

Sweetwater County
School District #1
Head Start

Demographics

Sweetwater is the largest county in Wyoming covering an area slightly less than the size of Massachusetts in Southwest Wyoming. The Union Pacific railroad spurred early development and runs parallel to the Interstate 80 corridor, passing through two major communities. Green River, the county seat, lies west along I-80 with Rock Springs, Wyoming to the east. Two School Districts are served by Sweetwater Head Start, but Sweetwater County School District #1 is the grantee.

Sweetwater county's economic base has depended on minerals extraction, most recently natural gas, and has experienced boom and bust cycles. In 2020, the county had a population of 43,352 people with a median age of 35.7 and a median household income of \$73,384 (datausa.io). The Head Start program must be responsive and ready for economic changes in employment and family financial stability.

Sweetwater County School District #1 Head Start (SCSD#1 Head Start) is a partner in the community in supporting early childhood services for children and their families. The program provides comprehensive child development services to 100 eligible preschool children. SCSD#1 Head Start is center-based and operates three classrooms, four hours per day, four days per week and three extended day classrooms, seven hours per day, four days per week. Five classrooms are located in Rock Springs and one classroom is located in Green River.

Strategic Planning Methodology

SCSD#1 Head Start program views strategic planning as an opportunity to unify the program around the mission and philosophy to form goals and objectives. SCSD#1 Head Start has developed a comprehensive strategic plan which identifies program goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and results based on a five-year projection.

Program stakeholders including the Head Start Executive Director, Director, Policy Council, SCSD#1 Board of Trustees, management staff, teachers, and community partners were invited to participate in the strategic planning process. Data that was utilized in the development of this plan included but is not limited to the Community Assessment, Program Information Report (PIR), Self-Assessment, Annual Report, and School Readiness Goals. Upon completion of the strategic plan document, it shall be presented to the Policy Council and Board of Trustees for approval. The approval of the strategic plan sets in motion the goals and objectives for the following five years.

Strategic planning includes:

- Review of program's mission and vision statements.
- Review an analysis of the program's most recent Community Assessment, PIR, Self-Assessment, School Readiness Goals, On-going Monitoring Plan, Continuation Grant Application, CLASS Data and Family Engagement Plans.
- Creating the program's strategic goals and objectives.
- Communicating the strategic plan to the governing boards, staff, parents, and community partners.
- Ongoing monitoring of the strategic plan.
- Developing a timeframe for reporting progress on the goals and objectives.

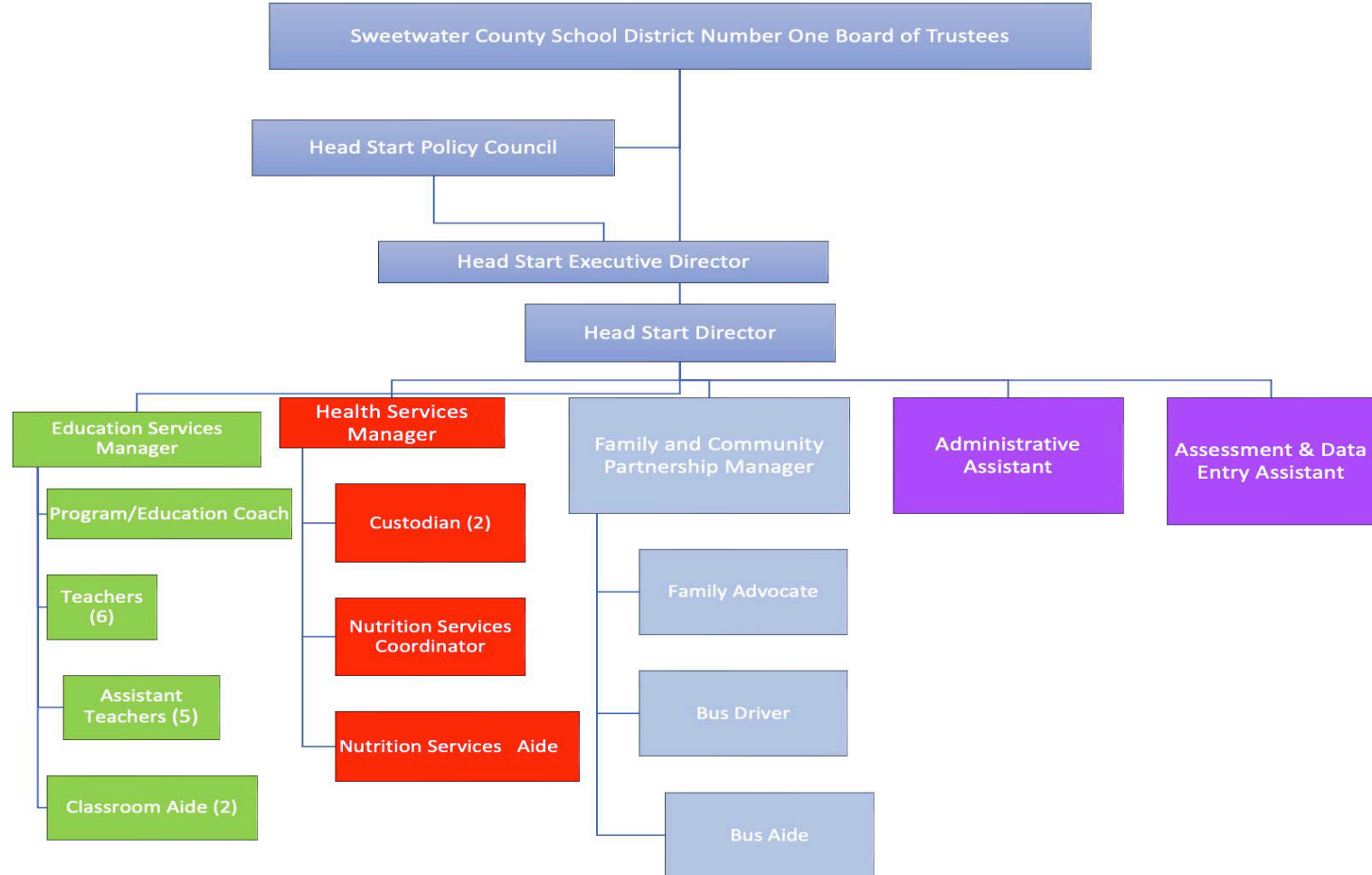
The strategic plan is used as a living and working document throughout all daily activities of the program. It is aligned with policies and procedures and formally reviewed.

Sweetwater Federal Data-Program Information Report (PIR, 2022)

The total cumulative Head Start student population consists of 67 four-year olds and 44 three-year olds, with 8 homeless children, 9 foster children, and 2 on TANF/SSI. Of these, 61 children will be transitioned to kindergarten in 2022. Although a majority of the children speak English, almost 23% come from homes where Spanish is the primary language. This requires development of a dual language curriculum and program. Children with disabilities are also served with 22% on IEPs, dually served by Head Start and the Sweetwater County Child Development Services. 36 children were also provided transportation out of an eligible enrollment of 100 children.



Sweetwater County School District #1 Head Start Organizational Chart 2022-2023



I



SWEETWATER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

Strategic Plan 2018-2023

As an innovative district, united with our community, we empower and inspire all students to academic excellence in pursuit of their interests and passions.

SCSD#1 Head Start Mission

*Sweetwater County School District Number One Head Start
is committed to empowering families by
providing opportunities for early childhood development,
family partnerships, and
community involvement through quality,
confidential services.*

External Trends and Factors that Serve to Predict Organizational Direction

The external factors listed below impact Sweetwater County and contributed to the development of our strategic goals and objectives.

- Community knowledge about Head Start and services provided as well as eligibility criteria
- Decrease in population
- Small community
- Lack of mental health resources in community
- Difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff at competitive salaries
- Shifts in economy from effects of COVID-19; businesses closing
- Food insecurity
- Increasing cost of living
- Lack of public transportation
- Lack of child care options
- Lack of affordable housing
- Expanded Medicaid not available in Wyoming
- Economic differences between Rock Springs and Green River

Internal Trends and Factors that Serve to Predict Organizational Direction

The internal factors listed below impact SCSD#1 Head Start and contributed to the development of our strategic goals and objectives.

- Successful transitions to kindergarten
- Professional development opportunities for staff
- Waitlist
- Transportation challenges
- Budget
- Post COVID parental involvement
- Program communication

Program Strengths

- Collaborative relationship with school district
- Volunteers
- Long-lasting community partnerships
- Innovative technology
- Meeting Non-Federal Match
- Staff dedication to quality services/programming
- County Tripartite Board Support – CSBG funding
- Culturally diverse staff
- Positive, supportive relationships with families
- District-wide safety protocol
- Improved data systems
- Full enrollment with waitlist

Goals and Objectives

Program Goal 1: Focus Area: School Readiness: Head Start will enhance the school readiness of students by providing high quality early education and child development services to enrolled students including those with disabilities and dual language learners to promote students’ growth across each domain of development.

Objectives: Students will be supported with the skills needed to transition and be successful in kindergarten by aligning curricula, assessments, and professional development to the program’s school readiness goals, Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) and the Wyoming State Early Learning Standards.

Impact/Expected Outcomes: (Years 1-5)

1. Students will learn and internalize (follow) classroom rules, building-wide routines, and directions.
2. Head Start teachers demonstrate an increase in the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and The Pyramid Model Observation Tool (TPOT) scores.
3. Students demonstrate growth in age-appropriate progress across all domains.

Expected Challenges: Staffing, creating time in daily staff schedules.

Tasks/Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Completion Target	Success Indicators
1. CLASS and TPOT scores will reflect supportive, intentional and engaging learning opportunities for all enrolled children, including children with disabilities and dual language learners.	HS Director, Education Manager (ESM), Teachers, Special Education Service Providers	Current IEP, Lesson Plans	Ongoing with yearly review (2023-2028)	CLASS scores, TPOT scores, Child Observation Record (COR) reports
2. Intentional collaboration with district partners to align school readiness goals with the Wyoming Early Learning Standards and ELOF	HS Director, Education Manager (ESM), Policy Council, HS Teachers, Kindergarten Administration and Teachers	Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), Wyoming Early Learning Standards, COR reports	Ongoing with yearly review (2023-2028)	Students’ COR reports will show growth in all developmental domains.
3. Utilize peer mentoring to assist teachers who need additional support and develop professional growth	Education Manager (ESM), Peer Mentors, Education Staff	CLASS and TPOT scores, COR data, SWIVL camera	Ongoing with yearly review (2023-2028)	CLASS and TPOT scores will show individual teaching staff growth.

Program Goal 2: Focus Area: Family Partnership and Community Engagement: Head Start will empower families to be proactive in their student's success in school and beyond by strengthening and partnering with families to identify and address family needs and support family goals to improve family well-being.

Objectives: 80% of families will engage with Head Start by attending at least one home visit (other than initial) or parent teacher conference, accomplishing at least one family goal and attending at least one family event or parent class.

Impact/Expected Outcomes: (Years 1-5)

1. Parents have stronger social connections, providing links to support in times of need. Family Services will emphasize parents as their student's primary teacher and demonstrate positive strategies and family engagement.
2. Increased amount of completed family goals.
3. Strengthened parents' ability to advocate for their student.
4. Positive parent/staff relationships.
5. Increased parent skills related to positive child and family outcomes.
6. Increased number of parent volunteers.

Expected Challenges: Presentation style/online vs. in-person engagement; Participation from all stakeholders; Services and resources; Follow-through from parents.

Tasks/Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Completion Target	Success Indicator
1. Increased collaboration between family service staff and education staff.	HS Director, Management Team, Parent, Policy Council	Embedded Time, Communication Method, Collaboration Opportunities	Ongoing (2023-2028)	Increase in family participation in Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences.
2. Provide a variety of family and parent events that address diverse needs and interests.	HS Director, Management Team, Community Partners, Parent Volunteers	Funding to support parent events, Childcare during events, Parent Interest Survey to identify events, Space to hold events, Community Partners to provide events	Ongoing throughout grant cycle. (2023-2028)	Increased attendance at family events/activities. Completion of Pre and Post Family Interest survey.
3. Thorough explanation of program expectations and opportunities at application time throughout school year.	Family and Community Partnership, Family Advocate, Policy Council	Parent Information Book/materials	Developed Year 1 (2023-2024) Ongoing throughout grant cycle (2023-2028)	Completion of Parent Information book, Increased parent knowledge of program expectations (Pre and Post Parent Interest survey)

Program Goal 3: Focus Area: Staff Capacity and Retention/Professional Development: Head Start will ensure that all students and families have access to quality Head Start support services by recruiting, hiring, training and retaining qualified staff.

Objectives: Increase number of full-time positions with competitive salaries.

Impact/Expected Outcomes: (Years 1-5)

1. Decreased staff turnover.
2. Increased education/credentials, skills and expertise of staff.
3. Higher child and family outcomes resulting from highly qualified staff.

Expected Challenges: Funding opportunities, recruiting applicants that meet the required qualifications, District Pre-K, loss of staff to external employment positions.

Tasks/Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Completion Target	Success Indicator
1. Identify additional funding opportunities to increase staff wages and compensation.	HS Director, Management Team, Policy Council	Funding, Embedded time to research grant opportunities, Wage Comparability Study	Year 1 (2023-2024) Ongoing throughout grant cycle	Completed Wage Study, Additional funding identified and secured, Increase to base wages for all staff.
2. Evaluate program organization and identify if restructuring supports community needs.	HS Director, Policy Council, Management Team	Wage Study, Community Assessment	Year 2 (2024-2025) Ongoing to reflect needs outlined in Community Assessment	Staffing positions support needs of program, increased staff wages, increased staff qualifications.
3. Review new hire orientation and onboarding procedures.	HS Director, Management Team, Policy Council, HS Staff	Current new hire procedures, self-assessment focus group, develop survey tool to gain feedback on hiring/onboarding	Year 1 (2023-2024)	New hire survey, Completed Self-Assessment, Revised Onboarding procedures
4. Identify additional funding to support Head Start staff continued education/certifications and professional development opportunities.	HS Director, Management Team	Funding opportunities, Partnership with possible education institutions (WWCC, UW?)	Year 2 (2024-2025)	At least two staff enrolled in Early Childhood degree programs or credential program, Increased staff opportunities for trainings.

Program Goal 4: Focus Area: Health and Safety/Nutrition: Head Start will nurture a healthy environment for all students and families and promote a healthy lifestyle for students and their families.

Objectives: 85% of enrolled students and families will participate in health literacy engagement activities to increase student and family health behaviors, physical abilities, and emotional well-being.

Impact/Expected Outcomes: (Years 1 – 5)

1. Increased parent knowledge of healthy habits that support their student in developing basic hygiene and oral health skills.
2. Early awareness and detection of student health concerns.
3. Families are connected to ongoing, accessible health care.
4. Health Services Advisory Committee focused on strategies to address challenges to families obtaining medical care for students.

Expected Challenges: Scarcity of affordable and accessible health insurance for families, provider limits on Medicaid patients, generational wellness knowledge and practices, lack of community agencies to provide training for families, creating new medical provider partnerships.

Tasks/Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Completion Target	Success Indicator
1. Increase the number of family goals related to health and wellness.	Family and Community Partnership Manager, Health Services Manager, Family Advocate	Family goal sheets	Year 1 (2023-2024) ongoing throughout grant cycle	Increased number of completed family goals specific to health and wellness.
2. Increase the number of classroom home activities related to health and wellness (potential in-kind).	Health Services Manager, Education Manager, Teachers, Health Services Advisory Committee	Health and wellness newsletter	Year 1-5 (2023-2028)	Increased parent engagement in home activities, returned health and wellness activity.
3. Create ongoing relationships with community health agencies and resources.	HS Director, Health Services Manager	Community Health Agency Partnerships	Year 1-2 (2023-2025)	Additional community partnership agreements formed.
4. Parents and families participate in health and wellness activities, class, and/or trainings at Head Start or in the community.	Family and Community Partnership Manager, Family Advocate, Health Services Manager	Schedule of community events focused on health and wellness, Head Start Health and Safety Fair Vendors, Parent trainings	Year 1-5 (2023-2028)	Event attendance roster

Program Goal 5: Focus Area: Mental Health: Head Start will increase educational supports to foster positive social/emotional development and the lasting effects on students, families and staff.

Objectives: Students, families and staff will engage in activities that improve mental health and well-being.

Impact/Expected Outcomes: (Years 1-5)

1. The work environment will foster wellness and a healthy lifestyle for students, families and staff.
2. Students, families, and staff will benefit from community collaboration to address mental health awareness and supports.
3. Students will demonstrate increased appropriate social/emotional behavior.

Expected Challenges: Scarcity of mental health resources in community; lack of participation from parents and staff.

Tasks/Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Completion Target	Success Indicator
1. Evaluate instructional teaching practices that teach social/emotional skills.	HS Director, Education Manager, Teachers, Peer Mentors	Evaluation Tool. Pre and Post survey	Year 1 (2023-2024)	CLASS scores will indicate student growth in social emotional domains. Increased TPOT scores, COR data will reflect increase in social/emotional domain.
2. Research and share self-care practices to reduce staff stress and promote wellness.	HS Director, Health Services Manager, Health Services Advisory Committee	Pre and Post staff climate survey, Funding to create wellness incentives, Research based stress reduction strategies for educators	Year 1-5 (2023-2028)	Developed Pre and Post staff climate surveys that show staff needs, Documentation of shared strategies, Staff engagement in wellness challenge activities.
3. Identify resources for mental health and wellness for parents, children and staff.	HS Director, Management Team	Funding to support staff mental health and wellness incentive, Embedded time to research resources	Year 1-5 (2023-2028)	Staff and Parent knowledge of resources available to support mental health; Pre and post parent interest survey data, Pre and post staff climate survey data.

Program Goal 6: Focus Area: Communication/Marketing: Head Start will develop an effective communication process with all internal and external stakeholders to increase agency visibility and partnership opportunities.

Objective: Increased community knowledge of services and awareness of Head Start.

Impact/Expected Outcomes: (Years 1-5)

1. Increased community knowledge of Head Start and the services it provides.
2. Additional community partnerships.
3. Increased volunteer support.
4. Increased number of referred students to Head Start.

Expected Challenges: Staffing, time and budget constraints.

Tasks/Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Completion Target	Success Indicator
1. Develop external communication/marketing plan.	HS Director, Management Team, Policy Council	Marketing plan	Year 2 (2024-2025)	HS Staff can briefly describe SCSD#1 Head Start services; Increased community partnerships, Marketing Plan that is shared with external agencies, Increased HS Staff involvement in community events.
2. Work with community partners to support Head Start services that generate volunteer hours and in-kind.	HS Director, Family and Community Partnership Manager, Community Partners	Community partnerships, presentation/marketing plan, in-kind reports	Year 1-5 (2023-2028)	Increased community volunteer and support; Increase annual in-kind total.
3. Develop a “one sheet” overview of the services our Head Start program provides to share with community partners.	HS Director, Management Team	Marketing Plan	Year 1 (2023-2024)	HS staff can describe SCSD#1 Head Start services and student educational targets; HS staff attend two community events a year to promote and recruit Head Start.

Program Goal 7: Focus Area: Early Head Start: Head Start will explore supplemental funding and/or converting enrollment slots from services for Head Start preschool-aged students to Early Head Start services for pregnant women, infants and toddlers based on the needs reflected in the Community Assessment.

Objective: Provide Early Head Start slots to pregnant women, infants and toddlers.

Impact/Expected Outcomes: (Years 1-5)

1. Increase support and prenatal outcomes for expectant mothers and children up to age 3.
2. Enhance the development of young children.
3. Promote healthy family functioning.
4. Increase teen mom graduation rates by providing care for infants while they are in school.

Expected Challenges: Recruiting and hiring qualified staff, District day-care

Tasks/Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Completion Target	Success Indicator
1. Analyze Community Assessment to make recommendations for program design structure to convert Head Start slots to Early Head Start slots.	HS Director, Policy Council, Board of Trustees	Current and past Community Assessment data; HS Conversion of Slots application, Additional funding	Year 1 (2023-2024)	Approval from governing boards to convert Head Start slots to Early Head Start slots.
2. Review program budget to see if additional funding is needed to support Early Head Start services.	HS Director	Current budget; Cost Analysis;	Year 1 (2023-2024)	Budget development that supports Early Head Start services.
3. Recruit and hire qualified staff for Early Childhood classroom.	HS Director, Management Team, Policy Council	Early Head Start Teacher(s) job description	Year 2 (2024-2025)	Hired qualified staff who have experience, competencies and relevant education to serve expectant families, infants and toddlers.
4. Provide developmentally aligned supplies, curricula, equipment and materials to Early Head Start classroom.	HS Director, Education Services Manager, Health Services Manager, Policy Council	Supplies, Equipment, Curricula	Year 1 (2023-2024)	Evidence based curricula and professional development training for Early Head Start staff; Early Head Start classrooms fully furnished.

The above goals were developed during several program-wide strategic planning sessions and are intended to serve as a guide for the five-year grant to be submitted in 2023. As part of the planning process, Sweetwater County School District #1 and Head Start developed annual measurable objectives and grant outcomes reported to Region 8 Office of Head Start while monitoring the progress of its efforts to sustain compliance and quality of the past 27 years.

Acknowledgement:

Sweetwater County School District #1 Head Start would like to acknowledge the SCSD#1 Board of Trustees, Policy Council, parents, community partners and staff who participated in this strategic planning process. The input and support provided is critical to the success of the Head Start program.

