



Claremont School District

Strong Programmatic Vision Sustains Community School Initiative

DESCRIPTION

- Serves over 600 students in grades k-12
- Total budget over \$800,000
- Part of Yale University's "Schools of the 21st Century Initiative"
- Former 21CCLC Grantee

Elements of Sustainable Programs

- **Vision**
- Results Orientation
- **Strategic Financing Orientation**
- **Broad-Based Community Support**
- Key Champions
- Adaptability to Changing Conditions
- Strong Internal Systems
- Sustainability Plan

Overview

The Claremont School District in Claremont, New Hampshire, provides extensive before and after school programming to students in grades K-12 in the district's schools. These programs are part of the district's Schools of the 21st Century (21C) initiative that provides comprehensive school-based services to children and families in the community. In a typical month, the district serves over 600 of their 2000 children in out-of-school time activities and runs a range of related community programs, including dental services, a youth employment program, and parent education programs. While a federal 21st Century Community Learning Center (21CCLC) grantee in 2001, the foundation for the program was Schools of the 21st Century, a Yale University initiative. The district has continued to operate programming at full capacity after the federal grant period ended.

Claremont has sustained out-of-school time programming by employing a number of strategies, including: (1) developing a clear vision before seeking funds; (2) making strategic financing choices; and (3) developing broad-based community support. For the Claremont school district, these three strategies have been deeply linked to one another. A strong programmatic vision allowed leaders to access several diverse funding sources and to win the support of the community. Diverse funding from federal, state, and private sources, accessed while the district was still receiving 21CCLC funds, partially sustained the program when 21CCLC

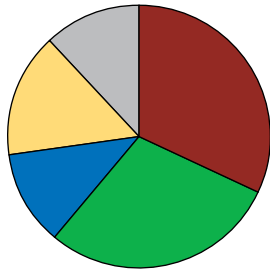
funds ran out. Finally, due to strong community support for the program, in 2005 Claremont town meeting attendees supported a district budget that included the balance of funds needed to sustain programming.

✔ **Getting Started: Developing a Vision**

Before receiving 21CCLC funds, the Claremont school district spent a year laying the groundwork for its community school initiative, a process that the program coordinator cites as essential to their long-term success. Out of concern with high poverty and low rates of school readiness in their district, officials wanted to implement a comprehensive model of school-based services for children from birth through the schools years. In 2000, the school board voted to join Yale University's School of the 21st Century initiative, which became the blueprint for their community school initiative. Sometimes referred to as family resource centers, the Yale model brings childcare (including afterschool programs) and family support services to public schools.

In the first year, the district hired a program coordinator, who assessed existing services and developed a plan for implementing and financing the Yale University model in Claremont schools. Joining Schools of the 21st Century required a financial commitment from the district, but in return allowed them to receive ongoing training and technical assistance from Yale University.

FUNDING SOURCES FOR CLAREMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT



- School District
- Tuition
- Donations
- Other Grants
- Contracts

✓ Strategic Financing Orientation

With the implementation of the community school initiative, the Claremont district has systemically developed a variety of financing strategies to support their initial vision and develop a stable base of resources over time.

Making Better Use of Existing Resources

The community schools model links schools to community services in an effort to reach more families who can benefit from the range of services healthy families need, including healthcare, child care, parent education, and other services. At the same time, the model allows for significant cost savings in service delivery, as programs take place in existing school buildings and are managed jointly by one district coordinator.

Maximizing Federal, State, and Local Revenue

Claremont’s community school initiative has worked to maximize a range of diverse federal, state, and private funding sources, rather than relying exclusively on one time-limited federal grant. In 2000 the district provided afterschool services in one school with funding from the University of New Hampshire’s Cooperative Extension. In early 2001, the district received funding from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for a parent education program.

Claremont Budget	
School District	\$271,000
Tuition	\$245,000
Donations	\$100,000
Other Grants	\$127,000
Contracts	\$100,000
Total	\$843,500

Finally, in June of 2001, Claremont was a recipient of a federal 21CCLC grant of \$1.5 million dollars, allowing the district to provide before and after school homework help and enrichment services to four elementary schools, four middle schools, and four high schools. 21CCLC funds also supported school breakfasts, the salary of a parent educator, and vacation camps that are accredited by the National Camping Association.

While utilizing 21CCLC funds, the district continued to seek additional funds to support its comprehensive community school model. For example:

- **Dental Care:** New Hampshire’s DHHS and a local hospital support the salary of an in-school dental hygienist to provide much needed dental services.
- **Child Care Resource and Referral:** Through a contract with DHHS, the district provides child care resource and referral services in Claremont and its surrounding region. Services include recruitment and training of child care providers.
- **Workforce Development:** Funds from the New Hampshire Workforce Opportunity Council, as well as private grants, support a teen center, in which high school students run and operate a small business (a coffeehouse).

Claremont also receives private grants and donations that support parent education and other general programming. While the district no longer has a 21CCLC grant, it has sustained the afterschool programming through a range of other funding sources.

Generating New Dedicated Revenue

Claremont's afterschool program consistently receives a portion of its revenue from student fees. By charging tuition for the program since its inception (as opposed to adding fees only when federal funds diminished), participants were well accustomed to a fee-for-service model. The district also aims to enroll families in federal child care subsidies when eligible. To encourage participation from low income Claremont families, they also offer a sliding fee scale and free tuition for children who are homeless or who receive free lunches.

✓ Broad-Based Community Support

The Claremont School Board has supported a community schools approach since voting to adopt the 21C model in 2000. The Board's enthusiasm for out-of-school time programs has grown in recent years, due to regular updates from the program coordinator, reports of high attendance at programs, and demonstrated improvements in students' grades for three years.

By partnering with other local providers serving the community, including Cooperative Extension and organizations supporting violence prevention, home visitation, and mental health services, the 21C has broadened the range of services offered in schools and gained support from the larger community.

Finally, the 21C coordinator has made extensive efforts to raise the visibility of the program by appearing at school board meetings shown on public access television and becoming involved with

community activities. For example, 21C has taken part in a community service initiative coordinated by local businesses and organized a creative writing contest. In addition, the program puts its logo or "seal of approval" on flyers from the district and partner organizations that go out to families. As a result of these efforts and the popularity of programs, 21C before- and- after school programs routinely have waiting lists.

As a culmination of growing community support, the FY2005 district budget — which included over \$270,000 to fill in gaps left by the end of the 21CCLC grant — passed by 88 votes in a Claremont town meeting. Voters have defeated Claremont school district budgets in the past. The school superintendent credits the result of this vote, as well as the high turnout in the midst of a major snow storm, to the extent to which parents value 21C services.

Next Steps and Key Challenges

The 21C program is constantly reevaluating and adapting its services to promote better outcomes for children and families. For example, the district recently replaced its more traditional afterschool activities for high school students with a teen coffeehouse program, due to youths interest in employment. The district continues to coordinate with community partners to apply for additional sources of funding, including a federal Safe Schools/ Healthy Students grant and additional state funding to support afterschool and home visiting programs.



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