Sun Service System:
Challenges Ahead

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Date: December 5, 2012

To: Jeff Cogen, Multnomah County Chair
        Commissioners Kafoury, Smith, Shiprack, and McKeel
        Michael D. Schrunk, District Attorney; Daniel Staton, Sheriff
        Joanne Fuller, COO

From: Steve March, Multnomah County Auditor

Re: SUN Service System: Challenges ahead

Schools Uniting Neighborhoods Service System, or SUN, is a school-based and school-linked model to promote educational success and family self-sufficiency. This inter-jurisdictional collaboration has been nationally recognized and appears to be operating efficiently and effectively in delivering support services to children, families, and community members throughout Multnomah County. The successes and strong support that SUN has seen while growing from eight to 67 schools in slightly more than a decade does not, however, guarantee a future without challenges in the years ahead.

The greatest challenge will involve funding SUN to provide services to the next 6,000 highest need students in 15 elementary and middle-schools plus five high schools with a total population of nearly 15,000 students. Any expansion will also require investment in support and management services as well. This challenge will require County leaders to explore a variety of funding sources and partnerships that could include the State of Oregon.

Lesser, but nevertheless important, challenges face the SUN Coordinating Council in dealing with questions of equity, roles and responsibility, and community involvement. While there has been great outreach, maintaining a high level of involvement is critical for these kinds of collaborative efforts.

The challenges for the SUN staff and management are in dealing with the growth of the program and its workload, providing long-term monitoring and evaluation while working collaboratively with our community partners, and strengthening its data use and validity within the constraints of the data systems. To effectively meet these challenges will require some investment in staff and resources.

This audit was conducted by Fran Davison and Shannon Gryzbowski. We appreciate the assistance we received from the Department of County Human Services, the SUN staff and other departmental staff, as well as the SUN Coordinating Council and the various partners in the system.

C: Susan Myers, DCHS Director; Peggy Samolinski, SUN Manager; Bill Scott, SUN Coordinating Council

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Service System is a nationally recognized example of inter-jurisdictional collaboration that uses a school-based and school-linked model to promote educational success and family self-sufficiency. Over the past 13 years, SUN has grown from eight Community Schools in 1999, to 67 scheduled to operate during the 2012-2013 school year, with a plan to make every school in Multnomah County a SUN Community School.

This innovative System appears to be operating efficiently and effectively to deliver support services to children, families, and community members in Multnomah County. We found staff, partners, and agency personnel to be dedicated, capable, and strong advocates of the System.

Overall, we found the program to be a promising strategy for delivering support services across the County. However, we found some areas that could benefit from further examination for each of the levels of management involved. We identified the following as areas for strategic focus as the System continues to evolve:

For the Chair and Board of County Commissioners:
- **SUN Community Schools require broader funding**-Although there are many funding sources that support SUN Community Schools, Multnomah County provides the largest share of the cost for after-school programming and staffing site managers, as well as administrative costs associated with managing the System. There is a need for a more broad-based funding strategy, which could include State recognition of the community school model and commensurate funding allocations.

- **6,000 highest need students do not have a SUN Community School** - There are 19 schools in the top quartiles (1 and 2) of the Poverty Ranking Index, that do not have SUN Community Schools, while there are 12 schools in quartiles 3 or 4 with SUN Community Schools in place. Although we recognize the long term strategy of keeping established sites in place and the value of maintaining on-going programs and relationships, the System should develop a timeline for funding high need sites and evaluate the benefit of maintaining lower need sites while several schools with great need remain unfunded.

- **Expanding the System will require significant investment** - The Coordinating Council is actively exploring strategies to expand the system to create a SUN Community School in every Multnomah County school. To accomplish that vision, it will cost approximately $9 million to $10 million more annually to fund every Community School site, plus additional funding for support services and SUN management at the County, since County staff are already at capacity for the number of current sites and services within the System.

For the Coordinating Council:
- **Continue to examine equity** - The Coordinating Council has been working to address equity and should continue efforts in this area. The Council recently reviewed a working definition of equity and has discussed ways to more effectively consider equity in decision making.

- **Continue to develop guidelines prior to significant changes** - While the Coordinating Council has received praise as an effective body for advising and guiding a complex system and maintaining strong communication among and between System partners, auditors identified areas where it could improve. Developing clear guidelines before expanding the System will minimize lobbying to provide contracted services and ease the integration of new schools into the System.

- **Clarify roles and responsibilities** - During Council meetings, Council members make difficult decisions that have System-wide impact. Members have an opportunity to discuss difficult topics and come to a solution that most members can agree with. However, some Council members expressed a lack of clarity as to roles and responsibilities.

- **Consult with broader community** - While the Council maintains good representation of providers and system partners, it may not be hearing the voices and needs of the population the System serves. The Coordinating Council could benefit from getting deeper perspectives from communities of color and families in poverty. This consumer perspective could add value to conversations of service delivery and coordination, and community impact.

For SUN Management:
- **Growth of the System adds workload** - Community Schools and SUN services and initiatives have grown, and workload has increased for County staff. In fact, managers say administrative staffing has remained flat since 2008 when there were fewer SUN Community Schools and fewer initiatives associated with the System. Staffing has not kept up with the workload associated with growth.

- **Consider long-term contractor monitoring and evaluation** - Monitoring and measuring contractor performance over time, rather than providing annual year-end letters and in-depth monitoring once every two years, would provide SUN a clearer picture of overall performance during the life of the contract.

- **SUN should validate its data** - Managers should examine data reliability and validity and use outcome data to make decisions. Managers should assess if staff, partners, and volunteers are collecting the best data and if data collection methodologies are consistent across the system.

- **Increased use of data could add value to the programs -** We believe SUN managers could better use the data to understand improvements in academic success and other outcomes; however, a lack of staff capacity at this time prevents deeper analysis.

SUN Service System Report to Management

Introduction

The SUN Service System is the County's primary anti-poverty effort, providing school-based and school-linked services in an aligned system of care. SUN is in the Department of County Human Services. During our review we found that, overall, the system is well-managed and operating effectively. The SUN Service System has demonstrated itself to be an effective vehicle for delivering services to children and families in need in Multnomah County. By providing multiple sites around the County from which to access services and combining County general fund dollars and federal anti-poverty money with funds from system partners, SUN is able to deliver more services to more people, thus generating a deeper, countywide impact, than otherwise possible. The system models the County's core values of caring for vulnerable people, nurturing diversity and equity, investing in the future, and working with community partners to meet residents' needs. Although we uncovered a few areas for suggested improvements, we decided not to proceed with a full audit and opted instead, to issue a report to management that discusses the system and the challenges it faces now and in the future. Our results include discussion on funding and system expansion, the need to address equity, oversight, capacity, data monitoring, and evaluation. We limited our review to programs under the direct purview of SUN and therefore did not include a detailed review of SUN's linkages with the County's anti-poverty assistance programs.

Overview   **What is the SUN Service System?**
The SUN Service System is a nationally recognized model,
providing school-based and school-linked services in an aligned
system of care, with support services for youth, families, and
community members that promote educational success and self-
sufficiency. According to the national organization Coalition
for Community Schools, Schools Uniting Neighborhoods
(SUN) "represents one of the nation's most powerful visions of
a community schools system." According to published results,
among those students who participated in SUN activities, average
daily attendance rates exceeded the district averages and students'
average gains in reading and math were equal to or higher than
expected for most grades measured.

The integrated system of care was built on two broad policy
areas:
- Reducing poverty by supporting education and academic
  success; and
- Using schools as the vehicles to deliver services and
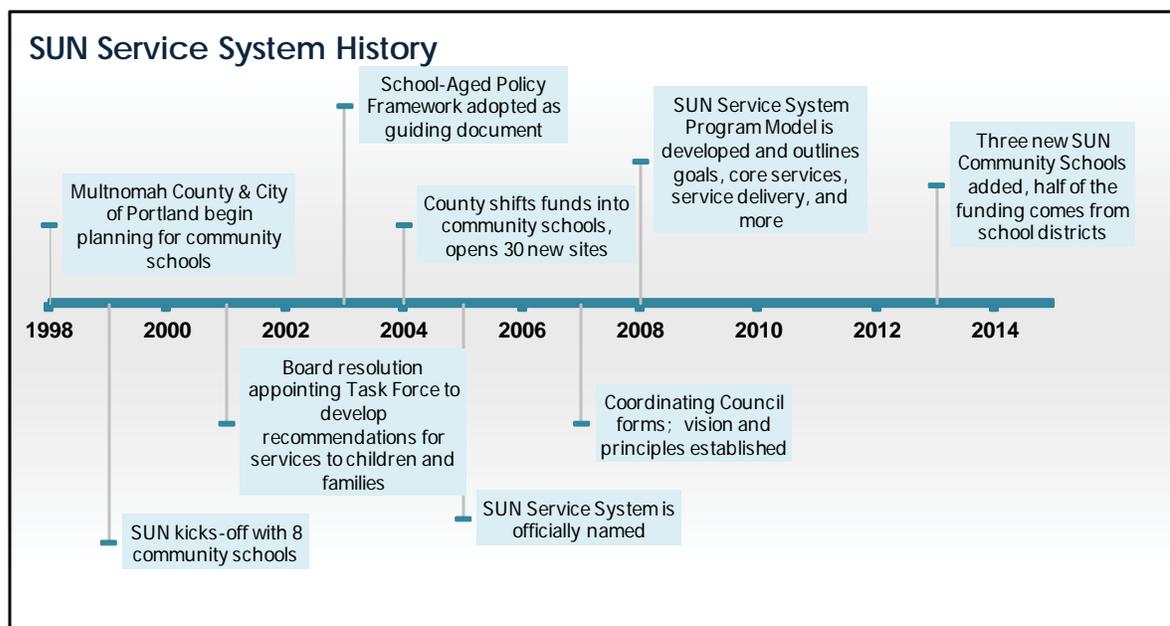 resources to students and families.

SUN Community Schools are the most visible part of the system,
serving as hubs to link services. However, the system is much
larger and further reaching than just the community schools.
SUN Community Schools provide the location and infrastructure
to deliver an array of services by bringing together multiple
partners, agencies, jurisdictions, and funders. In addition to
academic success, the system focuses on hunger and nutrition,
housing and homelessness, family self-sufficiency, and children's
readiness to learn. The 2003 report "Making the Difference:
Research and Practice in Community Schools" by the Coalition
for Community Schools asserts that community schools "offer a
practical and effective strategy for educating all children to their
full potential" in part, because they link school and community
resources.

The System's leadership envisions every school becoming a SUN Community School. Currently, the Every School a SUN Community School workgroup meets to identify what it would take to have every school be a SUN Community School and how to realize the vision. Based on the reality that every Multnomah County school serves families that are experiencing poverty, the vision of making every school a SUN School could provide a consistent, school-based system across the County that would offer cost-effective, accessible, and efficient service delivery. It would also provide businesses and other sponsors a consistent entry point to contribute resources to neighborhood schools and families in need.

The Evolution of SUN

Since its inception, the SUN Service System has changed and evolved with input and direction of workgroups, evaluations, and strong leadership. There have been some course corrections along the way as recommendations from these groups have been implemented and the system has matured.

Prior to the development of the SUN Service System, programs for school-aged youth were delivered by six County departments with little or no coordination among efforts. Specifically, the County funded over 100 separate programs for school-aged youth and their families and the programs were planned, funded, and managed separately; there was no mechanism for service planning geographically, the County funded multiple "systems;" and most of these services were not linked to or based in schools. In 1999, SUN began as a partnership between the County, the City of Portland, and school districts to provide services and supports through the schools. The City and County launched eight community schools by integrating education, health, social services, and recreational activities to respond to the needs of children, their parents, and the community. Among the initial eight, seven community schools opened in the Portland Public School District and one opened in Gresham-Barlow School District. SUN Community Schools would expand to become the primary vehicle to deliver services to school-aged youth and link children, youth and families to additional services in the community.

Exhibit 1

SUN Service System History

School-Aged Policy Framework adopted as guiding document

Multnomah County & City of Portland begin planning for community schools

County shifts funds into community schools, opens 30 new sites

SUN Service System Program Model is developed and outlines goals, core services, service delivery, and more

Three new SUN Community Schools added, half of the funding comes from school districts

1998   2000   2002   2004   2006   2008   2010   2012   2014

Board resolution appointing Task Force to develop recommendations for services to children and families

Coordinating Council forms; vision and principles established

SUN kicks-off with 8 community schools

SUN Service System is officially named

Source: Multnomah County Auditor's Office

Increased Focus on System and Policy Development

In 2003, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the School-Aged Policy Framework, which was the result of a two-year planning process that examined the County's investment in programs for school-aged youth and their families. The process included multiple stakeholders, community conversations and extensive research to identify duplication of effort and options for improving services and coordination. The new policy resulted in a major reorganization that shifted some existing County resources into "a school-based service delivery model integrating school-based and school-linked services, identified target populations to be reached with these services, and called for realignment of social, health and support services," according to the SUN Program Model. Today, the System described in this model remains the foundation of this system of care.

Formalized Partnership

In 2006, the Board of County Commissioners and the in-coming Chair of the Board convened a task force to look at how the County, with its partners, could strengthen and streamline services for children and families. The task force focused on services, partnerships between complementary agencies, and longer-term efficiencies. As part of its charge, the group established a shared understanding of the purpose of the SUN Service System in relation to other services for school-age youth; recommended improved models for alignment of services; and identified possible alternative funding sources. In addition, the task force recommended establishing an advisory body, to help guide the partnership toward realization of the shared vision. The resulting Coordinating Council is comprised of representatives from all SUN Service System partners: City of Portland, County, Portland Parks and Recreation, the Children's Levy, Department of Human Services, providers, business, and the Coalition of Communities of Color. Since its inception, the Council has been meeting regularly to address issues including equity, funding, and access to services.

Growth and Continued Expansion of Community Schools

Exhibit 2 below shows the growth of SUN Community Schools over the past 13 years, from the first schools that started in 1999 to the SUN Community Schools scheduled to open for the 2012-2013 school year.
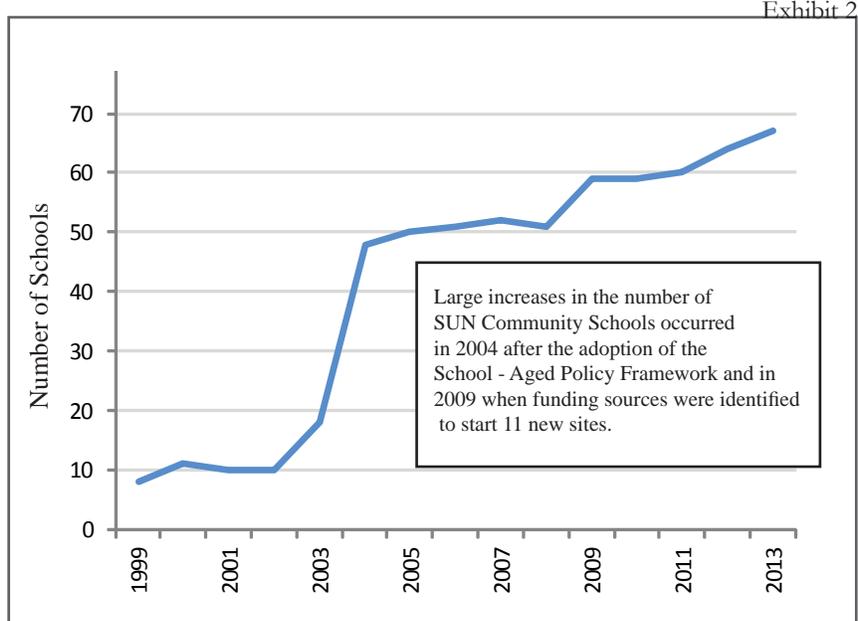
Some highlights of the expansion include the following:

- Eight SUN Community Schools opened in 1999, after City of Portland and County leaders decided to coordinate their efforts and work together to support educational and life success in Multnomah County.
- Eight additional SUN Community Schools opened in 2002-2003, including locations in Reynolds, David Douglas, and Centennial School Districts.

- In the spring of 2004, 30 SUN Community Schools were opened after the release of the 2003 School-Aged Policy Framework. According to managers, shifting funds from other programs to SUN Community Schools increased SUN's budget.
- Eleven sites were added in 2009, including six funded through 21st Century Grants and five funded by the Portland Children's Levy.
- As of July 2012, there were 64 established SUN Community School sites with three new sites scheduled to open for the 2012-13 school year.

Over the years, six SUN Community School sites have closed, mostly due to school closures and grant expiration. It is noteworthy that during recessions and times of tight budgets, City and County leaders, school districts and other funders have continued to support and expand SUN Community Schools.

Number of SUN Community School Sites by Year

Exhibit 2

Large increases in the number of SUN Community Schools occurred in 2004 after the adoption of the School - Aged Policy Framework and in 2009 when funding sources were identified to start 11 new sites.

Source: Multnomah County Auditor's Office

Programs and Services

The SUN Service System is comprised of services that meet the needs of children and families at different stages in their lives and when facing different challenges. Students and families can access school-based services in schools. School-linked services or resources are accessed outside of school, but are aligned with SUN to connect youth and families to an array of government and community assistance programs.

Programs and Services of the broader SUN Service System include:

- Parent Child Development Services provides parenting classes and child development services for children birth through age 5 and their families.
- Social and Support Services for Educational Success provides academic support, case management, and skill-building for youth ages 6-17.
- SUN Community Schools are the hub of the System, connecting children and families to social services and operating extended-day activities.
- Anti-Poverty Services provide rent assistance, energy assistance, case management, and other services to homeless and low-income households.
- Other services include Services for Sexual Minority Youth; Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drug Services; a project supporting school readiness; food pantries; and a social services agency for Multnomah County's growing Latino population.

For detailed information on these services and the metrics on those served, see Appendix A.

At SUN Community Schools, SUN site managers connect students and families with school-linked services. The process for referrals and connections varies by site, but often involves the site manager's direct personal knowledge of a student's situation and/or teachers, school counselors, and other school personnel sharing information about student and family needs with SUN site managers.[1] The System relies on cooperative relationships for referrals. Non-SUN schools may lack a central person and infrastructure, like the SUN site manager and his/her resources, to connect students and families to needed services.

The County, the City of Portland, and non-profit agencies provide SUN Service System programs and services in coordination with schools.[2] The County awards contracts by program and by geographic region, which align with high school catchment areas and Oregon Department of Human Services regional boundaries. In addition, the County awards contracts to organizations that provide culturally specific services to Target Outreach Populations across the County, which include African-American, African Immigrant, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American, and Slavic communities.

Benefits of SUN

Services provided through the SUN Service System are designed to promote self-sufficiency and managers have always considered the initiative to be long-term strategy for reducing poverty. According to recent studies, community schools that align school and community resources offer a promising strategy for improving student outcomes by providing support services that meet the social, physical, cognitive, and economic needs of both students and families. Community school programs are linked to positive attitudes about school, increased academic achievement, increased rates of attendance, increased parental involvement, and higher graduation rates.

1 Personal information is only shared in this way if the school has a release of information document on file from the family permitting such information to be shared.
2 Most program services and community school sites are provided and/or operated by nonprofit organizations. However, Portland Parks & Recreation operates 11 SUN Community Schools.

Evidence linking participation in after-school programs and extracurricular activities with increased school engagement has been found to be especially strong for students from low-income families. Mentoring, academic tutoring, and life skills training have been shown to have positive effects on student engagement, academic achievement, and other areas of positive development.

**Collective Impact: Partners, Advice and Oversight, Resources**

Because the SUN Service System is comprised of different organizations with diverse specialties across multiple jurisdictions, it is able to serve a broader population of individuals and families than if any of the partner organizations was acting alone. The SUN Service System is an example of *collective impact* - "the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem," as described in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, Collective Impact, 2011. The SUN initiative is an example of how the collective impact of aligned community partners and System funders created a system of joint ownership and a commitment to identifying funding solutions to sustain it.

Partners

The County accomplishes this work through a network of partners, contractors, and a shared vision. The County, as managing partner, is responsible for the overall administration, coordination, monitoring, contract management, evaluation, and leadership. However, the partners play vital roles in the ownership, responsibility, funding, and service delivery.

SUN Service System Collaboration

Exhibit 3
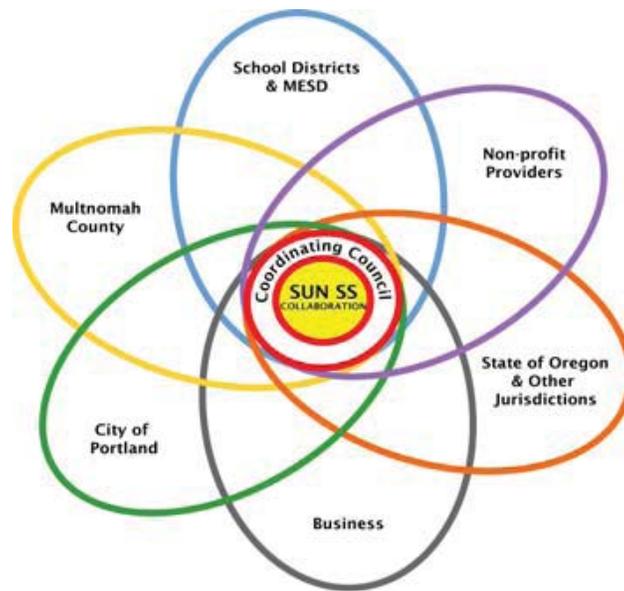
Source: SUN Service System

Current partners include:
- Multnomah County Departments of County Human Services, Library and Health Department;
- City of Portland and Portland Parks & Recreation and Portland Housing Bureau;
- Portland Children's Levy;
- Six School Districts: Centennial, David Douglas, Gresham-Barlow, Parkrose, Portland Public, and Reynolds;
- Oregon Department of Human Services; and
- A vast network of nonprofit service providers. Nonprofits include those that contract with the County to manage SUN sites and provide direct services and those that partner with contracted agencies to provide a variety of classes, programs, and services. See Appendix B for examples of partnerships within a SUN school.

Oversight

Since 2007, the Coordinating Council, according to its charter, has provided "high-level system oversight and support to ensure shared responsibility and coordination" and to assist in addressing system-wide issues. The Coordinating Council's impact on SUN's success and longevity has gained national recognition. It has an important role for internal and external communication, stakeholder engagement, and building visibility. Responsibilities include: ensuring system-level alignment among all participating organizations, developing operating policies for the system, and making operating decisions. In cooperation with the school districts, the Council determines how to allocate funding to current and future SUN community schools. Members include leaders from Multnomah County, the City of Portland, representatives from the school districts, the state of Oregon, community organizations and the business community.

The Council is built on the idea of joint ownership, which means that partners share responsibility for ensuring the System's efficiency, integrity, accountability, and sustainability. Members of the Coordinating Council drive the policy, development, and services of the System. For example, since its inception, the Council has appointed numerous workgroups who meet to address key issues in depth. Past workgroups have included work on Core Services; Allocation Methodology; Resources; Evaluation; System Integration and Alignment; and Joint Ownership and Mutual Responsibility.

Resources

SUN's total resources, including County funds, partner funds, aligned services, and in-kind donations are difficult to quantify. For fiscal year 2012, the County General Fund contributed $8.4 million to the SUN Service System, which provides funding for administration and evaluation and a wide range of services including, hunger relief, social and support services, parent and child development services, SUN Community Schools, and other programs. Forty percent of the budget, or $3.4 million, is used to fund the Community Schools component of the System. However, the total System, and its countywide impact is significantly

larger than the County budget would indicate. SUN managers estimate that an additional $10.4 million that directly supports community school programs and services came from System partners, including school districts, the Portland Children's Levy, and business contributions. For example, in fiscal year 2012, the City of Portland directly supported 11 Community Schools, the Portland Children's Levy directly supported 8 community schools, school districts provided support for 13 SUN Community Schools, the City of Portland provided funds to help support an additional 22 schools, and 6 schools received federal grant funding.

Additionally, managers assert that an additional $30 million of state and federal contributions supported aligned and school-linked services including early-childhood development, health, and anti-poverty services such as rent assistance, workforce development, energy assistance, and other direct services. This includes the Oregon Commission on Children, Families, and Community supported Social and Support Services for Educational Success and Parent Child Development; and private donations in support of hunger relief and other programs.

In total, these contributions fund 64 community schools and classes, recreational and enrichment activities, and provide support services to thousands of people across the County. Similarly, although the County only employs 16.5 FTE to support the SUN Service System, the work is carried out with hundreds of staff members and volunteers of system partners and community organizations.

SUN Service System Financial Resources

Exhibit 4

County
Gerneral Fund
$8.4m

Federal and
State
contributions
$30m

System partner
contributions
$10.4m
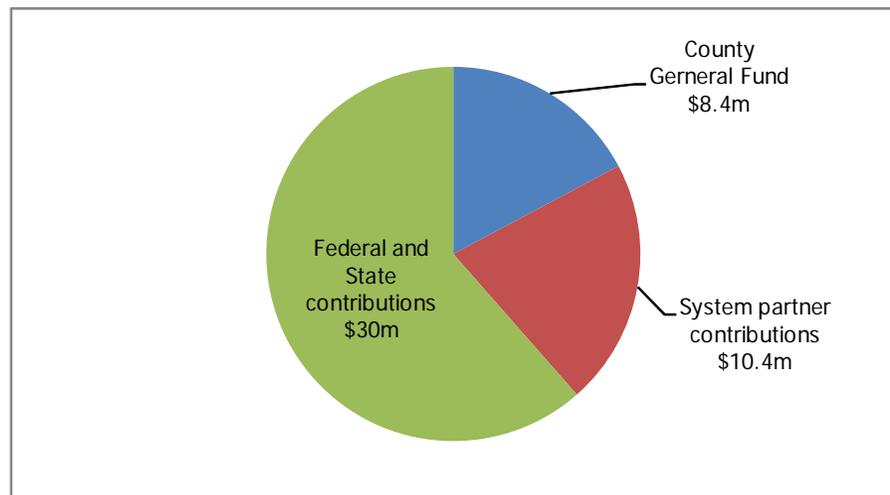
Source: Multnomah County Auditor's Office

SUN Community School Site Selection Consideration Factors

During the early years of the initiative, site selection was based on available funding, existing programs, school-readiness, and school interest in participating in the community school initiative. After the first schools were established, site selection became more focused and deliberate. In 2003, the School-Aged Policy Framework noted that services had not been distributed equitably across the County, particularly given shifts in population. The School-Aged Policy Framework's recommendation on equity addressed site selection, directing managers to:

> *"Distribute services based on countywide populations with high risk needs, including the number of children on free and reduced lunch, the percentage of children on free and reduced lunch, and neighborhood poverty, using census, school, Oregon Department of Education, and community and culturally determined data that is county validated. "*

Recommendations went on to say that sites be selected taking into account both the number and percentage of children on free and reduced lunch or neighborhood poverty, and that City/County criteria for phasing in sites use factors such as site readiness, combined risk, and geographic distribution.

Managers responded by creating a Poverty Index, which has been modified somewhat over the years. Each school is given a rank order using the percent of students receiving free and reduced lunch **combined** with the rank order of the total number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, giving preference to larger schools. The Poverty Index also provides additional information for each school including geographic location, school district, and other details. The result divides the 146 Multnomah County [3] schools into quartiles, with roughly 25% of schools in each quartile.[4] Schools in the first quartile are the highest poverty schools while schools in the fourth quartile have the least poverty.

When selecting sites to place new SUN Community Schools, the Coordinating Council uses the Poverty Index along with other consideration factors such as input from school districts, site readiness, and geographic location. In some cases, the Coordinating Council may not be directly involved in choosing new SUN sites. For example, school districts may want to open new SUN Community Schools in locations suited to serve the needs of students in their districts. Three new schools are scheduled to come on-line in fiscal year 2013 and each will receive half its funding from its respective school districts. The Districts worked with County managers to select sites to locate new programs at Prescott Elementary in Parkrose, Wilkes Elementary in Reynolds, and Highland Elementary in Gresham-Barlow.

Although the Poverty Index is an imperfect indicator of poverty, when used with geographic information and input from school districts, it helps identify schools and areas with the highest need. The Coordinating Council is currently discussing the issue of equity and has discussed ways of incorporating another equity indicator into the Poverty Index. Some Council members and others have suggested that the Poverty Index should include information on race, ethnicity, and English language learners to provide a more informed view of each school.

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3 Count does not include charter and alternative schools.

4 In cases where schools share a rank, they are included in the same quartile. Three schools in quartile 1 share the rank of 37, increasing the number of schools in this quartile.

Quartiles

Among 146 schools in the County, approximately 85,000 students are enrolled and more than half of students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch.

Number of Schools, Students and Students Receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch, by Quartile

Exhibit 5

Quartile	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Students on FRL	Percentage receiving FRL
Quartile 1	39	27,154	21,273	78%
Quartile 2	35	22,292	14,159	64%
Quartile 3	38	19,198	8,686	45%
Quartile 4	34	16,444	3,105	19%
Total	146	85,088	47,223	56%

Source: Multnomah County Auditor's Office

The circle above highlights the number of students in highest need schools and those on free and reduced price lunch.

Two small school districts in Multnomah County, Riverdale (two schools) and Corbett (three schools), do not have any schools in quartiles 1 and 2 and do not have any SUN Community Schools at this time. The chart on page 19 includes three new SUN Community Schools scheduled to be in operation for the 2012-2013 school year, including one in each of the following school districts: Gresham-Barlow, Parkrose and Reynolds.

As shown in Exhibit 6 below, of the 67 SUN Community Schools, most (55) fall into quartiles 1 and 2, and very few SUN Schools are in quartile 4. However in quartile 3, there are some schools with high needs that could be good candidates for SUN School expansion. Because the Poverty Index considers both size of the free and reduced price lunch population and percent of the school on free and reduced priced lunch some schools with small student populations fall into quartiles indicating less poverty, even though they may have a higher percentage of students in poverty than larger schools.

- For example, Grout Elementary has 71% of students receiving free and reduced price lunch, but only 360 students. Although it has high need, its small student body puts it into quartile 3.

Managers have said they are looking for other indicators to help assess and rank schools in quartile 3.

Distribution of SUN Community Schools
Across the Districts, by Quartile

School District	Quartile 1	2	3	4	Total SUN Schools
	Higher Poverty ← → Lower Poverty				
Centennial - 10 Schools					
Schools with SUN	1	4	-	-	5
Schools no SUN	-	2	3	-	
David Douglas - 13 schools					
Schools with SUN	6	3	-	-	9
Schools no SUN	3	1	-	-	
Gresham-Barlow - 19 schools					
Schools with SUN	1	6	-	-	7
Schools no SUN	-	2	6	4	
Parkrose - 6 schools					
Schools with SUN	1	2	-	-	3
Schools no SUN	1	1	1	-	
Portland Public - 77 schools					
Schools with SUN	16	8	9	3	36
Schools no SUN	1	3	12	25	
Reynolds - 16 schools					
Schools with SUN	7	-	-	-	7
Schools no SUN	2	3	4	-	
Corbett and Riverdale - 5 schools					
Schools with SUN					
Schools no SUN	-	-	3	2	
TOTAL - Schools with SUN	32	23	9	3	67
TOTAL - Schools no SUN	7	12	29	31	79
TOTAL - Schools	39	35	38	34	146

Source: Multnomah County Auditor's Office

The chart shows schools and SUN Community Schools by quartile across County school districts. There are 19 schools in quartiles 1 and 2 that do not have SUN Community Schools. Also, Centennial, David Douglas, Parkrose, and Reynolds School

Districts have a significant proportion of schools in quartiles 1 and 2 (70%, 100%, 83%, and 75% respectively). Leaders have recognized the need to expand SUN Community Schools in east Multnomah County.

There are 12 SUN Community schools located in areas of less need (quartiles 3 and 4). While some may suggest defunding these programs to support other higher need schools, leaders maintain they are working toward a universal system where every school is a SUN Community School and say that dismantling programs only to re-instate them in the future would not be in the best interest of the system. Rationales for retaining programs may include the following: some schools of less need may be funded by a grant or other support in a particular geographic area and serve as a "base" for service delivery in the area; a school may have shifted demographics over the years; the school might have strong community support; or it may be a result of long-standing partners in the schools. Further, some schools in quartiles 3 and 4 are funded at 75% of the current level including Mt. Tabor Middle School, Buckman Elementary School, and Robert Gray Middle School.

For example:
- In 2004, managers added a SUN Community School at Markham Elementary School in Southwest Portland (quartile 3) in order to provide community access to available support services in that area.
- Robert Gray Middle School, quartile 4, and Buckman Elementary School (quartile 3) were among the first eight SUN Community Schools established, with programs in place since 1999. These schools have well-attended programs built on long-standing relationships.

- Mt. Tabor Middle School in Southeast Portland (quartile 3) has had a long-standing extended-day presence by City of Portland Parks and Recreation. The well-established program transitioned to a SUN Community School in 2004. Although schools in quartile 3 do not have as high a need for SUN Schools as those in quartiles 1 and 2, the infrastructure was already in place.

As shown on the map on the following page, SUN Community Schools are fairly well distributed across the County. The map illustrates that the system has been deliberate in siting schools by placing SUN Community Schools in a majority of schools with the highest need.

Distribution of SUN Community Schools

Legend

1st or 2nd Quartile

3rd or 4th Quartile

SUN Schools
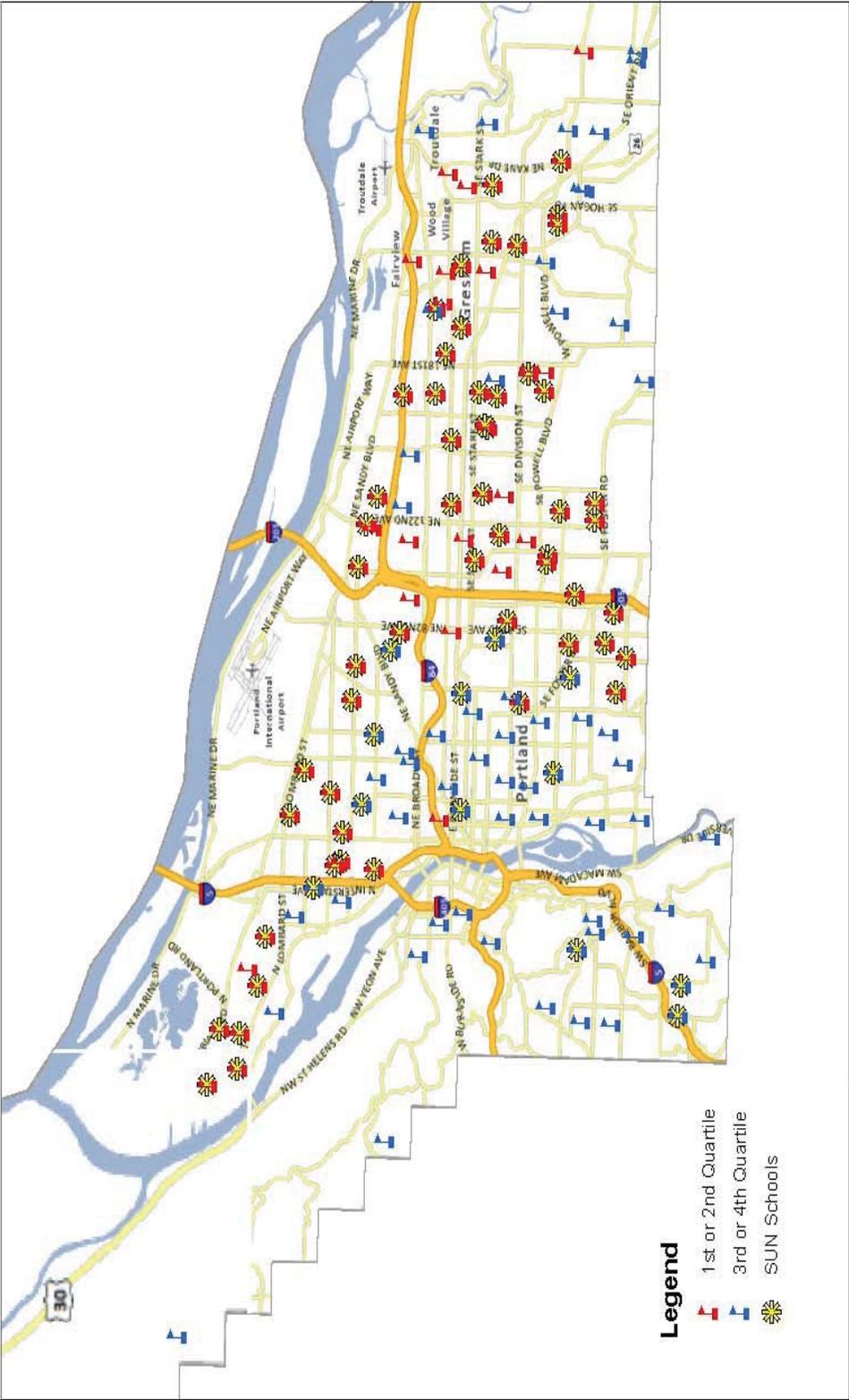
Looking Forward: the Future of SUN

Strategic Challenges and Opportunities for the Future

As noted above, the SUN Service System has grown considerably over the years. The Coordinating Council has plans to continue its expansion. With this growth, the System will experience challenges and has several strategic opportunities. While we found the program to be a promising strategy for delivering support services across the County we found some areas that could benefit from further examination for each of the levels of management involved. We identified the following as areas for strategic focus as the System continues to evolve:

For The Chair and Board of County Commissioners:
Funding the system
SUN Community Schools require broader funding -
As part of the School-Aged Policy Framework, County leadership agreed that the County's role is to: "Provide funds for school-based and school-linked services for children and their families that assist all students in succeeding in school." While there are many funding sources that support the SUN Community Schools including significant funds from the City, school districts, and the Portland Children's Levy, Multnomah County provides the largest share of the cost of after-school programming and staffing site managers. Over the years, the County and has taken on support of specific sites when funding from other sources has ended, specifically expiring grants. For example, in fiscal year 2012, federal grants expired at three high poverty SUN Community Schools. Multnomah County contributed $150,000 to sustain SUN at these schools. Managers stated that the money represented about one-third of the total cost of maintaining SUN in those schools and that the County's investment helps leverage resources from SUN Community School partners. In 2014, six grants are scheduled to expire. The County has been able to replace lost funding to expiring grants in the past, but this may not be sustainable in the future. For example, during fiscal year 2013, partner budget decisions resulted in tradeoffs in programs to help preserve the SUN Service System. Further cuts may be necessary next year. The community, school districts, City of

Portland, and County are all committed to the SUN Community Schools model; however there is a recognized need for a more broad-based funding strategy going forward, which, auditors suggest, could include State recognition of the community school model and commensurate funding allocations.

6,000 highest needs students do not have a SUN community school - There are 19 schools in quartiles 1 and 2 that do not have SUN Community Schools, including four large high schools, two middle schools and 13 elementary schools. Approximately 15,000 students are enrolled in these schools with more than 9,500 (65%) receiving free and reduced price lunch. Some of these schools have other programs in place that serve high need students.

Literature suggests that the types of services and interventions SUN provides may have the greatest impact in earlier grades. Among the 15 elementary and middle schools in this group, there are more than 7,500 students with close to 6,000 (76%) receiving free and reduced price lunch. Further, most of the schools are located in the east part of the County.

In contrast, there are 12 schools in quartiles 3 or 4 with SUN Community Schools in place, serving approximately 5,500 students with 2,500 (45%) on free and reduced price lunch, all elementary and middle schools and all within Portland Public School District boundaries. Each of these schools has a rationale for remaining a SUN Community School and funding for these schools is complex.

- Four are designated as base Community Schools sited in high poverty high school catchment areas;
- Several are funded and staffed directly by the City of Portland Parks and Recreation with programs in place since 2004;
- One is fully funded by the Portland Public School District;
- One is funded by a grant from the Portland Children's levy; and
- Six operate at a reduced funding level.

While we recognize the long term strategy of keeping established sites in place and the value of maintaining on-going programs and established relationships, the System and its partners should develop a strategy to fund SUN CS at high need schools, or consider shifting resources to provide funding for some schools with great unmet needs.

Expanding the System will require significant investment - The Coordinating Council is actively exploring funding strategies. As previously discussed, a Coordinating Council workgroup, Every School a SUN Community School, formed to consider what it would take to have a SUN Community School located in every Multnomah County school and how to accomplish it. According to meeting notes, the System Integration workgroup initiated the idea in June 2008. "As they addressed ways to better integrate and align services across the County, it became clear that having a consistent, effective school-based system across the County would be a huge step toward cost effective, accessible and efficient service delivery."

The Every School workgroup continues to meet and recently discussed moving forward toward the vision of a universal system with every school a SUN Community School. In a June 2012 meeting, they estimated that establishing a community school at each of the 80 remaining non-SUN Community Schools would require an additional $9 million to $10 million annually; to provide administrative support of the System and wrap-around service coverage to these students and families would cost significantly more.

According to managers, the cost to fully fund one SUN Community School site is approximately $95,000. This funding provides a full-time site manager and extended-day programming (that may include an assistant), which serves a minimum of 200 youth, 50 adults, and many more who attend community events. This does not cover funding for additional support services linked to the school such as case management and parent-child development services, funded by the County and State of Oregon. Nor does it include funding for administrative costs associated with County management.

These and other school-linked support services are an important part of the model. Oregonians living in poverty increased from 12.9% in 2007 to 15.8% in 2010. The likely result of increased poverty is the need for additional support services.

Another consideration factor in the need for additional support services is the reality that there are people who do not feel comfortable in a school setting and some at-risk youth are not attending school. Additional parent-child development and case management services may be used to reach youth and families not connected to schools.

- To illustrate the cost of adding SUN Community Schools, one scenario for expansion would be to bring the SUN Community School model to the 19 schools in quartiles 1 and 2 that are not SUN Community Schools (see graph on p.19). Approximately $2 million annually would fund these additional sites. However, as noted above, additional funding would be needed to provide support services and System Administration.

As SUN expands into schools with less poverty, other funding scenarios may open up. In the future, some of the funding for specific sites might come from community fundraising, fees, or other creative and strategic solutions unique to specific schools and neighborhoods.

For the Coordinating Council:
Equity
The Coordinating Council should continue to examine equity
- The Coordinating Council has been working to address equity and should continue efforts in this area. Equity should be a consideration in all areas of the SUN Service System, including future selection of SUN Community School sites, selection of service providers, distribution of resources, and evaluation of services. Some service providers reported tensions between providers serving culturally specific populations and providers serving the general population. The Council is working to address issues associated with equity, yet could benefit from creating a working definition of equity and developing effective ways of

considering equity in decision making. As we were concluding our analysis, the Council was discussing holding a retreat on the County's Equity and Empowerment Lens, which is a tool for framing decisions to advance equity.

Advice and Oversight

The Coordinating Council should continue to develop guidelines prior to significant changes - While the Coordinating Council has received praise as an effective body for overseeing a complex system and maintaining strong communication among and between System partners, there are areas where it could improve. In the past, as new schools came into the System as SUN Community Schools, the Council did not have clear guidelines or direction on which partner agencies would manage them. This created competition among the providers and a courtship for the schools, as provider agencies lobbied for new opportunities and contracts. However, as the System added three new SUN Schools in 2012, the Council created a sub-committee to decide how to award contracts and interviewed contractors prior to deciding. Developing clear guidelines before expanding the System minimizes the lobbying and eases the integration of new schools into the System.

The Coordinating Council should clarify roles and responsibilities - During Council meetings, Council members make decisions that have System-wide impact. Members have an opportunity to discuss issues and come to a solution that most members can agree with. The decisions are not easy and there is not always unanimous agreement. Some members of the Council expressed a lack of clarity as to the roles and responsibilities. The Coordinating Council Charter outlines individual responsibilities, which include attending Council and sub-committee meetings, communicating with leadership of the groups or organizations they represent, making decisions on behalf of and representing the views of the groups they represent, and contributing staff support to the Council. As the System has grown and the Council is being charged with more complex decisions, some members have questions about how the Council makes decisions and who has ultimate authority.

The Council should consider periodic review of policies and procedures to ensure a shared understanding about the roles and responsibilities of Council members.

The Coordinating Council should consider consulting more with community representatives - Finally, while the Council maintains good representation of providers and system partners, it should continue to seek out the voices and needs of the population the System serves. By holding focus groups and community conversations, the Council has made efforts to obtain a broad perspective of communities in need. However, we believe the Coordinating Council could benefit from getting deeper perspectives from communities of color and families in poverty. This consumer perspective could add value to conversations of SUN Schools, service delivery and coordination, and community impact.

For Sun Management:
Capacity
Growth of the System adds workload - As the number of Community Schools and SUN services and initiatives has grown, the workload has increased for County staff responsible for overseeing their implementation. Additionally, as SUN Community School sites increase, responsibilities increase in managing additional partnerships, monitoring contracts, conducting and analyzing evaluations, and tracking funding requirements. Over the past five years as the number of SUN Community Schools has increased and programs have joined the System, such as Child and Family Hunger Relief, there has been little change in County staff that support and manage the system. According to managers, SUN Division administrative staff has remained flat since 2008 when there were fewer initiatives and fewer SUN Community Schools.

Managers report that staff have had difficulty keeping pace with the workload. There are now more SUN schools and services to oversee and new responsibilities to manage with a relatively small staff who are limited in their ability to take on more work and don't have the time to delve into areas of concern or interest.

The following illustrates some of the ways in which new SUN Schools add to the demand on County staff: negotiating with administration to bring on a new school; creating or amending a contract; orientation and oversight of new site managers; training and support for data collection; additional coordination with a school, principal and counseling staff; additional contract monitoring; and other tasks and responsibilities that increase County workload.

Data, Monitoring, & Evaluation
SUN Managers should consider long-term contractor monitoring and evaluation - Every two years, the County monitors the contracts of agencies that provide SUN and linked services and an annual monitoring letter is sent to agencies. Staff monitor Culturally-specific and Regional providers alternately every other year. Contract monitoring is a labor-intensive process that involves site visits and file reviews. Each program has a monitoring tool that staff use to review required documents, spending, service goals, outcomes, and other measures, as required by the particular program's contract. When staff find problems or areas of concern, they issue a letter to the responsible agency and request a corrective action plan. Typical problems vary by program but may include agencies not meeting the minimum number of youth/families served or missing documentation. However, monitoring and measuring contractor performance over time, rather than on individual occasions once every two years, would provide SUN a clearer picture of overall performance during the life of the seven year contract. Doing so would allow management and staff to advise and correct problematic areas, rather than only responding to problematic incidents, when they occur. Long-term evaluation should also include monitoring of contractor staff retention (site coordinators and case managers). Many staff members stressed the value of building relationships with students, families, school staff, and providers, which can be disrupted by staff turnover at SUN Community Schools.

SUN should validate its data - Although we uncovered some issues involving data quality in the data reporting system, these were due to a system upgrade and have been addressed. County staff worked with the vendor to identify the problem and a solution. Though, staff have indicated the current software is not ideal. Apart from issues with data collection and reporting software, managers should examine data reliability and validity. Managers should assess data collection to determine if the best data is being collected and if data collection methodologies are consistent across the system.

Increased use of data could add value to the programs - The data collection system has been in place for several years, and the system has a tremendous amount of data available for analysis. The System systematically collects various types of data from program participants, teachers and others, including student level data from school districts to monitor SUN participants' outcomes after participating in services. Yet they do not have staff resources to fully utilize these data. We believe SUN managers have access to the data they need to better understand improvements in academic success and other outcomes; however, a lack of staff capacity, as noted above, prevents deeper analysis. For example, the data could be analyzed for different populations of students to assess which services are more beneficial to certain populations of students.

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office initiated an audit of the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Service System because it is a relatively new program that has grown significantly over the last decade and has never been audited by our office. We determined that, based on its growth and complexity, it warranted an external review.

Scope and Methodology   Auditors performed an overview assessment of the SUN Service System by looking broadly at the whole System, rather than an in-depth analysis of one particular program. Auditors reviewed policy documents and management studies of the SUN Service System, reviewed professional studies related to community schools, attended Coordinating Council meetings, interviewed County staff and staff of partner organizations, toured SUN Community Schools, observed program-specific meetings, reviewed data and evaluations, and reviewed program budgets.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Programs and Services

SUN Service System programs	Metrics
Parent Child Development Services (PCDS)	
Provides services for families of children from birth through age five to promote positive parenting, healthy child development, and school readiness. Services include: • developmental screening • immunizations • early childhood education and play groups • parenting support and groups, home and personal visits, and • access to social and health services PCDS uses the Parents as Teachers curriculum, which is an evidence-based practice designed to teach parenting skills.	• Nearly 600 families, including more than 800 children, participated in young child playgroups and parent education. These services are delivered through an evidenced based program designed to teach parenting skills that have been shown to increase children's readiness for school. • Nearly three-quarters of the participating adults were not native English language speakers. • 90% of children were of color or from a culturally specific community.

Social & Support Services for Educational Success (SSSES)

The goal of the SSSES program is for youth to remain in school and/or get back into school.

- It serves youth ages 6-17 who are at risk for academic failure. Factors that contribute to students being at risk for academic failure include: poor academic performance, poor class attendance, suspension or expulsion, behavioral issues, English not being the primary language, foster care placement, gang involvement, homelessness, individualized education plan, poverty, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy.

- The program fosters academic achievement by providing school-linked, age-appropriate, and culturally-specific academic support, case management, family engagement, and skill-building groups.

- Nearly 2,000 youth received services to increase school success, including academic support, case management and skill building activities.

- 90% of the youth were of color or from a culturally specific community.

- 75% of youth served were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Anti-Poverty Services	
Anti-poverty services help homeless and low-income households leave poverty and become self-sufficient. Services include: • Energy assistance • Rent assistance • Employment services • Housing • Case management • Skill-building, and • Referral to other programs This funding is not part of the SUN budget, but students and families in need are referred to agencies where they can get assistance. This is primarily federal funding supplemented with general fund dollars.	• The SUN Service System links families to rent assistance, energy assistance, employment services, case management, and other anti-poverty support services. • Housing was stabilized for nearly 700 families at risk of homelessness and almost all of the families remained in permanent housing six months after receiving rent supports.

Other Services and Initiatives	
Additional programs and services - Linked to the SUN Service System are several other services for children and families in need. These include: • Services for Sexual Minority Youth • Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Services • Hunger Relief • a social service center for Multnomah County's growing Latino community • linkages to health and mental health services • library programs	• Child and Family Hunger Relief - served meals to children and families during summer and supports weekend food pantries at six SUN Community School sites.

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SUN Community School Profile 2011

Faubion PK-8

Lead Agency: Portland Parks and Recreation

Service Area & Target Groups/Focus

Children, adults and families who are homeless, living in poverty and/or at risk of academic failure – primarily from school neighborhood, but services are open to anyone.

School Population: 401 students; Grades PK-8; 77% Free and Reduced Lunch; 73% Students of Color (Hispanic 21%, Asian/Pacific Islander 6%, Black 37%, Native American 0.5%, Multi-racial 7%, White 27%)

Core Services 2010-11

Extended-Day Activities (children and adults)

Academic Support
After School Meal
Homework Clubs
Late Study Hall
Skate & Study

Enrichment
Aka Science
Math Trek
Invent It!
Chess for Success
Garden Club
Theater Club
Broadcast Yourself! Video Production
African Drumming
Samba Performance Group
Lego Robotics
Marine Biology
Clay & Sculpture
Creating Beats
Shape My World
Illustrated Storybook
Animal Architects
Story Scouts
Seasonal Art Classes

Mentoring
SEI - Brothers Reflecting Brotherhood
SEI - Sisters Reflecting Beauty
Concordia University Service Corps

Recreation
Gymnastics
Soccer
Basketball
Volleyball
Hip Hop Dance
Creative Movement
Games Galore

Summer Programs
Eight weeks of theme camps
    & special interest camps
Free breakfast & lunch program

Youth Leadership/Involvement
SUN Student Leadership Team

Empowerment/Skill-Building
SEI - Brothers Reflecting Brotherhood
SEI - Sisters Reflecting Beauty
Bicycle Safety Club
Garden Club
Survivor Health Challenge

Adult Education
WomenStrength Self-Defense
Yoga
Zumba
Boot Camp Fitness
Home Weatherization Workshop
    (Community Energy Project)
Host for Urban Growth Bounty
    Series classes through Bureau of
    Planning & Sustainability

Community/Cultural Events
Community Partnerships Include:
  Tears of Joy Theater
  Oregon Gymnastics Academy
  Chess for Success
  Community Cycling Center
  Concordia University
  Saturday Academy
  Old Library Studios
  SEI
  Growing Gardens
  Aka Science
  ORTOP
  Multnomah County Library
  Portland Police Bureau
  City of Portland Bureau of
    Planning & Sustainability

Family Education & Engagement

Daily communication with parents
SUN Advisory Council
Family Activities: SUN Family Fun Nights, Positive Play Sports Leagues

Case Management & Skill Building
Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI) Outreach Program

System Coordination, Service Integration & Site Management
Recruitment and connection of students and families with services; development of referral system
SUN CS Advisory Body (school staff, parents, students, and partner agencies)
Partner Meetings
Student Staffing Meetings
Site Management in Out-of-School Time
Partner and Resource Development

| 14 Community Agency Partners | 1813 volunteer hours contributed |
| 3 Business Partners | $62,824 leveraged in cash & in-kind donations |

Additional Services

Culturally Specific Services
SEI African American Culturally Specific curriculum
Library Services
CHIF-funded after school programs
PPS Nutrition Services
After School Supper Program

Evaluation 2009-10

Outputs

315 youth served
78% students of color
47% identified as being "at risk of academic failure"
76% qualified for free and reduced lunch
56 adults served

Outcomes

76% of students increased benchmark scores in Reading
85% of students increased benchmark scores in Math
Average daily attendance of SUN CS students was **95%**

According to teachers, of students who regularly attended SUN CS:
84% improved **classroom academic performance**
69% improved getting **homework** in on time
79% participated in class more
66% improved **behavior**
66% came to school more **motivated to learn**

SUN Spotlight

Ten of our community partner organizations provided youth classes during our Fall term at Faubion SUN, which accounted for a large portion of the dedicated SUN adults that brought knowledge, expertise, and valuable skill development to our children. However, when I think of what our partners bring into our community school, I can't help but acknowledge how the physical objects they carry through these doors help highlight the amazing opportunities available to our students.

Students wheeled 14 bikes in and out of Faubion each week for Bike Club, which was provided by the Community Cycling Center. The Oregon Gymnastics Academy set up a miniature gym each Monday complete with all the equipment you can imagine for teaching the foundations of gymnastics. Students learning African Drumming with the Tears of Joy Theater carried 15 Ghanaian drums into Rm.9 each week, while the video production class set up a temporary studio next door. The Sculpture instructor from Saturday Academy lugged giant bins full of clay, wire and wood, and Old Library Studios instructors transported the keyboards and laptop computers for their musically inclined students in the Creating Beats class.

These are just a few examples of the resources that community partners contribute to our program above and beyond their teaching and mentoring. However, when I see these objects shuffling through the halls, I appreciate the tangible representation of how SUN is helping to foster a sense of opportunity in our schools.

SUN Community Schools are a collaboration of Multnomah County Department of School and Community Partnerships, the City of Portland Parks and Recreation, nonprofits and local school districts

SUN Community School Profile 2011

George Middle School

Lead Agency: Neighborhood House

Service Area & Target Groups/Focus

Children, adults and families who are homeless, living in poverty and/or at risk of academic failure – primarily from school neighborhood, but services are open to anyone.

School Population: 364 students; Grades 6-8; 87% Free and Reduced Lunch;
77% Students of Color (Hispanic 34%, Asian/ Pacific Islander 10%, Black 29%, Native American 4%, Multi-racial 1%, White 23%)

Core Services 2010-11

Extended-Day Activities (children and adults)

Academic Support
Homework Assistance
Homework Independence
Academic Computers
Tutoring Services (SES)

Recreation
Bachata Student Practice
Boys/Girls Basketball
Boys/Girls Soccer
Break Dance
Children's Course Golf
Folklorico Dance
Hip-Hop Dance
Volleyball

Youth Leadership/Involvement
SUN LEAD Team: Student
  Advisory Group

Mentoring
Big Brothers, Big Sisters
George SUN Boys Group

Enrichment
Saturday Academy: Actors
  Studio, Claymation Video
  Animation
Art
Ethos: Band, Electric Guitar
  Group, Rock Band
Gardening
Cooking

Summer Programs
SUN School Summer Academy:
  academic tutoring, art, Ethos
  music, sports, hip hop
  dance, break dance, team
  building, and field trips

Empowerment/Skill-Building
Girls Inc.
Northwest Family Services:
  Poder Joven
SEI: Sisters Reflecting Beauty,
  Brothers Reflecting
  Brotherhood

Community/Cultural Events
Back to School Night
George MS Multicultural Day
SUN School Showcases events
SUN Winter Posada

Adult Education
Adult ESL
Academia de Padres
Thursday AM Coffee
Folklorico Dancing
Latino Parent Community
  Meetings

Family Education & Engagement

School-wide Parent Meetings & Activities
Family Education: AVID High School Nights
Family Activities: Back to School Night, Conferences, Cultural Events, SUN CS Showcases, Sporting Events, Latino Family Nights

Case Management & Skill Building
SSSES Case Management: SEI, Hacienda CDC
Neighborhood House CASASTART
Northwest Family Services
School Attendance Effort

System Coordination, Service Integration & Site Management
Recruitment & connection of students & families with services; development of referral system
SUN CS Advisory Body (school staff, parents, students, and partner agencies)
Partner Meetings
Student Staffing Meetings
Site Management in Out-of-School Time
Partner and Resource Development
36 Community Agency Partners   238 volunteer hours contributed
2 Business Partners $88,533 leveraged in cash & in-kind donations

Additional Services
Culturally Specific Services
Case Management and Skill Building Groups
Health Services
School-Based Health Clinic
Library Services

Evaluation 2009-10
Outputs

216 youth served
80% students of color
76% identified as being "at risk of academic failure"
91% qualified for free and reduced lunch
20 adults served
471 people served in non-enrollment events
(Family educational nights, cultural fairs, etc.)

Outcomes

77% of students increased benchmark scores in Reading
75% of students increased benchmark scores in Math
Average daily attendance of SUN CS students was **94%**

According to teachers, of students who regularly attended SUN CS:
69% improved **classroom academic performance**
61% improved getting **homework** in on time
60% participated in class more
56% improved **behavior**
59% came to school more **motivated to learn**

SUN Spot:: SUN in Action

In December 2010, Neighborhood House George SUN School partnered with El Programa Hispano, Northwest Family Services, Hacienda CDC, and CASASTART for a fun-filled evening kicking off the holiday season with a colorful multi-cultural Posada.

The Posada was mostly a success due to the incredible involvement of several George MS parents. The committed parents and lead partners began planning the event on a weekly basis in November during Thursday school coffee chats. Parents developed organizational and communication skills in the process. Lots of hard work was done and the Posada came to life a month later.

The morning of the Posada, the SUN Solarium was filled with lots of adults working hard to make lots of colorful traditional decorations. Over 100 guests participated in the Holiday Posada that featured participants walking to local participating business, traditional foods, singing, costumes, and a family environment unlike any other.

SUN Community Schools are a collaboration of Multnomah County Department of School and Community Partnerships, the City of Portland Parks and Recreation, nonprofits and local school districts

Responses to Audit

November 27, 2012

Steve March
Multnomah County Auditor
501 SE Hawthorne, Room 601
Portland, OR 97214

Dear Auditor March,

Thank you to you and your staff for your audit of the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Service System. I welcome the opportunity to respond.

I appreciate your Office's detailed review and consideration in conducting this audit. Your staff auditors appeared to take a genuine interest in the Service System; they were professional and thorough during the process.

I am encouraged that your audit found that the SUN Service System is operating efficiently and effectively, and that SUN is a promising strategy for delivering support services across the county. This conclusion is an important one and underscores why the SUN Service System is a key poverty prevention strategy for our community.

Your audit outlines three broad areas for further consideration by the Board of Commissioners, the SUN Coordinating Council and SUN Management. First, with respect to the considerations for Board of County Commissioners, you raise some interesting ideas in terms of funding the System. As your staff learned in the process, over the past three years increases in funding for SUN Community Schools have been shared between the County and School Districts. This joint funding represents a significant shift; it clearly demonstrates the commitment of School Districts to SUN Community Schools. We will continue to explore opportunities for new funding sources.

As the SUN Council continues to advance its vision that every school become a SUN Community School, developing a funding process for the next 19 high poverty schools is paramount to achieving this vision. It will take a combined effort of all the system partners to determine how this funding will become possible. It is a vision that we all share.

Second, the role of the SUN Coordinating Council is an important one. Their ability to provide guidance and oversight is beneficial in developing deeper commitment and alignment across jurisdictions. The County can not speak for the Council so it will be helpful for your staff to meet with the Council and review your recommendations with them. The SUN Coordinating Council has also engaged in discussions about equity. Most recently we held a half- day retreat where we learned about the County's Equity and

Empowerment Lens, and how application of that tool can be applied to decisions the Council will recommend in the future. Such discussions can only serve to make the Council stronger and more purposeful in its work.

Finally, the considerations for SUN Management are well stated. As the SUN Service System has grown, and the number of Community Schools has increased, we agree this has increased the administrative workload for County staff. Administrative capacity has not grown along with the System. The infrastructure of the SUN Service System Division is a key to what makes the System so strong. As we move into the FY14 budget process, I will work with Susan Myers, the DCHS Department Director, to begin addressing the capacity and work flow issues you raise.

Thank you again for your Office's thoughtful review of this important service delivery system.

Sincerely,

Joanne Fuller, Chief Operating Officer
On behalf of Multnomah County Chair Jeff Cogen