

Healthy Schools

Connecting education, health, & community



Deschutes Co Board of County Commissioners | January 2026

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What is Healthy Schools?

WHAT

Bend-La Pine Schools and Deschutes County Health Services **partnering together** to **embed** Public Health Specialists in middle and high schools

WHY

Ensuring **students thrive** by preventing:
student suicide, substance use, bullying/violence,
sexually transmitted infections and teen pregnancies

HOW

Engaging the whole school community to **have a say in**
improving **health curriculum, school climate**, and
linking students to **care and preventative resources**



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Evaluation

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Evaluation Questions



1. Did middle and high schools actually adopt and integrate Healthy Schools and practices?



2. Did middle and high schools increase their use of evidence-based practices and reach to students because of the Healthy Schools program?



3. Did Healthy Schools have impact on student mental health, suicide, and substance use?



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As a result of Healthy Schools



Successfully integrated Public Health Services into district and schools and improved alignment and effective school-based prevention and health promotion services



Improved school-based services reaching students with evidence-based programs already proven to work for our targeted adolescent health outcomes



Prevented 21% of Behavioral Health related Emergency Department visits in one year – that's 84 visits equating to \$812,000 to \$1.5 million in avoided health care charges



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Results

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Question 1: Did middle and high schools actually adopt and integrate Healthy Schools?



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Result: Successful Adoption and Integration

Proportion of BLS Schools Adopting the Healthy Schools Program

Out of 14 BLS Sites with Assigned Public Health Specialists



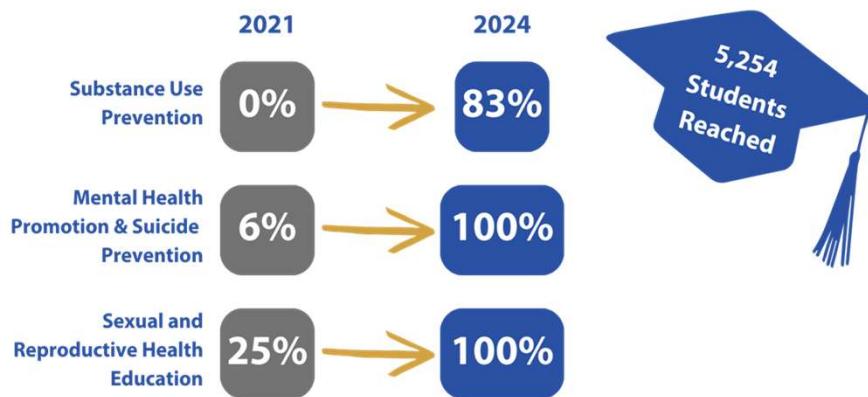
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Question 2: Did middle and high schools increase their use of evidence-based practices and reach to students because of the Healthy Schools program?



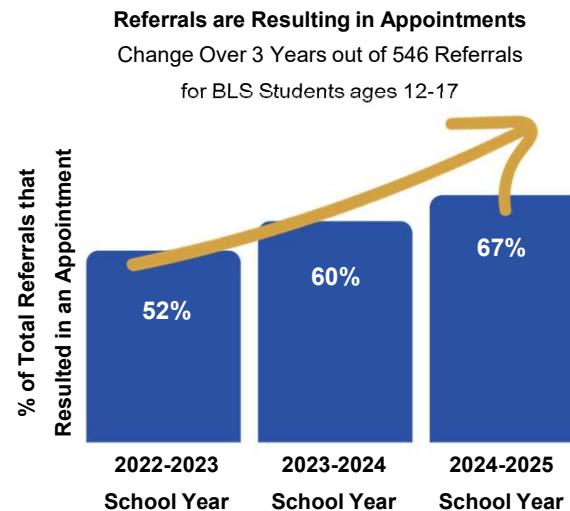
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Result: Improved School-Based Services



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Result: Improved School-Based Services



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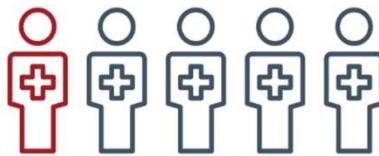


Question 3: Did Healthy Schools have impact on student mental health, suicide, and substance use?



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Result: Improved Adolescent Health Outcomes



1 in 5

Behavioral Health **Emergency Department visits***

were **prevented** for youth ages 11-17
from zip codes **with Healthy Schools**

...that means we prevented
84 visits in one year.

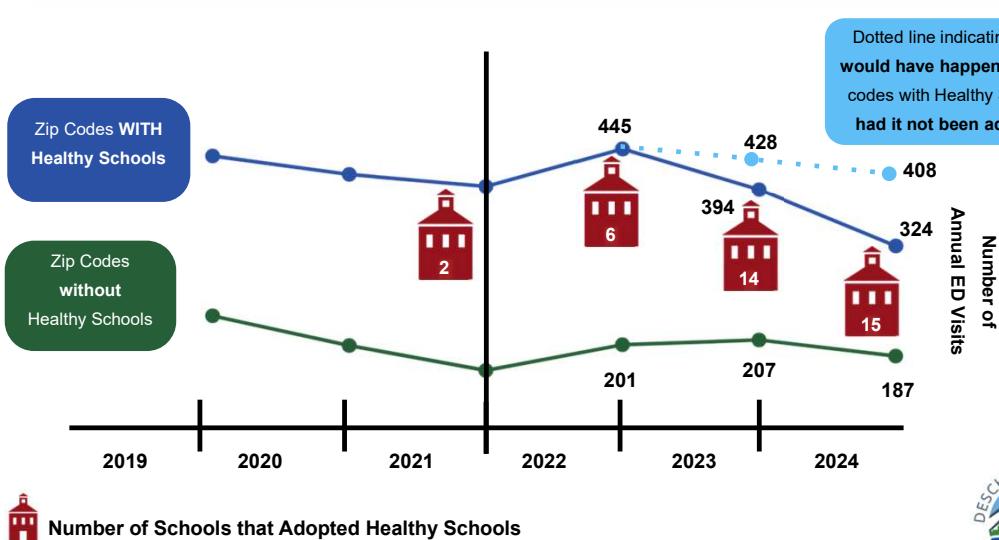


* Emergency Department visits for suicide,
substance use, depression, and mental health



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Result: Improved Adolescent Health Outcomes



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Result: Improved Adolescent Health Outcomes

Sources of Strength Peer Leader Post-Survey Results



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Student Impact Quotes

“ I've seen a lot of kids figure out like that they are having mental health problems and they need to get help, and how they can get help. It [Sources of Strength] shows resources that they can go to. They made it more like eye-opening, like they can talk to someone, the teen-to-teen line [YouthLine] and all that.” ”

“ Some people tried to cope or to help with home problems...they do substances to help them out. Now we have a lot more resources out there available for them, and we try to make them feel comfortable talking to our counselors or other staff members they trust. ” ”



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Result: Improved Adolescent Health Outcomes

Estimated Cost-Savings

- \$812,000 to \$1.5 million in avoided health care charges

Other Prevented Costs:

- Missed school days for students (reimbursements)
- Missed workdays for caregivers
- Lost productivity for employers
- Medical transports, travel, accommodations, and meals



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Findings Validated



Key Informant Interviews

Interviews with experts in Deschutes County's behavioral health care and student services systems to look for other explanations.



Student Focus Groups

Focus Group discussions with Peer Leaders to assess whether Sources of Strength could have resulted in prevented emergencies.



Criteria for Causality

Reviewed all data for essential criteria for causality: Cause-and-effect timing, Coherence with EBPs, Specific targeted results.



Find Technical Evaluation Report: Deschutes.org/healthyschools



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Conclusions

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Student Impact Quotes

“ Because at [my former school], I did not go to class, like, I'm just putting it out there, I did not go to class. And then I joined Sources, and I started, like, going most days. And so it like, first of all, it helped me find a community. And second of all, it helped me, like, more, like, engage in school and like hearing about that through other things. Like, it kind of like brought it together. ”

“ My freshman year, I had a lot of mental health problems, and [my dad] just didn't know what to do with it, so I had to go talk to people that weren't my dad. And it was, like, really hard, not to talk to my dad about it. And now I feel like I can talk to my dad about it, and I feel like I can be like 'Dad, I need help.' Yeah, so it changed, like, how my dad's dynamic is when it comes to talking about mental health. ”



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School Administrator Impact Quote

“ Many of our students have stated that they understand what resources are available to them and if they are unsure, they feel comfortable asking a trusted adult. One of our students demonstrated a lot of concerning behaviors as a Freshman (head down, no friends, no connection to school through clubs or athletics) as a Senior this student has come out of their shell and now has a friend circle and participates in school clubs. This student is often seen with a smile. This all started when they participated in a class that was using Sources of Strength and gave this student an opportunity to see themselves as a leader and found connection to others and school. ”



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Thank you

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