



Roseville Area Schools

UNITY CENTER

2023–2024

End-of-Year Report

Thriving in School and Far Beyond

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MISSION

Excellence, Innovation & Equity

As a program of Roseville Area Schools, Unity Center aligns with our school district's mission statement: Excellence, Innovation & Equity in All We Do. We foster a learning environment where students can explore and grow in all three of these areas. Our mission is also emphasized in our programming and demonstrated by our Unity Center staff.



OVERVIEW

About Unity Center

Unity Center offers students in 4th – 8th grade and their families a place to get extra help and participate in a variety of academic, artistic, cultural, career, and social and emotional growth opportunities outside the school day, on some non-school days, and during the summer. These opportunities equip students with the skills to thrive in school and in life.

Grant-Funded Programming

Unity Centers are federally funded through a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant. To make this project successful, we rely on partnerships from families, community members, businesses, the Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative, Shoreview YMCA, the Ramsey County Library-Roseville, and 4-H.

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OUR FOCUS

Long-Term Goals of This Grant



Increase access to high-quality afterschool programs.



Improve academic performance among historically under-resourced students.



Increase levels of community collaboration and support in planning, implementing and sustaining expanded learning programs.



Our Program Prioritizes...

Access

We provide high-quality programming that is accessible to all students. There is no cost for registration, and we provide transportation to Unity Center students within their school's transportation area.

Engaged Learning

Teachers and youth workers partner to design hands-on learning experiences for our Unity Center students. We strive to hire staff and partners that are culturally representative of the students we serve, understanding that having demographically representative staff improves learning and engagement for students. Targeted support and homework help encourage student success and involvement in school and Unity Center activities. Unity Center has an academic focus, offering academic enrichment that complements, but does not replicate, school day instruction. We also focus on social/emotional and skill development through enrichment programming.

Partnerships

Partnerships are a critical component of Unity Center. We prioritize intentional outreach to and engagement with families, in order to gather input and feedback and encourage family involvement. We also prioritize meaningful relationships and collaboration with community partners in order to increase the types of programs and services that are brought into our program and that our students and schools have access to.

PROGRAMMING

What have Unity Center students been up to this year?

Highlights from 2023-2024

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math)

- Elementary school students visited Valleyfair to explore the forces involved in rollercoaster motion, such as gravity, inertia, and centripetal force. They constructed rollercoaster models using cardboard, straws, and foam tubes, and their models were then judged by experts at Valleyfair as students pitched their rollercoasters as a new ride idea.
- Elementary students engaged in robotics clubs and competed in creating circuit boards.
- Middle school students made ice cream in a bag with 4-H and designed bottle rockets.

Arts & Culture

- Elementary students created art projects in lessons with our partner KidCreate Studios.
- Middle school students met each month with a leader of color from Greater Twin Cities Link who taught students about history and how to dance, play drums, and act in plays.
- Middle school students visited Midtown Global Market, an internationally-themed market with food and crafts from around the world.

Health & Wellness

- Middle school students participated in weekly cooking classes, in partnership with 4-H, to learn valuable food safety and cooking skills.
- Elementary students engaged in swim lessons with certified Water Safety Instructors to learn important water safety skills and explore the joys and health benefits of swimming.
- Elementary students interacted with Oscar the therapy dog and learned about his purpose.



PROGRAMMING

What have Unity Center students been up to this year?

Highlights from 2023-2024

Leadership Development

- Middle school students took turns pretending to be the Site Coordinator for the day. They created the schedule for the day and helped with leadership responsibilities.
- Elementary students, in partnership with Froriginals, completed a leadership project where they designed and painted a dinosaur sculpture that embodied their school's mission statement.

Mentoring

- Elementary students went on a field trip to Bizztown for financial literacy mentoring.
- 6th graders helped mentor K-2 students during our homework help time.
- 8th graders connected with rising 7th graders to them around the middle school and discuss expectations for the school year.

Literacy

- Grant Coordinators paired enrichment activities with our district's literacy curriculum, Wit & Wisdom. Example: Students were learning about the literal and figurative heart during the school day. During Unity programming, students made a "pumping" heart and learned about the mechanics of how the heart functions. Unity is a perfect space to connect school day learning in fun and interesting ways.

College & Career Readiness

- Middle school students met twice weekly with the YMCA to learn about college and money management.
- Elementary students heard guest speakers (theater directors and a musician) talk about their careers.



OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



total students



33,881

**total hours of learning
among students at all sites**



88% of students in Unity Center identified as students of color

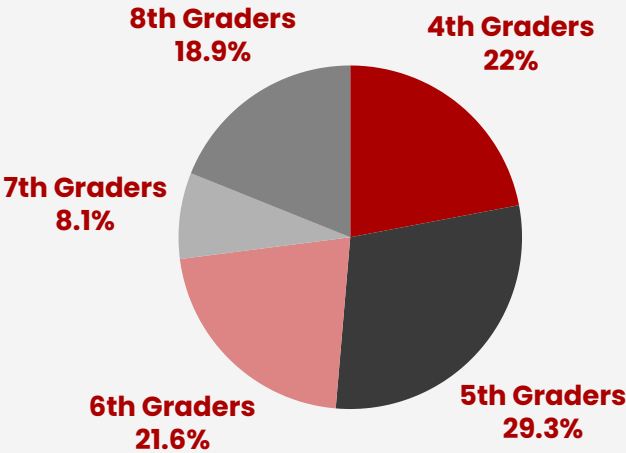


80% of Unity Center staff members identified as a person of color



80% of students in Unity Center attended at least 25 hours of programming

Percentage of Students by Grade Level



**of the 21st
Century Grant**

4

**school year
sites**



2

**summer
sites**

OUR IMPACT



We asked, "What do you love about Unity Center?"

"I like the teachers, the field trips and being able to see my friends over the summer."

- Sarika, Elementary Student

"It's fun and you get to be with new people. There are lots of exciting choices to do."

- Lekzi, Elementary Student

"Friends!"

- Kolby, Elementary School Student

"We get to learn new things about people and get to know them."

- Hugo, Middle School Student

"We get to cook!"

- Randy, Middle School Student

"The staff participate with students. They listen to us!"

- NaNa, Middle School Student

"Unity Center is, besides recess (which is hard to beat), hands down the most popular program that we offer at Harambee. I know that there are multiple students who make coming to school a priority so that they can go to Unity. In addition to the engaging programming that Unity offers, the Unity staff have been amazing partners in supporting all Harambee students. We often work together to make sure that we are meeting the educational and social emotional needs of our students. The Unity staff and programming are a true benefit to our building."

- Nathan Meyer, Harambee Principal