

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships between White Bear Lake Area Schools and the YMCA



History The first school in the White Bear Lake area was built in the 1850's to serve a settlement that included Native Americans and recent immigrants from England. By the 1890's, the White Bear High School graduated its first graduates from a site located in the center of historic downtown.

Within a decade, in the early years of the twentieth century, the YMCA opened in downtown White Bear Lake, providing recreational and service opportunities for youth and families.

Such are the roots of the partnership between the White Bear Lake Area Schools and the White Bear YMCA.

There have been name changes over the years. In White Bear Lake, the push for consolidation after World War II resulted in White Bear Lake High School becoming White Bear Lake *Area* High School, drawing students from ten different communities in three counties.

By the 1970's, new subdivisions surrounded newly built schools, as the district grew rapidly during the post-World War II baby boom.

On the southern edge of the school district, a new facility was built for the YMCA, including an indoor and outdoor pool.

During the following forty years, into the new millennium, the school district and YMCA cooperated in programming, two important but separate assets in a growing and changing community.



In the 21st Century During the first decade of the new millennium the demography of the district began to change gradually but significantly, becoming more economically, culturally, and racially diverse. Apartment buildings along the I-694 corridor and other new developments drew families new to Minnesota and new to the United States.

New Facility In 2005-06, the district and the YMCA piloted an elementary water safety course for children from the district's most racially and culturally diverse elementary school. During this same period, neighboring municipalities and school districts studied a way to expand and update the YMCA.

The resulting project included the White Bear Lake Area Schools, and the municipalities of City of White Bear Lake and White Bear Township. Each contributed to the capital costs of the building, making this a four-way partnership. Embedded in the new agreement was a twenty-year lease for the school district to partner in use of the pool, which was named the "White Bear Lake Area Schools YMCA Aquatics Center." The partnership agreement also included resources for every elementary child to participate in water safety lessons at the Y.

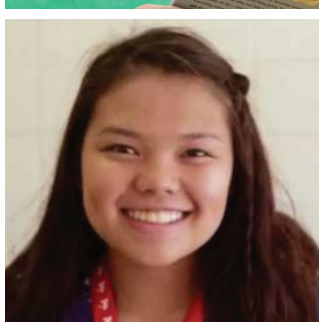
After more than a half-century and seven attempted referenda in the school district's efforts to build a swimming pool, the district now has a pool in collaboration with the YMCA, at approximately one-quarter the cost it would have taken for the district to build and operate a pool separately.

Expanding Partnerships This new facility partnership was only the beginning, as YMCA and school district leaders and staff began to look at other ways in which the missions of the YMCA and school district overlapped.

How does this relate to achievement gap? Closing the achievement gap fundamentally is not about a single program, or a single year, but creating a community where all families have opportunity and access, including common places where families can support their children and feel included in the community.

Along with the school district, communities of faith, the YMCA and other non-profits help fill that need.

Beginning with the facility partnership in 2010, which included access to the pool and a teen center, the partnerships now includes: a daycare program, centrally located in the school district in an elementary school; middle school outreach programs; and an after-school elementary program using targeted services funding.



In the presentation today, we will:

1. Briefly explain the history of the partnership, in particular the overlap of organizational mission and core values;
2. Show how specific programming is designed to give all students and families access and opportunities; and
3. Identify promising programs that are helping to close the achievement gap, not just for a single group of students, but by assuring an inclusive and supportive community for all families.

PARTNERSHIPS SUMMARY

Water Safety/Facility Partnership

This partnership has several components, including shared space for competitive swimming and other collaborations. The Water Safety Program, highlighted in this summary, is a key component of the partnership.

The school district provides a payment to the Y twice annually in return for programming and rental space. Along with financial commitments from both the City of White Bear Lake and White Bear Township, this four-way partnership allowed the Y to renovate and create the White Bear Lake Area Schools YMCA Aquatics Center. The agreement between the School District and the YMCA is a 10 year agreement with an additional optional 10 year extension at a lower cost to the district.

As part of the facility partnership, the Y provides water safety classes to every second or third grader in the school district. More than 650 students come from eight elementary schools annually. Classes are taught during the school day by nationally certified YMCA swim instructors.

Why do it? Drowning remains the second leading cause of death for children under the age of 14. National data indicates that black children are three times as likely to die from drowning as white children; we consider this to be one strategy which contributes to closing the access and opportunity gaps within our community, and having a positive effect on establishing the sense of shared community so important in closing the achievement gap.

What are the results? Data from our partnership indicates that as many as half of our elementary children had never had swimming lessons before, and about a quarter had never even been in a swimming pool. Observationally, by the end of the 8-day course, most have some basic water locomotive skills and all have an understanding of how to be safe around water. The program also contributes to growing numbers of students from all backgrounds joining the middle school/high school swim and dive teams.

Teen Center/Facility Partnership

The facility expansion project that resulted in the Water Safety Partnership, along with the support of private donors, also created a Teen Center space on site at the YMCA. This program area has been used for multiple purposes: YMCA-supervised drop-in programming for teens; a casual hang-out spot after school for youth in transition; and a space to house intentional programming.

Why do it? Teens asked for safe, fun places to hang out during facility studies conducted in 2008. Both organizations identified a need to create intentional programming spaces outside of school as well.

What are the results? The space has become popular and useful, providing a flexible option for a variety of program needs.

Birch Lake Elementary School YMCA Child Care Partnership

The school district leases 4 rooms in the Birch Lake Elementary School to the YMCA for the YMCA Early Childhood Learning Center, which opened in fall 2011. The center is new, state-of-the-art, and serves up to 66 children per day ages infant to pre-k from 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

About half of the enrolled children receive financial aid. This program is fully licensed through the State of Minnesota and achieved accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Children served at the site include those from district teachers and staff.

Why do it? The YMCA identified a need in the community for high quality, full-day child care with a strong curriculum for early learners; the school district concurred with the need and entered into a five year renewable lease for space at one of the district's most economically and racially diverse elementary schools.

What are the results? This program has served several hundred families since its inception, providing significant engagement opportunities for many children who otherwise wouldn't have them. For parents for whom partial day preschool wouldn't be an option, this program provides an opportunity, regardless of family income, to close opportunity gaps. This program also gives families an early relationship with the Birch Lake Elementary principal and school staff.

Birch Lake Elementary, a Title I School, is consistently rated as a Reward or Celebration-Eligible School by the Minnesota Dept. of Education.

Wyman Teen Outreach Program

The YMCA operates a program funded by Ramsey County designed to reduce school drop-outs, class failure, and teen pregnancy rates for youth in middle school while promoting healthy choices and community service learning opportunities through a year-long weekly program. In the 2015-16 school year, this program is active at both Sunrise Park and Central Middle Schools. The district helps provide transportation and refers students into the program. About 60 have participated annually during the past three years.

Why do it? The YMCA and the School District recognize that youth can benefit from multiple program interventions, and believe the Teen Outreach Program can be very helpful in closing access and opportunity gaps for these students, and contribute to community factors which provide the basis for high levels of achievement.

What are the results? The program has engaged a diverse group of students in White Bear Lake Area Schools. Participants data for the 93 students served in 2014-15 showed: 35.5% Black/African American; 15.1% Asian/Pacific Islander; 7.5% Hispanic/Latino; 6% American Indian and 49 % White/Caucasian. More than 65% reported were eligible for Free/Reduced lunch

This group of White Bear Lake Area School students completed 748 community service learning hours in 2014-15.

Twin City data on participants in this program, including at sites in the Northeast Metro Area, showed significant reductions in negative and risky behaviors and increases in positive behavior.

Y-Zone Program

The Y-Zone Program has evolved over the last three years, and in 2015-16 is present at both Matoska International and Birch Lake elementary schools. The program is funded by and coordinated with Targeted Services dollars and is designed to aid students who are not performing at grade-level, and ultimately, to provide another tool to help close the achievement and opportunity gap.

The program focus is on educational programming in the areas of math and reading. After receiving a healthy snack the students take part in at least 45 minutes of activities and lessons for math and reading that challenge them and provide instruction in way that supports their daytime learning and specific needs but presents the material in a different fashion. The second half of programming consists of hands-on activities that support learning in math and reading as well as provided opportunities for physical activities, social-emotional growth, and creative learning. Y-Zone teachers collaborate with White Bear teachers to organize activities and assignments that are designed specifically to help students achieve a higher level of competency.

Program leaders communicate regularly with staff in Nutrition Services and Transportation, and school principals. Program staff also work closely with day time teachers, custodial staff, Extended Day staff, and other school staff. Parents are provided regular newsletters and calendars outlining program updates, days off, and special activities.

Why do it? The YMCA and the White Bear Lake Area School District independently but mutually set goals in their strategic plans to close the opportunity and achievement gaps. As partners, the school district and the Y identified Y-Zone as an appealing after-school program option.

What are the results? The YMCA measures student experience with a variety of measures annually. The following results were compiled at the conclusion of the 2014-15 school year:

- 95.45% of enrolled students participated through the entire program year;
- 97.73% of students enjoyed attending Y-Zone;
- Parents reported that Y-Zone helped their students academically for 90.91% of enrolled students; and
- Parents reported that 84.09% of enrolled students improved their attitude toward school.

Students also completed surveys for the same school year. This is what they said about their experience, reflecting back on the entire program year:

- 60% of students said their interest in school improved;
- 63.08% of students said their understanding that doing well in school is important has improved; and
- 59% reported that feeling safe and having fun learning new things in the program has improved.

Matoska's Y-Zone Story

Matoska International IB World School is a K-5 school serving 550 students. Demographically we are 25% free/reduced and 20% minority students. Several years ago we recognized a need to provide academic support and services to students outside the school day. We had a significant number of students who were not achieving as we expected and numerous families in situations that limited their ability to provide additional support.

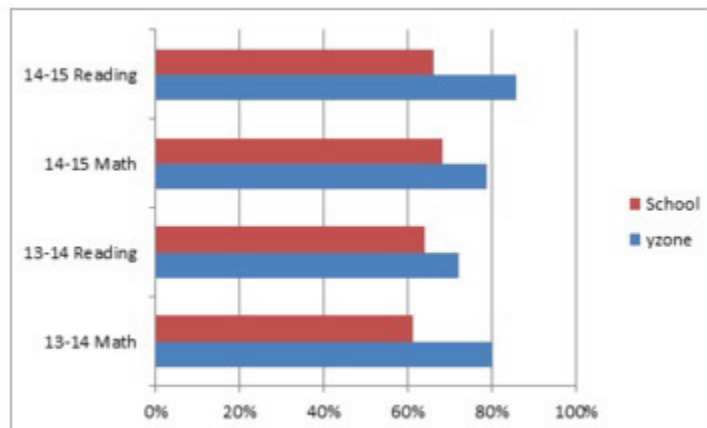
Like many schools, targeted services programs focused on reading, writing and mathematics but we lacked a systematic and consistent way to deliver this support across curriculum areas over time and in a way that we could track the success of these programs.

White Bear had already created strong partnership and relationship with the YMCA Aquatics Program. This partnership encouraged us to connect and examine models of academic support that the YMCA provided in other communities. We started a small Y-Zone pilot the first year and have been able to grow the program in the past two years.

Our Results

We know there are many factors in a student's success. We believe in a multi-prong approach to providing support to students. Data suggests that students who participate in Y-Zone, along with the other supports provided, do well when compared to their peers.

Percent of students in grades 1-5 meeting or exceeding MAP growth targets:



Presentation:

District/YMCA partnership extends reach to students and families

Learn how White Bear Lake Area Schools is closing the achievement (opportunity) gap through their partnership with the YMCA. The session will include information on partnerships in facilities and programming, as well as how the Twin Cities YMCA is engaging with diverse communities including recent immigrants and refugees.

Breakout Session Section: Engaging Diverse Learners and Communities

Presenters:

Dr. Michael Lovett, Superintendent of Schools

White Bear Lake Area Schools

Dr. Lovett has been superintendent of the White Bear Lake Area Schools since 2008. He previously served as Assistant Superintendent in Minnetonka and began his career as a social studies teacher in New York. He holds a B.A. degree from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Minnesota. In addition to his work in public education, Dr. Lovett is an adjunct instructor at the University of Minnesota and a published author who regularly contributes to national education publications. He currently serves on the General Board of the Twin Cities YMCA and on the Minnesota Private College Council.

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Shane Hoefler, Executive Director

White Bear Area YMCA and White Bear Lake Area Schools YMCA Aquatic Center

Shane Hoefler has a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. John's University in political science and Master of Public Policy in public and nonprofit management from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute. Hoefler has worked for the YMCA since 1996 in a variety of capacities and has led the White Bear Area YMCA since late 2008. Hoefler also serves as the Chair of the White Bear Lake Area School District's Community Services Advisory Council.

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John Leininger, Principal

Matoska International IB World School

John Leininger has been principal at Matoska International since 2010. Previously he served as Associate Principal as well as IB Coordinator after 17 years of classroom teaching in the White Bear Lake Area School District and overseas. He holds a BA from the University of Minnesota, MA from the University of St. Thomas and his licensure degree from Hamline University. Leininger has been involved with YMCA camping in various staff and board capacities since 1984.

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