

Lot Whitcomb Elementary School celebrated for closing the achievement gap

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Lot Whitcomb Elementary, which was recognized for closing the achievement gap by the Oregon Department of Education today, benefits from after-school programs like Children and Family Enrichment from the Metropolitan Family Services. In 2006, teacher Karen DeWolfe spoke to a number of students during an after-school tutoring program.

English language learners.

Last year, more than 93 percent of its fifth-graders met state benchmarks in reading and math. In third grade, more than 80 percent of its third-graders met those benchmarks, and more than 88 percent of fourth-graders passed in the same subjects.

The school, which enrolls about 470 students, benefits from a number of programs that educators cite as community-builders. The after-school Children and Family Enrichment (CAFE) program through **Metropolitan Family Service**, for example, has been credited with engaging students and keeping them learning even when the school day is over.

With such programs, as well as annual backpack donations from organizations such as Costco, Ong said the school has seen parents and families clamoring to stay in the community. Whitcomb educators' attention to data has also helped identify struggling students and drive up achievement, he said.

Whitcomb Elementary **joined twelve other schools for the distinction, ranking among the likes of Jason Lee Elementary School** in the **Portland Public Schools District** and **Tualatin Elementary School** in the **Tigard-Tualatin School District**.

Fostering a strong community hub at **Lot Whitcomb Elementary School** has been paying off, according to Principal Sid Ong.

On Wednesday, the **Oregon Department of Education** recognized the **North Clackamas School District** elementary school for closing the achievement gap.

"The main theme is that a strong community has developed over time," Ong said on Wednesday. Much of the success comes from "really taking the kids from when they walk in the door until they go at 5:30 at night."

The school has a large population of student groups that historically have difficulties meeting state benchmarks, but the school has made significant progress in its test scores over the last few years. About 80 percent of Whitcomb Elementary's students are low-income, and about half are

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