



In partnership with



SUCCESS STORY

How Ogden School District Built a Sustainable Human Skills™ Program

Situation

At Ogden School District in Utah, district leader Nicole Lovell faced a familiar challenge: students clearly needed social and emotional support, but the district lacked a structured, universal resource for teachers to deliver it. Intervening at the targeted, small group level wasn't sustainable if universal, whole-class instruction was missing entirely. The district needed an evidence-backed, teacher-friendly curriculum that could reach every student, as well as a way to sustainably fund it.

Approach

Finding the Right Funding Fit

To purchase Second Step® programs for PreK through Grade 6, the district leveraged a Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant under Title IV-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which supports well-rounded educational opportunities, safe and healthy students, and the effective use of technology.

The data-backed need was clear, the evidence base of Second Step programs was strong, and the investment fit within what Title IV-A is designed to support.

Sustainability over the Long Haul

Finding the initial funding was a breakthrough for Ogden School District, but the bigger objective was to sustain Second Step programs over the long-term. District leaders have been deliberate about framing Second Step programs as a sustainable budget line item, not a one-time grant experiment.

"It's not something that I'm trying to find a significant amount of money that I'd have to cut an FTE position in order to fund each year," Nicole Lovell explained. "It's something that we could be saying, here's what we're doing for this period of time, it has this cost, and then how do we make sure that we're allocating money so that there's a sustainability piece."



What I've appreciated with Second Step is that for us, it's sustainable.



—Nicole Lovell
Director of Student Advocacy Services
Ogden School District



Ogden frames Second Step® programs as a predictable, manageable cost that can be planned and renewed rather than a financial shock. This stable outlook allows for greater transparency into future costs, enabling both district leaders and funding entities to understand the cost—and more importantly, the benefits—of Second Step programs.

Outcomes

A Replicable Model for Other Districts

Nicole Lovell advises other districts to let student data lead the way to funding. If outcome data show gaps in well-being, belonging, or emotional regulation, you have the foundation for a funding case.

Title I can be a natural starting point for many districts, and Title IV-A can be another option, particularly for districts that can demonstrate the role of Second Step programs in building the protective factors that support safe and healthy students.

Ogden School District's approach has allowed Second Step programming to grow from an elementary grant initiative into a PreK through Grade 12 districtwide program that's now embedded in every elementary master schedule as required instruction.

For districts and charter schools wondering how to make the funding puzzle work, Ogden's story offers a clear model: start with eligible funds, build the program into your strategic plan, and treat renewal as a planned investment rather than an annual scramble.

After nearly 10 years, Second Step programs are now an integral part of Ogden's student support infrastructure, ensuring students have access to the leading human skills program for many years to come.

Ongoing Support for Sustainable Funding

Committee for Children (CFC), the nonprofit creator of Second Step programs, advocates for ongoing and expanded access to funding like Title IV-A. CFC's Policy & Advocacy Team works with families, educators, students, providers, and policymakers across the country to support laws and policies that promote human skills and increase funding access. CFC also serves on the board of a coalition supporting Title IV-A funding. To learn more, visit cfchildren.org/policy-advocacy

**Are you using
Title IV-A or other
funding to support
your students,
or do you want to?**

**Schedule a consult
and let us know!**