



SUN Service System Coordinating Council

Recommendation on Long Term Model for SUN Community Schools

November 7, 2014

Context

In June 2014, the SUN Service System Sponsors charged a cross-sector team to define the necessary and appropriate depth of services at SUN Community School sites and in the broader system. Sponsors requested that the process focus on understanding how current SUN sponsor organizations and other key stakeholders can have the greatest collective impact through our SUN collaboration. They also recognized that the work of this team would serve as a foundation for a long term alignment and resource model for SUN Community Schools. The SUN Community Schools Model Development Team was convened in early July and met five times between July and the end of October.

Process and Approach

The Team and SUN Staff approached the work by first engaging in a significant input and information gathering process. In particular, the Team sought to learn from both the wealth of experience that exists among system providers, partners and the community, as well as reflect research on related best practices. Input and information gathering activities included:

- **In-depth site review** of 8 SUN Community Schools that are achieving strong academic, attendance and behavioral outcomes
- **5 input sessions for different stakeholder groups** including two with SUN Community School providers and one each with schools/districts, Community Supporting Youth Collaborative sites, and youth service providers
- **Key stakeholder interviews** with leaders from Multnomah County Health Department, Portland Parks and Recreation, Worksystems, Inc. and Early Learning Multnomah
- **Compilation of existing youth, family and community input** related to what services and supports make the most difference in students' educational success
- **Best practice/literature review** to identify the most effective services or array of services

In response to the information gathered, the Team developed a long-term model for minimum depth of services needed at SUN Community School sites. The criteria used to determine which services to include in the model were services that:

- Have the greatest impact
- Are aligned with the priorities or other initiatives of sponsoring partners
- Take advantage of opportunities to leverage resources
- Improve outcomes or efficiencies through alignment

Input Summary

Across the multiple local sources of input there was a **strong priority for all community school services and practices to be culturally responsive and for the increased availability of culturally specific services**. This priority should be understood to overarch the other findings. The process included gathering information on three aspects of the community school model and depth of service: core funding levels, supplemental or layered services (depth), and effective practices. Findings for each aspect are summarized on the next page.

Core Funding Levels

The input identified the need to establish differentiated core funding levels based on size and complexity of the site. Schools with larger enrollment and high schools require a higher level of core funding in order to have adequate staffing capacity to respond to safety, administrative, partnership and grant expectations. K-8 schools, regardless of size, were also found to require additional funding. For K-8 sites, the funding supports staffing to provide two separate programs for elementary and middle school age students that provide developmentally appropriate supports, appeal to the interests of each group and are held at different times in different spaces. In addition, the input noted that the core funding level has not kept pace with cost of living increases over the years. An annual cost of living increase by all funders would address this issue.

Additional Depth of Services

A few key priorities for supplemental or layered services rose to the top across all areas of input:

- Housing and Basic Needs (utility assistance, food, clothing, flex funds)
- Case Management/Advocacy with the following priority characteristics noted in the input:
 - Focused on families at the elementary level and on youth at secondary levels
 - Culturally specific youth case management/advocacy
- Targeted Academic Support
- Mental Health Services and Supports that are culturally appropriate

While not mentioned in all, the following services had significant consensus across multiple sources:

- Recreation, Sports and Physical Activity
- Transportation
- Parent Education and Supports
- Kindergarten Transition Supports at elementary and K-8 sites
- Attendance Initiative Supports
 - An array of supplemental services including additional SUN Community School coordination capacity, family case management/advocacy, housing, basic needs, transportation and parent education for students and families

Effective Practices

Research and local experience demonstrated that certain practices were consistently related to the level of success at a community school site. Key community school implementation practices included: principal leadership – in particular, the strategic use of resources and time and identification and development of academic interventions; a strong collaborative relationship between the principal and SUN Community School Site Manager; alignment of the academic program across the school and extended day; systems and structures to provide targeted support; use of data to identify individual student needs and inform response; and inclusion of the Site Manager as part of the school staff and school-wide interventions. Site Managers play an important role in coordinating school and district partnership initiatives, such as attendance and kindergarten transition protocols.

In addition, two school-based practices were identified as essential by community school teams and the input groups: culturally responsive Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Justice and/or Practices. These are school-wide strategies and it was noted that when there was a high level of implementation and fidelity in these practices, schools saw significant results not just in disciplinary outcomes, but also in academics. The team recommends alignment and consistency of practice across the school and extended day staff in buildings that adopt such strategies.

Recommended Long-Term Model for Depth

The recommended long-term model for core and supplemental services at SUN Community School sites is on the next page.