



THE PROPOSAL

Serendipity is seeking a \$2.6 million-dollar investment in the expansion of Serendipity Center's program in order to meet a growing public need. This award will strengthen Oregon's efforts to develop best practices for serving a growing population of vulnerable children. It reflects our commitment to avail all children of the care to which they are entitled.

THE PURPOSES

Increases student capacity proportionate to district referrals, allowing admissions that are responsive to district and student needs.

Creates additional learning environments whose design is tailored to the developmental needs of our students.

Adds spaces for additional classrooms, therapy, physical play, and individualized care.

Supports student and staff safety by increasing student choice and opportunities for self-regulation.

Believe in Me

The Future of Serendipity



The Urgent Need

In every school district, there are some students who not only are unable to learn, but whose behaviors can compromise the learning opportunities for others.

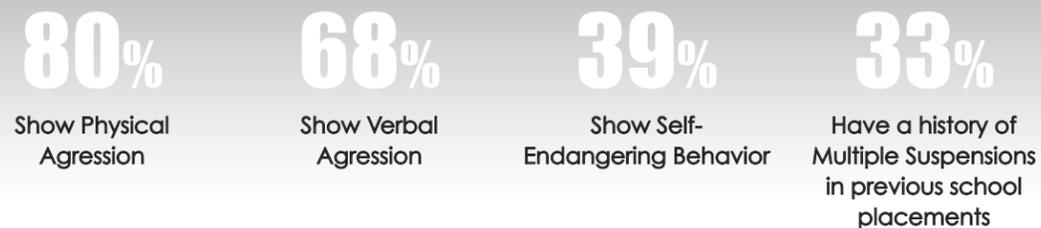
The number of students districts struggle to serve is increasing. Often, it is these young people who are referred to Serendipity.

Students who attended Serendipity last year faced the following challenges:



* Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, witnessing domestic violence, neglect, mental illness within the family, substance abuse within the family, incarceration of household member, divorce or separation, or homelessness. 30% have experienced four or more of these traumas.

This results in the following disruptive behavioral concerns, taken directly from district referrals:



Serendipity has reached enrollment capacity, yet the need is growing. Our waiting list is now 11 children, the highest in our history.

What are the costs to both these students and our community if they are denied access to an educational model designed to meet their needs?

Serendipity: a Proven Solution

The urgent need cannot be effectively addressed without therapeutic schools. It is essential that students who require interventions more intensive or customized than can be delivered in public settings also have access to school.

Serendipity Center is a 40-year-old, private, nonprofit, K-12+ therapeutic school in Portland, Oregon. We are a special education program with a primary focus on emotional and behavioral growth. Our program prioritizes academic learning (**EDUCATION**), progress on individual treatment goals (**MENTAL HEALTH**), preparing for future success (**TRANSITION**), and the development of life-long health practices (**WELLNESS**).



Education

Registered and approved in both Oregon and Washington by the Departments of Education, Serendipity provides adaptive learning opportunities to students of all abilities, helping those who have struggled in traditional classroom settings to experience academic engagement and success.



Mental Health

The therapeutic services offered at Serendipity integrate clinically designed interventions into the structure of a school day, creating accessible layers of support. We individualize our interventions through a shared understanding of each child's holistic strengths, histories, needs, and goals.



Transition

Serendipity's transition services create a bridge between the special education system and the world beyond the classroom. To prepare our students to become engaged community members, we cultivate their leadership, self-advocacy, independence, and resourcefulness.



Wellness

Serendipity's wellness programs develop lifelong health awareness and habits, which are critical to students already at risk for health challenges resulting from traumatic or adverse experiences. Wellness supports include the Growing Minds Garden, our school meals program, and therapeutic recreation.



Serendipity's Mission

Serendipity's mission is to provide the best environment for students to heal and become educated, productive community members.

What is accomplished by this project?

Innovation is Essential

When the Oregon Education Association issued its report, "A Crisis of Disrupted Learning," five evidence-based models were identified as those most frequently sought by educators.

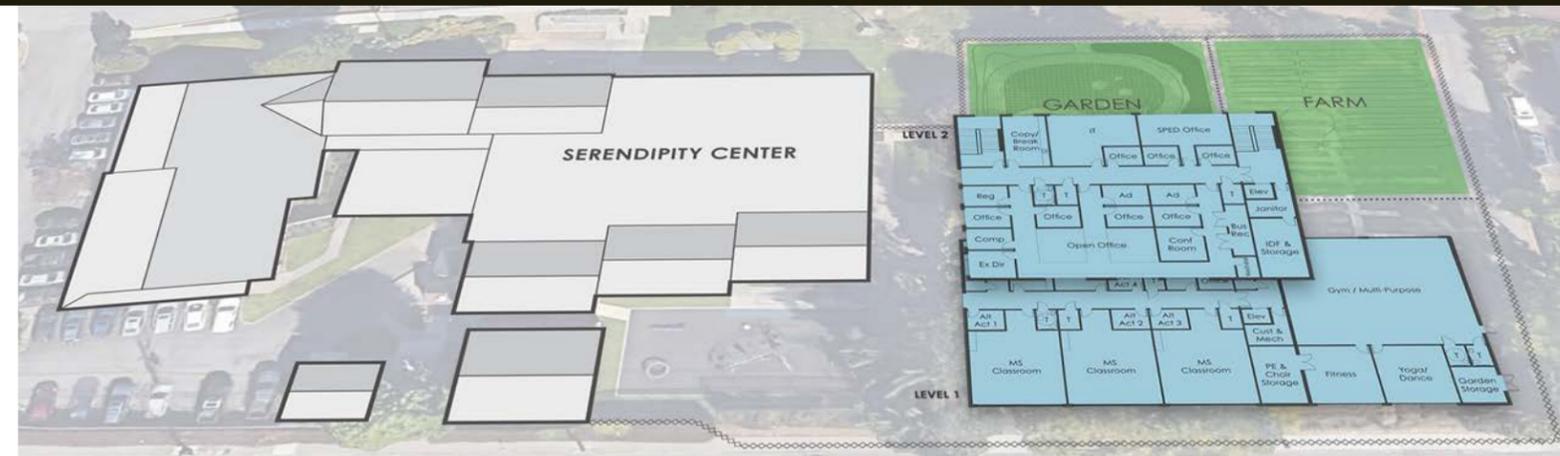
These included:

- trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practices
- social/emotional learning programs
- positive behavior approaches to guide de-escalation skills and strategies
- restorative discipline
- mindfulness instruction.

All five identified best practices are already implemented as the cornerstones of Serendipity's model.

This expansion builds capacity both for more students to benefit and for current students to deepen their engagement. In our current space, we are challenged to meet the spatial needs required for truly individualized care. Our children need space to process emotions, restore their equilibrium, and express themselves through art and movement when verbalization is too challenging. They need areas away from peers and classroom dynamics to de-escalate their behavior with dignity. Engaging and **innovative interventions are essential to obtain positive academic and behavioral outcomes.**

Full Implementation of the education model.



This expansion provides the following spaces to complete our model of Therapeutic Education:

Education:

- ✚ Developmentally appropriate separation between elementary and middle school aged students
- ✚ Reduction of noise and crowding for students with spatial and stimulation sensitivities
- ✚ Multiple spaces for integrating sensory work into learning

Mental Health:

- ✚ Expanded spaces for individual therapy
- ✚ Additional spaces for therapeutic groups
- ✚ Expanded spaces for art therapy
- ✚ Increased capacity for family engagement through groups and trainings

Transition:

- ✚ Multiple spaces for coaching
- ✚ Multiple spaces for restorative practices and mediations
- ✚ Expanded options for on-campus apprenticeships

Wellness:

- ✚ Addition of yoga room to support Mindfulness practices
- ✚ Addition of gym for therapeutic recreation classes and school-wide awards
- ✚ Multiple spaces for drop-in play and movement options

STUDENT STORY: JACK, 11-YEAR-OLD

Jack was referred to Serendipity Center at the beginning of his 2nd grade year. He exhibited developmental delays and increasingly disruptive behaviors. He was physically aggressive, and overly stimulated by noise and the chaos of traditional classrooms. He became enraged if there were changes in the schedule and would respond to his frustration by hitting, kicking,

biting, or screaming.

To address these problems, Serendipity assigned Jack a one-on-one Instructional Assistant who could focus on his individual needs. He began to use his words or picture cards to convey his frustration or indicate when he needed to take a break.

Over time, Jack began to develop relationships with his peers and learned to manage

his aggressive behavior, emotions, and worries with more independence. He eventually requested to do his work in the classroom with other students, and responded to reminders and cue cards on his desk.

After four years, Jack's team supported him to gradually re-enter the environment of a public school. He has come back to visit Serendipity several times and

seems happy and secure, and his family frequently expresses their gratitude for all we have done to help their son.



STUDENT STORY: RACHEL, 14-YEAR-OLD

Rachel was referred to Serendipity Center at age 14 after her third residential treatment placement. Due to her trauma history, Rachel had been struggling with emotional regulation at home and at school all throughout her elementary school years. She was easily overwhelmed with academic expectations and had difficulty managing her

stress in the classrooms. Rachel started having incidents of self-harm when she was 11, and had been hospitalized three times due to suicidal thoughts.

Throughout her stay at Serendipity Center, Rachel responded very well to a great deal of structure and support in her school environment. She also made great growth in socializing with her peers

in age-appropriate ways, expressing her feelings in safe manners, and using healthy coping strategies to manage her stress.

Rachel also gained self-confidence and was willing to explore her interest in writing. She even published several poems that related to her childhood trauma.

As she became ready to

transfer her new skills to a larger setting, a transition was planned. Rachel returned to a neighborhood school in 10th grade with much more confidence in herself and her ability to achieve success.



There are hundreds of successful students stories like these. Serendipity is a proven solution.

What is the benefit to Oregon?

Supports Oregon's vision for educational equity.

- Governor Brown's call to action was centered on the importance of all children being supported to achieve their full potential.
- **Disabilities and mental health challenges should not be barriers to accessing education.**
- For this vision to be attainable, a continuum of **services and placement options must exist so that students have access to the right setting and interventions necessary** to address their barriers to learning.

Investment in the capacity of specialty options, such as therapeutic schools, must be part of Oregon's plan.

Supports implementation of the Student Success Act.

- Serendipity is currently Oregon's only private special education program designated as a **School of Excellence** by the National Association of Special Education Teachers.
- Several **districts around the Portland Metro area have approached Serendipity as a resource for staff training in best practices.**
- We see a **great opportunity to share more practices and consultation** not only to our current districts, but to others around the region and state.

It is a benefit to this state for a learning laboratory to be available to educators.

Shared costs through blending revenue sources.

- Serendipity functions as an **extension of the school districts that place students who have exhausted numerous public and often several private placements.**
- Our capacity to accept and educate students allows **20 regional school districts in four Oregon counties to prevent children with intensive needs and histories from experiencing school failure.**
- It is appropriate that a portion of the revenue for this expansion be public. As the budget indicates, however, **costs would be shared among the investment of lottery dollars, private donations, and some long-term debt.**

The ability to draw from multiple revenue sources creates yet another solution to address a public need challenging schools throughout our state.

FACT: Serendipity partners with **OVER 20 SCHOOL DISTRICTS**, delivering individual and therapeutic education to students unable to access learning in public school settings every year.

OUR PROJECT

16,000 sq. ft. newly constructed addition, located on property owned by Serendipity and immediately adjacent to our existing school building.

The following budget is based on conceptual design created by **BRIC Architecture** and cost estimates produced by **Walsh Construction**.



Serendipity Center • Believe in Me Expansion Budget

Budget estimates based on conceptual design

December 2019

Expense	Explanation	Cost
HARD COSTS		
Construction of new building	15,990 sq. ft. (Contractor cost estimate)	\$5,737,175
Site development	Demolition & excavation	\$663,024
TOTAL HARD COSTS		\$6,400,199
SOFT COSTS		
Architectural design	20% of hard costs, including permits, special testing, and geotechnical consultant	\$1,180,040
Contingency	Includes escalation and estimating contingency	\$661,321
Contractor fee		\$311,980
Liability insurance		\$98,530
TOTAL SOFT COSTS		\$2,251,871
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$8,652,070

Revenue Source	Explanation	Amount
Lottery Dollars	This proposal	\$2,600,000
Capital Campaign	In progress (\$383,755 raised to date) \$1.1 represents targeted foundation proposals	\$2,800,000
New Mortgage	SNAP bond	\$2,200,000
Other revenue	TriMet purchase of corner, in-kind donations, and pro bono services	\$400,000
TOTAL REVENUE		\$8,652,070

Serendipity's Believe in Me Endorsments

Children living with disability and trauma need every opportunity to succeed in school and life. For these children, Serendipity is a critical community resource. Serendipity's Believe in Me Campaign will benefit the entire region by supporting a strong standard for best practice in therapeutic education, and increasing enrollment opportunities for children with significant needs.

Janet Arenz

Former Executive Director, Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs

Sam Breyer

Superintendent, Multnomah ESD

Paul Coakley

Superintendent, Centennial School District

Lora de la Cruz

Superintendent, Lake Oswego School District

DiAnne Fentress-Rowe

Portland State University, University Supervisor, Department of Education, Special Education

Guadalupe Guerrero

Superintendent, Portland Public School District

Dr. Ajit Jetmalani

Director, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, OHSU Joseph Professor, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Education

Michael Lopes-Serrao

Superintendent, Parkrose School District

Tony Mann

Superintendent, Molalla River School District

Drew Henrie-McWilliams

CEO Morrison Child and Family Services

Michael Hsu

Chair of Oregon Board of Parole

Mary Mertz

Senior Director of Special Education, Portland Public School District

Todd Nicholson

Director of Special Services, Oregon City School District

Barbara Roberts

former Oregon Governor

Michael Salitore

Director of Supported Education, Molalla River School District

Julie Sams

Director of Student Services, Parkrose School District

Patrick Tomblin

Executive Director of Student Services, Lake Oswego School District

Kirk Wolfe, MD, FAACAP

Consulting child and adolescent psychiatrist, long-time Oregon Delegate to the National Council, American Academy of Child and Adolescents Psychiatry

Denise Wright

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