



# The City of Eugene

OREGON

## Program Overview

Eugene, Oregon a city of 170,000 residents is proud to describe their successes in providing quality afterschool opportunities to children and youth in their community. The formal process began when the Eugene School District was awarded a 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grant in 2000 which resulted in a partnership with the City of Eugene. The afterschool partnership was called Best for Kids and Families (BEST) and it is now in its tenth year of operating and serves children in grade 1-8. The program is open 4 days/week for 3 hours each day.

The goal of the afterschool program is to extend the learning day by offering academic assistance in small reading and math groups, as well as homework support at both the elementary school and the middle schools. In addition the well rounded programs provide enrichment activities such as rocketry, rock climbing, yoga, and arts and crafts.

A dinner is served at school through the federal CACFP program and transportation home from the afterschool program is provided by the school district. In addition the programs provide family activities and adult learning opportunities in partnership with Title 1 and the Lane County Commission on Families and Children.

Over the last several years the school district has begun to recognize the after school programs as an “intervention” that is helping to close the achievement gap for many students. Once students are identified and invited to participate in BEST, the school, using fall district reading data, begins to monitor progress throughout the year for group placement and curriculum decisions. In the spring, reading assessment is used to review progress toward goals which have been generally very positive.



## Fast Facts

- In BEST the school district offers academics afterschool and the city offers recreation. As a result of this partnership, BEST programs have larger numbers of participants as well as higher daily attendance than other afterschool programs offered solely by the school district or by the City of Eugene
- Students are invited to attend based on academic needs in reading or math with any additional slots available to other students on a first-come, first- served basis
- In 2008-2009 BEST served 575 students of which 17% were English Language Learners, 16% were children with special needs, and 38% of these students were students of color
- In the 2009- 2010 school year more than 500 students were served in 8 schools/sites with 5 of those centers being BEST programs. Many of the schools had waiting lists of families who wished to have their children participate in the programs
- Overall, students in the BEST program showed significantly more growth in reading fluency, a key measure of reading ability than their non-BEST peers
- Parents and students alike express a high level of satisfaction with student's academic growth

## Best Practices

Eugene has been creative and successful in ensuring sustainability of programs as well as fiscal support. While funding is largely through 21st Century Community Learning Center Grants, in recent years that funding has been supplemented by the school district's general fund, the Title 1/ARRA funds and the City of Eugene. Title 1 has been a partner the last few years in 4 of the 5 schools, providing 20% of the budget for academic support. The Title 1 dollars are used to support instructional assistants and part time certified teachers who supervise the math and reading instruction after school.

One of the BEST goals is to improve reading and math achievement in 4 elementary programs and they are implementing it through small group reading intervention 1 hour, 4 days/week using Soar to Success and Triumphs, which is linked to and supports school day core curriculum. BEST also enjoys the support of a number of community partners who are committed to and instrumental to their success. These partners include:

- The City of Eugene's Recreational and Cultural Services Division, which supports enrichment opportunities from art and science to dance and rock climbing
- The Arts Umbrella, a non- profit music organization, which conducts beginning strings programs in all BEST schools. Last year over 120 students participated in a citywide youth strings concert, in an auditorium with "standing room" only
- People and Animals Who Serve (PAWWS), who brings reading assistance dogs with their 'uncritical ears' to help improve the reading fluency and enjoyment of reluctant elementary readers who eagerly await their furry friends arrivals on Thursdays
- Over 60 University of Oregon students who tutor youth in reading and math though a partnership with the University of Oregon and the federal work-study program