



“ **Before Playworks we had two types of students at recess; those who loved it, and those who hated it.** Many students didn't enjoy and didn't want to play because they didn't know how to play.

This created a tough situation. Before Playworks there were a lot of conflicts at recess between students. Many arguments would come back inside the school with kids lined up in the office waiting for administrative staff to intervene, rather than being in the classroom learning. Even when students went back to the classroom there were outbursts between students.

Since Playworks, most days the office is empty after recess. This means academics aren't interrupted; students go directly back to class without the need for conflict resolution by teachers or staff.

Recess is an important time when students can practice meeting the expectations we're trying to teach them. Rock-Paper-Scissors is an honorable way to teach them to walk away and be respected. It's an essential tool to be successful. They don't have to fight through every situation, they can save face and keep respect. It's really an important life skill.

The thing that is most surprising for me about Playworks is this: It didn't take months, it didn't take weeks, we saw change within days and **that's a program worth keeping!**”

Tamala M. W. Newsome

Tamala Newsome
Principal
Rosa Parks School
Portland, Oregon





Playworks Portland

Can 4-Square save a school? Can kickball improve the learning in the classroom? Yes!

Since 1996, Playworks has worked on-site exclusively with low-income schools, engineering a powerful system of play making a daily difference where it's most needed. With energy and imagination, high fives and hula hoops, **Playworks stops the chaos and builds play and physical activity into a positive school environment.** And by improving school climate, Playworks improves learning.

Playworks debuted in Portland in 2009, placing trained full-time coaches in each of our nine partner public schools. Here's a sample of what school staff reported:

- 89 percent reported a decrease in the number of *conflicts originating on the playground and spilling over to class*
- 92 percent reported an increase in the level of *participation in academic activities*
- 85 percent reported a decrease in *bullying at recess*
- 89 percent reported an increase in *class attendance*
- 89 percent reported a decrease in *disciplinary referrals*
- 88 percent reported an increase in *physical activity*

Playworks now brings play to **14** low-income Portland elementary schools serving **5,800** students in 2010-11, *including all nine of our original school partners.*

⌘ Beach School	⌘ Marysville School
⌘ Bridger School	⌘ Ockley Green School
⌘ Cesar Chavez School	⌘ Rigler School
⌘ Grout Elementary School	⌘ Rosa Parks Elementary School
⌘ King School	⌘ Sitton Elementary School
⌘ Jason Lee School	⌘ Woodlawn School
⌘ Markham Elementary School	⌘ Woodmere Elementary School

In addition, Playworks provides recess training, support and technical assistance to all four Parkrose Elementary Schools and their 1,600 students.

⌘ Prescott	⌘ Sacramento
⌘ Russell Academy	⌘ Shaver

Join the movement for safe, healthy play in the Great Northwest and help us serve more schools and students and grow our reach in the Portland area. To learn more and get involved, visit www.playworks.org/portland or contact:

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PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Carole Smith
Superintendent

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

January 19, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to offer this letter of support on behalf of Deputy Superintendents Mark Davalos, Cynthia Gilliam, Toni Hunter and myself to demonstrate Portland Public Schools' commitment to Playworks Portland. Physical activity and play are both integral components of our educational offerings. Each component promotes students' health and well-being and makes them more enthusiastic about coming to school. We have found that after engaging in a safe, healthy and inclusive recess, students return to the classroom focused and ready to learn. Teachers can then do what they do best—teach!

Playworks and its approach aligns well with our major educational goal, which is to enable every student to meet or exceed academic benchmarks and be able to make good choices and decisions throughout their lives. Playworks' innovative approach to physical activity and play, and its capacity for teaching students communication and conflict resolution skills, has carried over from recess into the classroom. Our partnership with Playworks began in the fall of 2009 and already there is evidence of impressive results. Principal and teacher surveys collected from Playworks' nine initial schools at the end of May 2010 reported the following:

- 89% reported a decrease in the number of conflicts originating on the playground and spilling over to class
- 88% reported that students showed an increase in *physical activity*
- 92% reported an increase in the level of participation in academic activities
- 85% reported a decrease in bullying at recess
- 89% reported an increase in class attendance
- 89% reported a decrease in disciplinary referrals
- 96% reported they would like Playworks to return to their school next year

Helping students build a solid foundation of academic, social and emotional skills, and promoting their physical health and development at the elementary school level is key to helping them develop into well-rounded and capable students as they enter their middle, high school and post-secondary years. That is why we've identified Playworks as a complementary and critical partner in enabling us to achieve our district goals—particularly for our academic priority zone schools. Principals have identified a need for more support around recess. Playworks is the only nonprofit organization in Portland maximizing recess for learning, and we have seen positive changes after just one year. As budgets allow, we support its expansion in additional public schools in Portland.

Sincerely,

Carole Smith
Superintendent

Mark Davalos
Deputy Superintendent

Cynthia Gilliam
Deputy Superintendent

Toni Hunter
Deputy Superintendent



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Daniel A. Grout Elementary School

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April 8, 2010

To Whom It May Concern::

The principals at Bridger, Grout, King, Lee, Markham, Rigler, Rosa Parks, Sitton, and Woodlawn Elementary Schools are pleased to submit this letter in support of Playworks Portland. Physical activity and play is an integral component of our educational offerings. Both help students become enthusiastic about learning and coming to school, as well as making an academic impact.

This is the first year of our experience with Playworks here in Portland Public Schools. Playworks had an immediate impact on school climate. Coaches work with teachers and students to teach non-competitive activities and conflict resolution skills that change the culture of a school. Mentorships and leadership opportunities compliment these activities and provide a common skill set that allows children to play and resolve issues themselves in a variety of settings.

The schools have seen a decrease in discipline incidents, particularly right after recess. Teachers are able to begin instruction immediately and students are not waiting in line to see the principal. As a result of the positive changes we all have seen we are committed to maintaining the program and support Playworks' grant request to keep this amazing program in Portland Public Schools

Sincerely,

Susan McElroy, D. A. Grout Elementary Principal on behalf of the Playworks Portland Principals

Total Responses: 129

According to school staff, Playworks has had the following impact on:

Student behavior during recess:

- 87% Report an increase in the *level of cooperation among students*
- 85% Report an increase in the *use of conflict resolution strategies*
- 88% Report that students showed an increase in *physical activity*
- 87% Report that students showed an increase in the *intensity of physical activity*
- 85% Report a decrease in the *incidents of bullying*
- 84% Report a decrease in the *number of conflicts (physical or verbal)*
- 89% Report a decrease in the *number of disciplinary referrals*
- 73% Report a decrease in the number of *students sitting or talking*

Student behavior in the classroom:

- 89% Report a decrease in the number of conflicts originating on the playground and spilling over to class
- 88% Report a decrease in the amount of class time spent resolving conflicts from recess
- 86% Report a decrease in the amount of time transitioning from recess to classroom instruction
- 85% Report a decrease in the number of disruptive events
- 92% Report an increase in the level of participation in academic activities
- 92% Report an increase in the level of cooperation with others during class
- 88% Report an increase in the students' abilities to focus on class activities
- 89% Report an increase in class attendance
- 94% Report an increase in the ease with which student's engage with other students in class

Additional Information

- 93% of staff report that Junior Coaches take on a leadership role during recess
- 96% of staff said they would like Playworks to return to their school next year

What impacts has Playworks had on recess activities and behaviors?

Playworks has been extraordinary in its impact on our recess. I supervise recess every day, each year. Students know the rules. They cooperate more. They are focused in their play. The types of games they play are more varied. The amount of bullying has dramatically decreased. I may have had only one referral all year. This is a dramatic difference.

I have been on duty for recess every day for 4 years. This year, with the introduction of Playworks I have not had a single fight to break up, minimal arguments and MUCH improved skills in quick and effective conflict resolution that allows kids to get on with play and enjoy their recess. I have written ONLY ONE referral this entire year. I used to write one per week. This program is powerful, transformative and completely AMAZING!!

Students who are new or shy have an activity they can join. There is a real purpose to recess. The playground resembles stations in a classroom, where there are activity options set up. This results in nearly all students feeling included.

Playworks is a fantastic program. I strongly believe that it really benefits all students in learning new games and social resources he/she can use all their lives.

As a classroom teacher I am no longer dealing with problems that come in from recess. In the past I had daily problems I was trying to solve and figure out during instructional time. This year I would say I have had little to NONE of that!

Examples of how student's benefitted from Playworks programming

I work with a special needs child who is wheel chair bond. Coach John facilitates games that include all students to play. This has made the students open and accepting of special needs children and many of these students have become good friends. I believe Coach John's inclusive attitude encourages our students to be accepting of other students, rather than bullying or developing clicks.

I had a student in my class who did not want to engage in any activity with other students. After having Playworks, it has opened that child up and he is now very willing to engage in group work/activities that take place in the school setting.

We are a special education class that focuses on children with social/emotional behavior issues. A lot of times our students are left out, but this year 2 of our students are Jr. Coaches. This has not only helped them socialize with the mainstream, but has given them a huge amount of confidence in their ability to fit in.

How has Playworks changed the school environment?

Playworks has made the school environment calmer. Students interact more peacefully and know how to solve conflicts in a peaceful manner rather than with violence.

I think that Playworks has changed the school environment by giving students, young and old, something to look forward to each day and each week. So many students get caught up in the video game world that it is important for students to learn that there are other fun and exciting ways for students to spend their free time. It also gives the students a chance to learn how to work together, as a team, which also spills over into the classroom.

Teacher Principal Survey 2009-2010
Portland Results

The overall feel in the hallways, at recess, and after school is significantly more positive than last year. The students have positive activities to be a part of. That means the world to our students.

The students have strategies to solve conflicts, and USE them! Students are better sports (all throughout the day). They understand that you don't always have to "win", to have fun playing.

I feel the kids are engaged with activities that help them develop a healthy attitude, modeling for positive behavior and intrinsic rewards for being a team player. It seems more kids get turns and inclusive for all. It's fun to have Coach Matt as part of our school team, and the kids love the games. I like to play with them, too.

It is a healthier, more understanding, more peaceful place filled with kids who LOVE to play all different kinds of games. I am indebted to this program for making my life as a teacher more FUN and easier. :) Thank you!



PLAYWORKS

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Aside from the national board, each Playworks city has a local board to advise in the areas of strategic growth, financial planning and community outreach. Playworks strives to have a diverse board composed of both men and women, community leaders, educators, parents, and leaders in the field of sports, physical activity, and/or play.

100% of Playworks Board Members make financial contributions to the organization.