

Sayre High School, School Award Winner, 2007

Sayre High School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Results

School attendance increased 10% and suspensions decreased 50% between 2005-6 and 2006-7.

More students now consider careers in medicine due to the health-field pipeline program

90% of Family Fitness Night participants say they are eating healthier and exercising more.

Sayre graduated its first cohort of parents and students from REACH, an anti-truancy program, last January. Participants have been more involved in the school since the end of the program.

Who's Who At Sayre

Scott Baier, HPDP Program Coordinator
Chris Bower, Director of Community Schools
Jessica Brown, Urban Nutrition Initiative Coordinator
Catherine Daly, Beacon Director
Tessa Johnson, Family and Adult Coordinator
Dana Price, Peer Health Education Coordinator
Adrienne Ralston, REACH Anti-Truancy Coordinator
Alan Speed, Intake Social Worker
Joseph Starinieri, Principal
Tanya Thompson, Community Development Coordinator
Jae Williams, Asst. Director of Youth Development

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What do college students, an Ivy League university, an urban health crisis and teenagers living in poverty all have in common? Too many times, the answer is “not a thing” but at Sayre High School in West Philadelphia connections are being made that could very well save lives.

Responding to the issues that plagued his students – violence, gangs, drugs and a lack of access to basic health and dental care - the principal of Sayre School approached Penn’s Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) in 2002 with the idea that having a health center on site would be a boon to the students and the community. Around the same time, a group of Penn undergraduates were focusing their efforts on helping to solve the healthcare crisis in West Philadelphia. The students’ research and work with the community led them to propose the establishment of a community health promotion and disease prevention program at Sayre.

Penn faculty and students in medicine, nursing, dentistry, social work, education, law, and arts & sciences, work at Sayre through internships, courses, and research projects. The curriculum is designed to not only teach students about health, but also to prepare Sayre students to deliver health promotion and education to the community. In a Medical Intake Procedures course, for example, Sayre eleventh-graders work along with Penn students to learn to perform basic medical intake operations, including how to record blood pressure, height and weight, glucose levels, reflexes, and vision. Students also learn about prominent health problems in the community such as hypertension, obesity and diabetes. At the health center, which opened in 2006, students then apply what they have learned to assist Penn doctors and health professional students in providing intake services, medical information, and referrals for community patients. Students are learning by actively serving their community.

As a city-funded Beacon Centers site, Sayre extends its health focus into the after school hours through a variety of academic, enrichment, and fitness programs for youth of all ages. On Saturdays, Penn uses Sayre’s gym to hold youth basketball league games; on weekdays, Penn volunteers conduct after school practices and tutoring sessions for students in the league.



About Sayre

Sayre High School is a site of UPenn’s University-Assisted Community School Initiative. 100% of its students are eligible for lunch subsidies and 100% of its 700 students are African American.

With the support of the University’s Center for Community Partnerships, Sayre houses a school-based community health center. Sayre’s HPDP curriculum focuses on preparing students for careers in the health field. Learning is active here: Sayre and Penn students learn about health and careers together in the classroom, apply the knowledge via service-learning, and educate others in the community.

Some Key Partners at Sayre

*City of Philadelphia
National Students Partnership
Neighborhood Town Watch
Philadelphia Beacons initiative
Philadelphia School District
University of Pennsylvania (various departments within schools of: Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Education, Social Work, Law, & Arts & Sciences)
University of Pennsylvania Center for Community Partnerships
The West Philadelphia Neighborhood Link*