



# HEALTHY STUDENTS THRIVING



2005-2006

## COMMUNITY REPORT

OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES



“[Children] who face violence, hunger, substance abuse, unintended pregnancy, and despair can not possibly focus on academic excellence.

There is no curriculum brilliant enough to compensate for a hungry stomach or a distracted mind.”

— **National Action Plan for Comprehensive School Health Education**

Community and Business Partners:

3M	Health Start, Inc.	Pediatric Home Services
American Lung Association of Minnesota	Healtheast	Portico Healthnet
American Red Cross	McCord, Dr. James Medica Foundation	St. Paul Children’s Collaborative
Children’s Home Society and Family Services of Minnesota	Medtronic Foundation	Saint Paul/Ramsey County Department of Health
Children’s Hospital	Minnesota Department of Education	School Nurse Organization of Minnesota
Community Action Programs of Ramsey and Washington Counties	Minnesota Department of Health	Patricia Splett and Assoc., LLC
Eastside Family Center	National Association of School Nurses	UCare/Minnesota
Health Partners	Ovations - United Health Group	Dr. Kent Wegman
		Wilder Foundation

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This Community Report was made possible through a grant from the Guidant Foundation. Thank you to Saint Paul Public Schools students, families and staff for making this report possible.

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to present our first Office of Student Services Community Report. The Community Report provides an overview of Student Services and how we positively impact the lives of students, families and staff. Together, our seven departments provide services that eliminate barriers to learning and boost academic success.

Our mission aims to develop safe, healthy and optimistic learners who thrive in Saint Paul Public Schools' unique, multicultural community. With the commitment of our staff and school board, we are moving steadily toward our goal to prevent and remove barriers related to social, mental and physical wellness.

While this goal may seem daunting, we find inspiration every day from the children of Saint Paul Public Schools. In this report, you will read a few of the many moving stories of how students who might otherwise have “fallen through the cracks” were provided with the support and resources they needed to thrive and succeed.

We would like to extend a gracious thank you to everyone who has made our successes possible: our staff, business partners, community members, donors and everyday people who share our vision for the children of Saint Paul Public Schools.

Sincerely,

**Raymond Yu**  
Director of Student Services



## HEALTHY STUDENTS THRIVING

In today's world, schools provide a pivotal role in the health and well being of children. Simply put, if children are distracted by emotional and physical issues, their chances of being present and able to learn in the classroom are seriously jeopardized.

This is why the Office of Student Services nurtures the mind, body and spirit of Saint Paul Public School students. By addressing the basic needs of the whole child, our students are better able to thrive and succeed in school and beyond.

Some may question whether this approach is realistic considering the financial investment that such a program demands, but Saint Paul Public Schools simply cannot afford to do otherwise. Today's children become tomorrow's adults and we have the power to either cultivate a society that is productive and self-sufficient or one that contributes to the cycle of poverty and despair.

As the father of American public school education Horace Mann said so poetically

nearly two hundred years ago, education is the great equalizer. Today, we are fortunate enough to know that education also includes addressing the basic needs of children. In the end, we all gain by the time and investment that a comprehensive public school program can provide.

As a state, Minnesota finds itself in an increasingly competitive global market that demands even more of our students than ever before. In order to meet these new expectations, we must care for our students by addressing their physical, mental and emotional needs so that as a society we can strive to truly provide education for all.

This report provides a glimpse into how the Office of Student Services provide for students, their families and our staff. You'll find information on what our students and staff look like, how we are funded, who are our partners, and how our seven departments work collaboratively to provide a continuum of services for the students of Saint Paul Public Schools.

## FUNDING SOURCES

The Office of Student Services funds its seven departments responsibly by drawing from a diversified sources. As this table demonstrates, we do not simply rely on federal sources of revenue, rather we proactively seek public support and grant funding. We also have strong business and community partnerships that provide critical supplementary revenue.

Funding Sources	Total %	Guidance, Counseling & Related	Health Education	Physical Education	District Employee Wellness	Physical Education	Student Human Rights	Student Placement Center	Student Wellness
General Fund	\$5624,492 59%	\$806,152	\$5,000	\$5,000		\$5,000	\$12,000	\$1,293,404	\$3502,936
Non-Public (State)	\$1,159,324 12%	\$600,000							\$403,924 \$155,400
Federal/State/ County Grants	\$1,626,163 17%	\$452,322 \$589,299			\$25,000				\$25,000 \$187,477 \$185,700 \$53,150 \$10,000 \$98,215
Foundation/Local Grants	\$161,710 2%	\$27,082			\$80,000				\$25,000 \$29,628
*State/County Payment for Services	\$970,716 10%								\$83,244 \$887,472
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$9542,406 100%</b>	<b>\$2,474,855</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$105,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$1,293,404</b>	

\* Medical services, i.e., child and teen check-ups

## WHAT WE LOOK LIKE

- Saint Paul school students come to us from all over the world speaking more than 103 languages and dialects; 42 percent speak a home language other than English.
- Over 71 percent of our students live below the poverty level as indicated by their eligibility for free and reduced price lunch.
- Eighteen percent of our students receive special education services.
- Twelve percent of 6th, 9th and 12th grade students report having a physical or mental health problem that has lasted at least 12 months (2004 Minnesota Student Survey).
- In a pilot project of 4th grade students, 43 percent were found to be overweight or at risk for overweight.



## OUR STUDENTS

### Student Enrollment

Elementary 19,693  
 Junior High 5,280  
 Senior High 11,409  
 Alternative Grades 1,860  
 Miscellaneous 2,901  
 Total enrollment: 41,143

### Saint Paul's students are:

(Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.)

Caucasian American 27%  
 Asian American 30%  
 African American 29%  
 Latino/Hispanic American 13%  
 American Indian 2%

Limited English Speaking Pre-K-12 grade 37%  
 Home Language Other than English 42% or 17,280  
 Eligible for free and reduced price lunch 71% or 29,211  
 Mobility Index (2003-04)\* 21%  
 Stability Index (2003-04)\* 89%

Students Receiving Special Education Services 18% or 7,339

\*The mobility index shows the disruption due to students who enter or leave traditional schools during the school year. The stability index shows the percent of students who were enrolled for the entire year.

## OUR STAFF AND SCHOOLS

### Employees (2004-05)

K- 12 Teachers.....3,470  
 Principals and Other Administratives.....208  
 Paraprofessionals.....1,555  
 Support Staff.....1,329

**Total: 6,562**

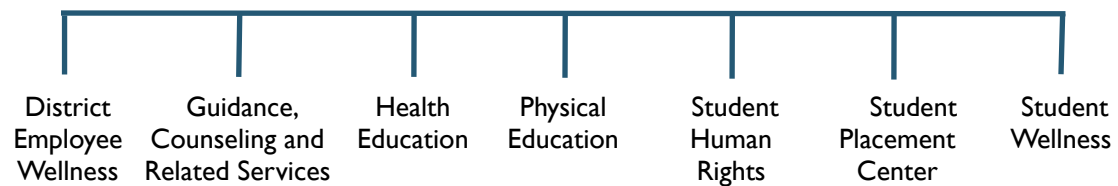
### Number of Schools and Programs

(As of fall 2005)

Elementary Schools (K-6).....49  
 Elementary Schools (K-8 or 1-8).....2  
 Open School (K-12).....1  
 Junior/Middle Schools (6-8 or 7-8).....8  
 Senior High Schools (9-12).....7  
 Special Education School.....1  
 Other Special Sites.....23  
 Other Programs and Learning Sites.....165

**Total: 256**

\*This list does not include charter schools in Saint Paul.



Many of our students face harsh realities from the time they wake up until they go to bed at night. Some struggle with violence in the home, others with the confusion of learning English and academics after years of living in refugee camps, and still others labor with the challenges of physical and cognitive disabilities.

Once these children walk through the doors of Saint Paul Public Schools, our staff works vigorously to ensure that they are provided with a safe, healthy learning environment filled with caring adults.

Saint Paul Public Schools is among the first districts in the country to implement comprehensive student health programming as a primary element of student success. Out of this effort, the Office of Student Services was created and now includes an impressive continuum of student and staff services through its seven departments (as listed above).

Our staff apply best practices from education, health care and business so that the most effective tools and strategies are used to address a spectrum of student health needs – physical, mental and emotional. Together, our departments optimize our students’ academic potential so that they can become successful, contributing members of our society.

We recognize that student success depends on many factors. Schools alone cannot address the significant health and social issues facing many Saint Paul students and families. But we also know that when district services are adequately funded, educators can make the greatest positive impact on barriers to learning than any other public institution.

As you will read on the following pages, we connect students with the health-based tools, skills and resources they need to thrive and succeed in school and in life.

Saint Paul Public Schools employees lead busy complicated lives. It is important to us that our employees make positive lifestyle choices so they are healthier, happier and better equipped to teach our students. Healthy employees are more productive employees. They have fewer illnesses and injuries and they are better able to effectively deal with the stress of today’s world.

Through a partnership with HealthPartners, the *Choose Well. Live Well* program offers assessment, education and fitness activities for district faculty and staff.

*Choose Well. Live Well* is designed to maintain and improve the health and well-being of district staff who serve as role models for children. Healthy teachers are more energetic, have fewer absences and can better impart academic and life lessons to children.

Studies show that teachers who participated in health promotion programs focusing on exercise, stress management, and nutrition reported increased participation in exercise and lower weight; better ability to handle job stress; and a higher level of general well-being.

To motivate employees to make healthier choices, *Choose Well. Live Well* provides a variety of fun and easy health promotion programs:

- Health assessments are provided through a fast and easy online tool where individuals receive a health score based on their current habits. Based on their results, participants are provided with steps they can take to make healthier choices to increase their health potential through better sleep, reduced stress and weight management.

- **10,000 Steps®** with a pedometer in hand or clipped to their belt, participants try to walk 10,000 steps a day (the approximate equivalent of five miles) to meet the suggested daily amount of exercise for weight management.

- **Holiday Challenge** for participants to make it through the season without gaining extra holiday weight that often comes as a result of too much merriment.

- **Self-Care program** where “self-care” refers to decisions that impact a person’s use of medical services — making the best choices. Appropriate self-care skills include knowing when a real medical emergency occurs, when to see a physician, when to treat yourself at home, and when preventive service visits and exams are appropriate. This program gives employees the tools and resources to get the best care when they need it.

## GUIDANCE COUNSELING AND RELATED SERVICES

Sometimes, just knowing that there are others who feel the way they do can make all the difference in the lives of children. By talking to their school counselor about their problems at home or at school, students suddenly realize they're not alone. This peace of mind begins the road to recovery and a renewed attention to academics and hopes for the future.

This is one of the many ways that Guidance, Counseling and Related Services touches the lives of Saint Paul school students every day. Prevention, intervention and referrals for students and families are the primary concerns of staff that support individual schools with counseling services and crisis response teams.

In collaboration with other Student Services departments, the fostering of productive and healthy students is achieved through the *Safe and Drug Free Schools* program, which provides early intervention, prevention programming and professional development for district staff to address student drug abuse and violence.

Other services include Elementary and Secondary School Counseling, which provides students with support in academics, personal/social well-being and career planning. These services have been enhanced through two initiatives:

- US Department of Education grant to align school counseling with academic reform in three elementary school sites.
- *Connected Counseling Initiative*, an effort funded by the Bush Foundation, to create and improve senior high school counseling services and develop leadership skills.

The Guidance department also supports students in achieving post-secondary and college readiness. The department builds self-esteem and widens students' learning experiences through innovative programs such as the Multicultural Excellence Program, which provides college preparation and mentorships for students of color in grades 7-12. Beginning in the 7th grade and continuing through college, students must remain active in the program by maintaining a minimum grade point average of 2.5 and attend all required sessions or activities.

## HEALTH EDUCATION



Good health is not attained through a one-time decision, rather it is realized through a series of decisions we make throughout our lives. Health Education provides students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that can encourage a lifelong commitment to making healthy decisions.

From wearing seat belts to preventing alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, Health Education impresses upon students the importance of making healthy decisions and how those decisions can impact their lives and those they love.

Health Education courses address the many dimensions of health: physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual. Through their coursework, students are taught how to make sound decisions around health practices in the areas of:

- Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use prevention
- Consumer and community health
- Environmental health
- Family and social health
- Human growth and development
- Injury prevention and safety
- Infectious and lifestyle diseases
- Mental and emotional health
- Nutrition
- Personal health and physical activity



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION



When a student with an emotional-behavioral disability who didn't like physical activities experienced his Saint Paul school's new climbing wall, he was finally able to excel. Because of his success on the climbing wall, he grew stronger and more confident in his abilities. As a result, he began to try more physical activities and worked harder in class.

Health and learning go hand-in-hand. More than just hand and foot holds, the wall improves students' strength, coordination and cognitive skills all the while teaching students the importance of cooperation and goal setting and building their self-esteem along the way.

The Physical Education department provides high-quality programs that enhance students' physical skills while teaching them how physical fitness contributes to life-long health and learning. Studies have found strong correlations between the participation in physical activity and higher test scores, a happier outlook on life, and positive

work habits.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, national costs attributed to both overweight and obesity is as high as \$92.6 billion a year. As a society, we clearly benefit from increased physical activity as it reduces the significant health care costs and emotional issues that often result from obesity, inactivity and a poor diet.

The Physical Education department provides regular and adaptive programs for students of all abilities. Through the help of grants, the department is also able to integrate innovative physical activity programs such as Dance Dance Revolution, which uses musical videos that move the whole body and increases users' stamina, aerobic capacity and motor skills. Grants have also provided high schools with fitness centers, bikes, treadmills and weight machines.

## SUCCESS STORY



### Coral Berge

*Collaborative Time Study Coordinator  
Special Education Department  
Saint Paul Public Schools*

Aerobics, tobacco cessation, whole-wheat muffins, and walking programs are not the usual terms one might associate with schools, but then again Saint Paul Public Schools' holistic approach to student and staff wellness defies the usual.

With the firm belief that the well-being of staff directly impacts student academic achievement, the district succeeded in securing corporate sponsorship with HealthPartners to pilot *Choose Well. Live Well*, a staff wellness program.

People like Coral Berge jumped at the chance to participate in Walk to Key West, a six-week walking program designed to motivate individuals to make long-term lifestyle changes. Already health conscious due to the heart disease in her family, Coral realized that increasing her exercise was integral to managing her high cholesterol.

Little did she realize at the time that the program would have so many other benefits, "I met people from other departments through the program. It was fun and it made me more aware of living a healthy lifestyle consistently: exercise, good foods, healthy relationships, reducing your stress." An avid baker, Coral also learned healthier recipes. Now instead of bringing high-calorie cookies and muffins to work, she makes carrot muffins and cookies with olive oil and no eggs. People have swarmed her for the recipes.

The program has also increased employee morale. As Coral relates, "To have the support of the administrators and others is just great. As a staff person it makes me feel cared about."

Now when Coral needs to stave off the afternoon slump, she takes a brisk walk at lunch so when she's back at her desk she's ready "do my best!" The added good news is that Coral's recent physical showed that her cholesterol had been reduced significantly.

## STUDENT HUMAN RIGHTS



The safety and respectful treatment of staff and students is a top priority for Saint Paul Public Schools. As outlined by two School Board policies, the Office of Student Services provides ongoing monitoring and prevention efforts related to student-to-student, and student-to-staff allegations of harassment. Excerpts of the policies are as follows:

**Racial Bias - Policy 413:** “The Board declares that its Policy is to provide an educational environment free of differential treatment motivated by the person’s race. It is a goal of this Policy to ensure that timely and appropriate actions will be taken to correct such conditions whenever and wherever found and substantiated.”

**Harassment, Violence, And Other Offensive Behavior - Policy 415:** “The purpose of this policy is to maintain a respectful learning and work environment in Saint Paul Public Schools that is free from harassment and violence based on an individual’s race, creed, sex, marital status, national origin, age, color, religion, ancestry, status with respect to public assistance, sexual or affectional orientation, or disability.”

School staff and administrators are encouraged to contact the Student Human Rights Coordinator at 651- 767-8179 with questions pertaining to the policy, procedures, and investigations.

## SUCCESS STORY



### Angela, Jeff and Nathan Parsons

*Saint Paul Public Schools Family*

**H**olding his stuffed bear, Rufus, Nathan Parsons glows with pride at the special friend that has helped him with accepting and living with his diabetes. Like Nathan, Rufus also sports a medical bracelet to indicate his diabetes and has been a willing candidate to help Nathan learn how to give insulin shots through his bear fur.

These fast friends met through the program Diabetes Dynamites, a club developed by Nathan’s school nurse Betsy Garcia, EdD, CNP, LSN, Diabetes Dynamites brings together students with diabetes so they can share their fears, successes and experiences. “It felt fun to meet other kids that have the same thing I do, because if you didn’t it would be kind of lonely,” says nine year old Nathan. Now Nathan has friends with diabetes who can relate to the strict routine that he must follow to keep his disease in check.

For his parents Angela and Jeff Parsons, the peace of mind that their son is well cared for during the school day has taken a huge burden off their shoulders. Angela relates, “The moment I met her I was impressed by her competence. I feel like I can leave him at school and not have to worry that there’s someone who can handle what to do when his blood sugar is too high or low.”

Through the support of the school principal, Louis Mariucci, Dr. Garcia even changed her own schedule to be there every day to give Nathan his insulin.

Diagnosed nearly two years ago, Nathan offers reassuring advice to kids who may be new to the disease, “It’s not the end of the world. You can still do all the things you want to. You just need to take shots and poke yourself to check your blood sugar. Some kids think that you can’t eat whatever you want, but you just need a shot for it – once you get used to the shots it doesn’t hurt.”

## STUDENT WELLNESS



The Student Wellness department provides a range of health services to students so that they can be at school every day, ready to learn.

Services include the following:

- School nurses provide vital services for individual schools and district wide initiatives. School nurses promote student health and safety, treating student illnesses and injuries, implement individual plans for students with chronic illnesses, and manage student medication administration.
- **The Asthma Management Program** for Students provides asthma education for students, families and district staff. Nationally, asthma is the most common chronic disease among children today; ten percent of Saint Paul Public Schools students have asthma. Asthma is one of the most common causes of school absence, which can then lead to decreased

academic achievement and increased social isolation.

- **The Adolescent Parent Childcare Program** provides support for the pregnant and parenting students enrolled in Saint Paul Public Schools. With services such as school-based childcare, adolescent parents are well supported and actually graduate at rates equal to or better than the district average. Adolescent parents participate in programs to help develop their parenting skills and develop their child's school readiness.
- **Early Childhood Screenings**, a comprehensive health and developmental screening for children ages 3 to 5 years. Screenings assess a child's growth, development, speech, vision, hearing, height, weight, social/emotional health, as well as reviewing immunization records, health histories and other risk factors. Based on the results of a screening,

a child may be referred to education, health and community resources.

- **Managing and Preventing Diabetes Program** to teach staff, students and families how to manage pediatric (type 1) diabetes, and provides education on preventing type 2 diabetes. In this program, school nurses work with students to prevent type 2 diabetes by providing classroom instruction for elementary students, weight screenings and referrals for children who are at risk.

Research clearly demonstrates that there are many health and learning consequences associated with poor nutrition, inactive lifestyles and weight problems. Academically, well-nourished students score higher on standardized tests, have greater cognitive functioning, fewer discipline problems, and increased daily attendance.

Physically active students demonstrate greater self-esteem, higher academic achievement, reduced stress and anxiety, positive attitudes and enhanced

concentration, and immune system functioning therefore Student Wellness is participating in Steps to a HealthierUS, a federal grant to help Americans live longer, better, and healthier lives by reducing the burden of diabetes, obesity and asthma, and by addressing risk factors for student health such as physical inactivity, poor nutrition and tobacco use.





## STUDENT PLACEMENT CENTER

The Student Placement Center is a family-friendly atmosphere where students and families are welcomed to Saint Paul Public Schools. Often the first point of contact for many families, Placement Center staff help families navigate their school choice options. In addition, bilingual staff help ensure we serve our multilingual and non-native students well by providing information in Spanish, Hmong and Somali.

Together, staff and families find the best school program to fit the student's needs and personality. Placement Center staff present the student's school options based on factors such as academic interests, where the family lives, as well as the student's language or special education needs.

Through the Placement Center, students also receive a health assessment, immunization updates and connections to community resources.

In addition to their direct services to families, Placement Center staff are involved in outreach efforts and systems improvements. Staff make more than 100 presentations each year to community groups on topics such as early childhood education. Staff are also integral in helping students smoothly transition into kindergarten, elementary, junior high and senior high school.

Additionally, the Placement Center manages open enrollment requests for students who live outside of Saint Paul, but want to attend a school in the district, as well as home schooling registration.

## SUCCESS STORY

### **Jerry Soleim, Chemical Health Specialist Guidance, Counseling and Related Services Saint Paul Public Schools**

Most days, "Peter" wore his Yankee's cap to shield him from eye contact with students and teachers alike. Withdrawn, he avoided those around him and never did his homework. One day Peter approached me and said he wanted to quit smoking marijuana, but did not want to go to treatment. After a long talk we shook hands on his plan to quit on his own.

As part of the plan, I would call Peter every night, which was a vulnerable time for smoking and dealing as Peter also sold marijuana to other students. The calls continued along with frequent meetings where Peter and I would talk of his struggle to remain drug free.

Eventually, Peter faced the sexual abuse he suffered some five years earlier. Together, we visited the Sexual Offenses Services and Peter finally dealt with his pain sober.

Soon after, Peter's grades soared and he graduated from high school. I referred him to the Minnesota Department of Rehabilitative Services, which provides grants for individuals in recovery who are striving toward a college degree. Peter thrived, securing funding for college along with additional scholarship money.

Peter graduated with honors from Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) and is now a graphic artist living in New York City.



# HEALTHY STUDENTS THRIVING



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