



Community Health Briefs

Thriving Schools — Kaiser Permanente

Innovation Strategy

Recognizing that schools are the place where kids and school staff spend most of their day, Kaiser Permanente developed Thriving Schools. The program seeks to intentionally align and coordinate Kaiser Permanente assets related to schools — community health, workforce wellness, labor engagement, school-focused programs — and to engage external partners with expertise in school wellness.

Root Determinants of Health Addressed in This Initiative

- Exercise
- Diet
- Health Literacy
- Education
- Employment
- Healthy Thinking
- Livable Communities

Program Description

Launched in 2013, Thriving Schools is a national effort designed to influence long-term behavior change and have a measurable effect on the health of students, staff and teachers in K-12 schools in communities served by Kaiser Permanente. It is focused on supporting healthy eating, active living, school employee wellness and positive school climate through policy, systems and environmental changes.

Creating and sustaining change in schools requires multiple strategies and partners. Given this context, the Thriving Schools design includes strategies that support:

- Cultivating and mobilizing grass-roots school wellness champions to build momentum for change
- Advancing and promoting policy and environmental changes through district and school engagement
- Creating and leveraging strong partnerships within the communities and with partners to create and sustain change

Kaiser Permanente operates in seven geographical regions across the U.S. with a Thriving Schools lead responsible for implementing strategy regionally in collaboration with cross-functional partners. Regional variations exist to support unique needs and opportunities. See Appendix A for a visual of the Thriving Schools framework.

Results

A multi-year, cross-site evaluation is currently underway and seeks to answer questions that are tied to improved health. Strategic interventions currently target 115 school districts across Kaiser

Permanente's service areas. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a key partner, is working alongside Kaiser Permanente in 21 districts and 312 schools in these service areas.

Short and long-term outcomes include:

Shorter-Term Outcomes (2- 4 years)

- Creation of school environments that include convenient access to healthy foods and encourage physical activity (for example, physical activity breaks, quality physical education, walking/biking to school), all supporting healthy behaviors for students, staff and teachers
- Increased physical activity and improved nutrition among staff, teachers and students
- Increased ability (measured through the Alliance for Health Generations assessment tool and supplemented with pre- and post- surveys) of school staff and teachers to make health-promoting changes in their schools and their own lives and model those changes for students

Longer-Term Outcomes (5-10 years and beyond)

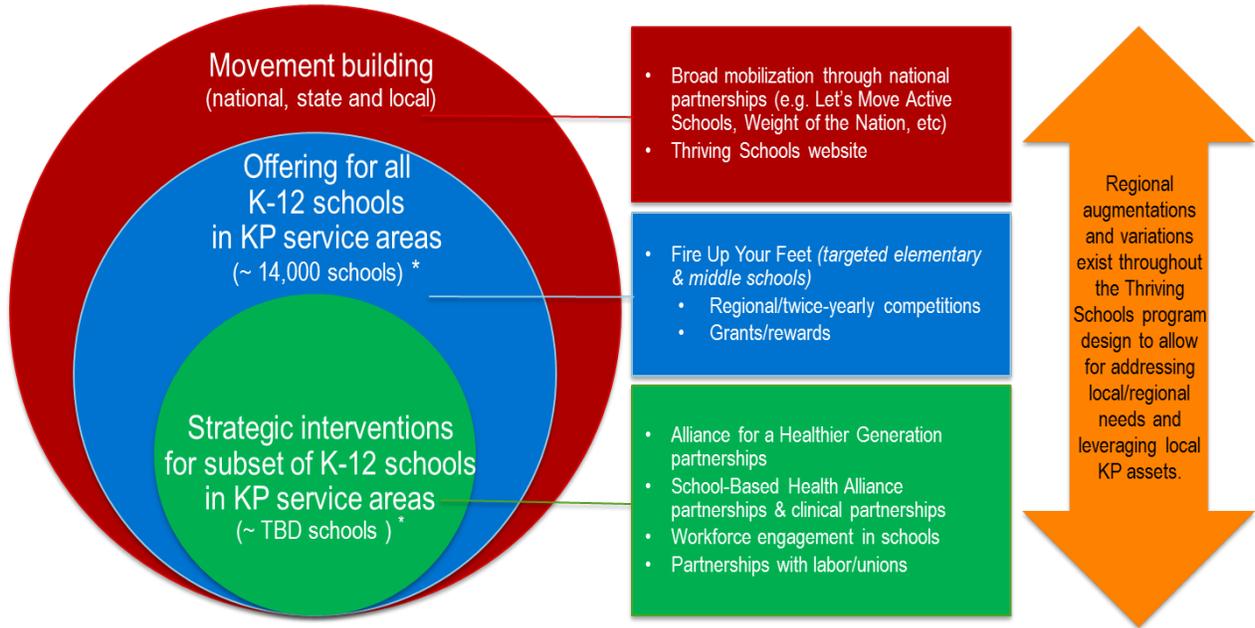
- Prevention and reduction of obesity in students and staff and associated chronic health conditions
- Increased performance of students through improved attendance, discipline, social and emotional health and academic achievement
- Increased productivity of school staff through reduced absenteeism, reduced stress, improved morale, improved social and emotional health, and improved productive hours per week
- Sustainability of school changes (for example, policy, systems and environmental changes) over time, yielding lasting effects
- Strengthening Kaiser Permanente's existing work to become a "Total Health Organization" that identifies and seizes upon the critical determinants of health that reside in communities, and addresses those determinants in the service of members and its social mission

Contact Information

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Appendix A

Kaiser Permanente's Thriving Schools Framework



* Design indicates a movement from broad reach to deeper touch and impact. Offerings in inner circles are inclusive of offerings in the circles that they sit within.