

Wraparound Social and Community Services Programs

SNAPSHOT

Initiative:

SUN Service System

District:

Portland Public Schools and Multnomah County's 7 other school districts

Location:

60 schools in Multnomah County, Ore.

Grades: K-12

Enrollment: 18,000 students annually, with 7,500 participating regularly

Free/reduced-price lunch: 74%

ELL: 26%

Delivering vital community services at neighborhood schools

SUN Service System

Multnomah County, Oregon

Multnomah County's SUN (Schools Uniting Neighborhoods) Service System uses 60 neighborhood schools as delivery sites for a comprehensive range of educational and social services for students, families, and community members. Services include before- and afterschool tutoring and sports, family engagement programs, early childhood education, meals, health and social services, and adult education. Services aim to empower parents to become actively involved in their children's education and to encourage a sense of community among families connected to the schools.

"No question about it: I'm going to college," said one student who had been on a trajectory toward dropping out until he got involved in a SUN afterschool basketball program. His experience is not unusual.

In the mid- to late 1990s, increasing poverty and ethnic diversity in Multnomah County were associated with a growing achievement gap in the schools. In 1999, the city of Portland and Multnomah County worked with the state government and local schools to create SUN Community Schools. The goals were to support education and school success while also improving family self-sufficiency by offering school-based health care, social services, and other forms of support. Initially, the services were offered at eight schools in the county.

In 2004, the program became part of SUN Service System, which provides social, health, and other support services. The system includes: SUN Community Schools; Parent Child Development Services, serving children from birth to age five; Self Sufficiency Programs for homeless and low-income households; and Social and Support Services for Educational Success, which mostly serves young adolescents.

In 2009-2010, SUN Community Schools served nearly 18,000 youth and about 3,700 adults in enrolled programming, and more than 70,000 people attended family and community events. Among the 7,500 students served for 30 or more days: about 74 percent qualified for free or reduced-price lunch; 70 percent were students of color, compared to 45 percent for the district as a whole; and 40 percent spoke a language other than English at home.



How the initiative works

Each SUN Community School serves as a support hub where schools and communities work together to promote the success of children and families through a comprehensive array of services. Core services at each site include academic support, social and health services, and extended-day recreation and enrichment activities. The sites provide a vital link with community centers, libraries, parks, neighborhood health clinics, area churches, and local businesses.

The county manages SUN Service System as a partnership with the 60 SUN Community Schools. Each school site is jointly managed by the school principal, a full-time site manager, and a nonprofit or community organization that serves as the lead agency. Each school also employs extended-day staff and activity leaders/teachers. In addition to the site managers, each school has a site advisory group, which includes representatives of the school, youth, families, and the community.

Costs amount to several hundred dollars per student, which come from a mix of county, city, state, and federal funds. Portland even has a "children's levy" that amounts to about \$60 added to the property tax for most homes, and some of that money goes to SUN. The tax dollars invested in SUN Community Schools leverage twice as much in resources from districts and local governments as well as substantial cash and in-kind contributions from community organizations and businesses.

Evidence of effectiveness

Outcomes for SUN Community Schools are based on data for students who participate regularly. Among the 7,500 students who participated in SUN Community Services programs for 30 or more days during the 2009-2010 school year:

- ▶ Average gains in reading and math test scores

exceeded state goals. About 75 percent showed increased state scores in reading, and 77 percent in math.

- ▶ Some 88 percent of students improved in at least one interim academic or youth asset measure: 64 percent improved homework completion; 54 percent improved classroom behavior; and 60 percent came to school more motivated to learn.
- ▶ Average daily attendance was 94.3 percent, compared to the state benchmark of 92 percent.
- ▶ More than 80 percent of seniors graduated, compared to less than 60 percent for the district as a whole. Furthermore, 92 percent either graduated or returned for a fifth year of high school, and 95 percent of ninth, tenth, and eleventh graders returned for the next school year.

Exemplary practices

Forming school-community partnerships: Schools and communities work together to provide the comprehensive educational and social services necessary to support the success of children and their families. Students' growth targets and academic performance are evaluated annually.

Engaging families in culturally appropriate ways: Adult education is among the core services of SUN Community Schools, and programs are geared toward the particular needs of each community. For example, early childhood education services at Alder Elementary School include two culturally specific programs involving parents: Parents as Teachers (PAT) for Hispanic families delivered by El Programa Hispano and for African-American families delivered by Self-Enhancement, Inc.

Grounding the program in the local community: Each local school becomes a hub of community life. The local site advisory group that guides the program

Family-School-Community Partnerships 2.0

Wraparound Social and Community Services Programs

includes members who represent families and community residents.

Outlook

Beginning with a five-year investment by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, more than \$7 million in funding has been brought annually to the SUN Service System over the last four years through co-investment and leveraging efforts of its city, county, school district, and federal partners. Individual schools and nonprofit partners have also been able to leverage significant cash and in-kind resources, using SUN as an infrastructure.

Leaders hope to expand the initiative to all 150 schools in the county, making every school a SUN Community School.

Association perspective

Portland Association of Teachers President Gwen Sullivan says teachers have been closely involved in the SUN initiative since its inception. Sullivan sums up the Association's viewpoint: "Programs like these that address the needs of the whole child are critical to advancing student learning. Involving the family is key, and strengthening the relationships between schools and families improves both teaching and learning."

Local contact

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Related information

Report card: <http://web.multco.us/sun/research-and-evaluations>

SUN Service System website: <http://web.multco.us/sun>

"Schools Uniting Neighborhoods: Successful Collaboration in an Environment of Constant Change," Marjory Hamann with Diana Hall, 2003 report to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, <http://bit.ly/ndSjNs>

"SUN Shines on Portland Students," NEA Priority Schools Campaign, December 2010, <http://neaprioritieschools.org/2010/12/02/sun-shines-on-portland-students/>

MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON



Great Public Schools for Every Student

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