



Springfield Public School Superintendent Todd Hamilton spoke at the Springfield City Club luncheon on Oct. 17. VICTORIA STEPHENS/THE CHRONICLE

SCHOOL continued from 13

Hamilton focused on one of these 28 programs, the Student Investment Account, which will use half of those funds. That \$500,000 is set aside better address students’ mental and behavioral health needs and to promote equity in traditionally underserved populations throughout the 197 school districts in the state.

The goal is to reduce academic disadvantages among low-income, racial, ethnic and other minority groups, students with disabilities or students where English is not their primary language, foster students and homeless students, as well as other groups that have traditionally experienced academic disparities.

These goals align with Springfield Public School System’s values of removing inequities, providing a safe, healthy, engaging environment and promoting inclusion.

To help find answers to that question, Hamilton had attendees participate in an exercise to determine which skills in one of four areas they thought was most responsible for their success – critical thinking and problem solving, content knowledge, ownership of learning and self-management and navigation of life transitions.

Hamilton said the point is that success is not always based knowledge but often on these softer skills.

This exercise mimicked outreach efforts being held throughout the community. Parents and community members have been partici-

pating in a similar exercise in efforts to identify what is needed for students to succeed. Hamilton emphasized that content knowledge is just a small piece of the puzzle.

Another focus area he mentioned to promote student success was the Early Learning Alliance, a program aimed to reach children and families from the time of birth to kindergarten. The idea behind this program is that problems often begin at home.

Attendance is a critical area of success in school and parent education is necessary to establish routines at home so children can get to school, he said. Family resource coordinators will be hired to help with that parent education process.

Hamilton said that United Way is doing the “heavy lifting” with that birth to K pre-school entry program. Kids in Transition to School (KITS), a school readiness program, developed by the Oregon Social Learning Center, is part of that parent education and outreach program.

Additional goals of the Student Investment Account are to promote a well-rounded education, reduce class sizes, increase instructional time, promote health and safety in supporting social and emotional learning, mental and behavioral health and to hire more school health professionals. Benchmarks for student success include reading by third grade and ninth graders being on track for graduation by having 25 % of their required 24 credits completed.



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