reading support specialist position for grades 4-6, and invested time and resources in learning walks for teachers and administrators. The district plans to follow a similar approach in the upcoming school year to address gaps in students' math skills.

The district also encourages and cultivates partnerships with the Intermountain ESD, the Oregon Trail REN, COSA, and other regional professional development organizations to ensure adequate training opportunities for teachers and administrators. Teachers are encouraged to participate in content-specific regional PLC's. Principals participate in regional administrator cadres, learning walks, and mentorship opportunities.

**How do you provide feedback and coaching to guide instructional staff in research-based improvement to teaching and learning?**

The AWSD employs a variety of methods to provide feedback and coaching, including:

- ESD Instructional coach facilitates learning walks for our early career teachers in partner districts.
- Brought in a writing expert to demonstrate writing strategies in classrooms through a live demonstration model.
- Due to our small staff size, staff are encouraged to participate in regional PLCs
- Staff participate in building specific data analysis to identify strengths and needs and then strategize instructional goals for academic growth or ways to challenge students.
- AWSD uses the Danielson Framework for teacher observations and evaluations. This tool lends itself to discussions focused on research-based teaching and learning.
- AWSD new teacher cadre

**What systems are in place to monitor student outcomes and identify students who may be at risk of academic failure? How do you respond and support the student(s) when those identifications and observations are made?**

At the high school level, teachers and administrators participate in monthly on-track meetings where all students are discussed to identify any wraparound supports needed to maintain their academic success. Interventions are personalized to the student based on their needs and what is known about their circumstances. Students may also be referred to the Student Support Team for both academic and behavioral study. Technical support is provided through initiatives such as a school counselor on-site, 1-to-1 Chromebooks, and alternative educational opportunities to help all students get to graduation. Community partnerships with Umatilla County Care Program, CTUIR, and DHS allow for elevated support to take place outside of school and address attendance and behavior concerns. This past year, trial students that identify in a minority group were enrolled in a college-prep English course that built skills in scholarship and essay writing. This curriculum is now being adapted into the upperclassmen ELA courses.

At the elementary and middle levels, teachers review internal academic data (iReady, Easy CBM) to identify at-risk students. Once identified, students at risk of academic failure are provided with specific and targeted interventions. When interventions do not cause an increase in skills, students may be referred for possible special education identification. In addition, building-level student support team referrals also identify behavioral, attendance, social-emotional, or other student wellness issues that may impact learning. The student support team then utilized internal supports such as onsite mental health services and outside agencies such as the Umatilla County Care Program to address student needs.

**How do you facilitate effective transitions between early childhood education programs and local elementary school programs; from elementary to middle grades; from middle grades to high school; and from high school to postsecondary education?**

The Athena-Weston School district has a robust system to facilitate effective transitions between early childhood education programs and local elementary school programs; from elementary to middle grades; from middle grades to high school; and from high school to postsecondary education. Each spring elementary district staff participate in preschool to kindergarten transition meetings with our local preschool programs, the IMESD early learning center, as well as a kindergarten round up event for families. For families and students transitioning from elementary to middle school, the district hosts an orientation event where student ambassadors take families on tours and answer questions about middle school. The transition process to high school also begins in the spring with family meetings regarding course forecasting and registration, high school culture, and graduation requirements. In August, the district hosts jumpstart programs for incoming kindergartners and middle school students as well as a LINK Crew orientation event for incoming 9th graders. The district has also hired a School to College and Career coordinator, Student Success Coordinator, and a Youth Transition Program specialist to ensure a successful post-secondary transition. Those employees assist students with resumes and job application creation, career exploration, tuition and grant resources, college loan application assistance, employment training, college selection and visitation resources.

**Plan Submission Requirements & Next Steps**

As per the guidance provided by ODE, this plan narrative covers four years, with a two-year [Integrated Planning and Budget Template](#), and includes the outcomes, strategies, and activities we believe will cause changes to occur and meet the primary purposes of the programs included in this integrated plan: HSS, SIA, EDM, CIP, EIS, CTE / Perkins. It reflects the choices made after pulling all the input and planning pieces together for consideration. This plan serves as an essential snapshot of our expected use of grant funds. Other requirements include:

- Providing our equity lens: [InterMountain ESD Decision-Making With a Purpose Tool](#).
- Community Engagement Artifacts, documenting two strategies designed to receive focal group input and two strategies for staff input with any potentially identifiable information removed.
- Assurances that the district will comply with all applicable state and federal civil rights laws, to the effect that no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subject to discrimination under any program or activity on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, gender identity, religion, age, or disability.

The district will receive a notification from ODE to acknowledge receipt of the application and include contact information for an ODE Application Manager, a single point of contact as this plan moves from submission to review, and into co-development of Longitudinal Performance Growth Targets and finally, to executing a Grant Agreement.

*The district sincerely appreciates all of the feedback and participation from the Athena-Weston community, students and staff for the development of this four-year plan. Please direct any questions or comments regarding this plan to Ann Vescio at [ann.vescio@athwestsd.org](mailto:ann.vescio@athwestsd.org) or 541-566-3548.*