



**SUCCESS STORY**

# Leopards Club Helps Students Connect with School & Each Other

Finding high-quality, affordable childcare and after school programs can be a challenge, particularly in rural communities.



"We had a number of parents and community members talking about childcare and all the challenges they were having," said Earl Pettit, superintendent of Cove School District (CSD), a rural district in eastern Oregon. CSD enrolls 320 students in one school, with Pettit serving as principal for grades K-8 and another principal supervising grades 9-12.

**In 2021, CSD partnered with Right At School to implement the Right After School program for grades K-5. Right After School provides districts with everything they need to run an after school program with their own personnel.**

Schools receive an easy-to-use curriculum and supply kits, access to a library of training and professional development courses, and an online registration and billing system.

"We would not be able to do an after school program if it wasn't for Right After School. It would take a significant amount of time to prepare the curriculum, lessons, and materials, and we don't have the resources or the means to do that," said Pettit. "The selling point for me was that it's all set up for you. It's a great deal when you consider how much time it would take to have somebody do all of that."

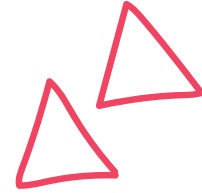




RIGHT AT  
SCHOOL



# Accessing a ready-made after school program



**CSD piloted Right After School during the summer of 2021, then launched the after school program on August 30.**

The Right After School program, which CSD calls the Leopards Club, is funded by a state grant. CSD offers the program free to all K-5 students on a first-come, first-served basis.

“We’re a district that believes in a free appropriate public education for all students. Period. So, as an experienced leader, I’ve always had a problem when we say that but then say, ‘Here’s a list of supplies you need to bring to school,’ or ‘Here’s a program, but it’s limited to whoever can find the money for it,’” said Pettit.

“We know we have an achievement gap here. Our lower socioeconomic status students are not performing as well as our higher socioeconomic status students. We knew from the start we wanted to try to get our lower socioeconomic status students into the Right After School program, but we also believe in providing access for all.

As it’s turned out, the students we were targeting for intervention are the ones who are attending — and it’s helping the parents who really need childcare after school.”

## CHALLENGES

- Lack of after school options for children
- Limited resources for district-operated program

## RESULTS

- Time savings for district and instructors
- Increased student engagement
- Improved social-emotional learning

## SOLUTION

- Right After School program from Right At School

### Grade Levels

- K-5



- Increased feelings of belonging and connection to school
- Positive feedback from parents



# Starting the Leopards Club

The Leopards Club is organized into two groups: grades K-2 and grades 3-5. Each group is limited to 20 participants. The program runs for about two hours every school day, ending around 6 p.m.

An abbreviated late bus route is available to support the program, as well as older students participating in sports or other activities.

Each day, Leopards Club participants receive an after school snack, participate in organized physical activities, engage in free reading or artistic activities of their choosing, and complete a science, technology, engineering, artistic, and/or math (STEAM) oriented task aligned with the mission and goals of CSD.

**“Right At School made it easy to get started,” said Lacey Baird, the after school instructor for grades K-2 and a substitute teacher for CSD.**

“The online training was easy to follow. It provided instruction on the curriculum and how to use it, all the way down to what lessons should look like on a day to day basis.

Having a ready-made curriculum saved a lot of time. Instead of having to find activities or create our own, we can see what we’re doing and what supplies we’ll need each day, and the supplies are here ready for us to use.”

# 70%+

## The Impact of Quality Before and After School Programming

More than 70% of students who participate in STEM after school programs express greater interest in and knowledge about science careers.

(Source After School Alliance. 2020. This is Afterschool.)



## Did you know?

Right At School is the official after school provider of AASA and an inaugural member of their SEL Cohort.





# Providing engaging, meaningful enrichment



**Right After School provides access to 180 days of Right At School’s Disguised Learning curriculum.**

The preK-8 curriculum supports learning standards in English language arts, literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, physical fitness, and service learning. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is carefully woven into the curriculum and aligned with standards from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

“The curriculum helps keep teachers organized, and it provides something new every day for students. It’s a great program,” said Pettit.

CSD allows parents to register their children for as many two-week units as they choose.

**The units cover fun topics such as Toy Makers, Unusual Art, Career Quest, and Galaxy Far, Far Away.** Admittance to the first unit is based upon the order of sign-up. Subsequent units are prioritized to admit those unable to get into a previous session.

“The Disguised Learning curriculum enriches what students do during the school day,” said Baird. “In the Galaxy Far, Far Away unit, my kindergartners were able to take what they were learning in class about space and bring it here after school. They’re really into it! There are lots of hands-on activities so they always seem to be engaged. I’ve never had a kid say, ‘This is boring,’ or ‘I don’t want to do this.’ They’re always excited to see what the next activity is.”



**“Since I have young students, the hands-on activities and games also help us work on things like fine motor skills and social-emotional learning.”**





# Forming friendships

In addition, Baird has noticed that the Right After School program is helping students develop friendships with students in other grade levels who they would not normally interact with during the school day.

“The after school program helps with students’ social-emotional learning,” she said. “Even though it’s organized into a K-2 group and a 3-5 group, we usually all come together for our main game.

It’s fun to see my students form relationships with an older buddy who can help them out. They definitely take care of each other.”

“When we have a snack, everyone sits together as well. It gives it more of a family feel,” said Carolyn Stewart, the after school instructor for grades 3-5 and an instructional aide at the elementary school.

**“Because the enrichment program is different from what we do during the school day, it also helps us build a different kind of rapport with the kids.”**

**69%**

69% of students in quality after school programs have improved homework completion and class participation.

(Source After School Alliance. 2020. This is Afterschool.)



**“I’ve noticed a difference in the kids who attend the Right After School program. When I walk around and see them in class during the school day, they’re more engaged. They are connected with school. Before they were students; now they’re Leopards.”**

— Earl Pettit, K-8 Principal and Superintendent







# Creating connections to school

"Kids love the Leopards Club. They want to be here," said Pettit. "The worst thing you can do is tell them they can't attend. I have done that on a couple of occasions for behavior issues. When they come back, they're fine and I never have to do it again."

"I've noticed a difference in the kids who attend the Right After School program. **When I walk around and see them in class during the school day, they're more engaged.** That's been huge for kids who were moving toward the at-risk categories. Now they feel like they belong. They are connected with school. Before they were students; now they're Leopards," he said. "Feedback from parents has been positive, too. They want their kids here."

"I recommend Right After School because kids enjoy it. I also think it's doing a real service for the community, especially those kids who would normally go home to an empty house after school," said Stewart. "Parents are appreciative that their children are enjoying the program."

"Kids tell me, 'I really love after school. I wish we could be at after school all the time.' They are super excited for the activities we do."

At the end of the day, they say, 'Do we really have to go?'" said Baird. "Then they run up to their parents holding up a project or something they've made. Parents enjoy seeing all the fun things their kids bring home and talking about what they did after school."

COVE SCHOOL DISTRICT • COVE, OREGON



## District Data & Demographics

Grades PreK-12  
320 Students  
www.cove.k12.or.us

<1% American Indian/Alaska Native  
1% Black/African American  
5% Hispanic/Latino  
4% Multiracial

90% White  
29% Free/reduced lunch  
13% Mobile students

## Bring Right At School to Your District

Ready to bring world-class after school enrichment to your community?

**855-AT-SCHOOL**



**RIGHTATSCHOOL.COM**