



What is an Opportunity Neighborhood?

An Opportunity Neighborhood is one where residents, schools, local government, community organizations, faith and business partners work collaboratively to create limitless possibility, ensuring the well-being of children and youth by reducing barriers and providing a seamless continuum of supports, using data to understand community conditions, measure success and be accountable for results. The Mission of ON is to *unite residents, community organizations and systems officials in securing school and career success for every Opportunity Neighborhood child.*

Fairfax County's first Opportunity Neighborhood (ON) covers the Greater Mount Vernon area and includes children, families, schools, and partners within the boundaries of Mount Vernon Woods ES, Riverside ES, Woodlawn ES, and follows these children as they enroll in Walt Whitman MS, and Mount Vernon HS. This service area has been identified through a variety of community risk factors as having the highest needs in FCPS, with a range of 50% to 84% in the included neighborhoods receiving free or reduced cost meals.

The Goals of ON are:

- ON children are prepared for school entry
- ON children succeed in school
- ON youth graduate from high school and continue on to post-secondary education and careers
- ON families, schools, and neighborhoods support the healthy development and academic success of their children

How does ON Work?

The ON Governance Team -- composed of equal parts residents, school and county representatives, and other partners -- has identified five areas of focus: (1) Literacy, (2) Out-of-School Time, (3) Parent Engagement, (4) School Readiness, and (5) Youth Leadership.

Theory of Change: To achieve the goals of ON, these foundational elements were identified as key levers of change:

- ✓ Academic Foundation: ON children and youth are provided with effective learning opportunities to address individual challenges and maximize gifts and strengths so that they are on course to graduate, pursue post-secondary education, and enter the workforce.
- ✓ Family Resilience: ON children and youth are able to focus on their future, free of concerns related to family crisis, caregiver stress, housing instability, or community violence.
- ✓ Cultivating a Culture of Engagement, Connectedness, and Success: ON Children and youth feel connected to a family, school, and community support network that believes and invests in their potential.

What does ON do?

ON resources support strategic initiatives that address ON goals and focus areas directly. Some of these include:

- Community engagement work which resulted in the creation of **Sequoyah Friends**, a group of residents who do outreach and improve neighbor involvement in the Sequoyah Community.

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- The **21st Century Learning Center after-school and summer programs**, which are designed to engage middle and high school students in learning and becoming leaders in their community. After-school programming includes course support and credit recovery for high school students and a robotics class for middle school students. Over 100 high school students were able to recover one or more credits this summer, and over 80 students participated in a jump start program for rising 9th graders. In addition 18 students worked at non-profits and with Neighborhood and Community Services as paid interns, learning interview, resume and work skills.
- The **Neighborhood School Readiness Team** brings together educators and administrators from child care centers, family child care, preschools, FCPS elementary schools as well as representatives from local government agencies and other community and faith-based organizations to support the successful transition of low-income, at-risk young children to kindergarten. The NSRT engages parents in literacy activities and practical actions such as getting immunizations and registering early for school to ensure that children start kindergarten on time and ready to learn.
- The **Supreme Teen Street Team, or "ST²"** is a group of teens who serve as consultants for ON planning and promote school attendance with ON representative support.

Promise Scorecard: An online system that helps staff track the progress of ON programs and the success of children, families, and community. Using the Promise Scorecard we are able to demonstrate:

1. A 7% increase in the number of Whitman MS students who reported feeling safer at school
2. A 15% increase in the number of students passing Algebra 1 by the end of 8th grade
3. A slight decrease in the number of middle and high school students who missed 10% (20 days) or more of school this year

Results Scorecard		Scoreboard			
Opportunity Neighborhood					
ON: Children succeed in school					
ON: Elementary Schools - Average Reading SOL Pass Rate (Grades 3 & 5)	83%	79%	1	2011-2012	
Mt. Vernon High: Reading SOL Pass Rate (11th Grade)	96%	92%	1	2011-2012	
MVHS Pyramid: % of students who report there are lots of chances at school to talk with a teacher one on one	N/A	81.6%	0	2010-2011	
ON: Elementary Schools - Number of Students with 10+ Total Absences per Semester	N/A	169	0	2012-2013	
ON: Communities support children's healthy development & success					
MtV District Station: # of domestic related assault incidences with police involvement	499	535	1	2012	
22309: # of requests for basic needs assistance on human services line	1,523	1,454	1	County FY 2012	
22309: # of juveniles with JDRDC Complaints	119	121	2	County FY 2012	

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Next Steps: With our theory of change in mind, we have planned additional activities for the 14-15 school year, including:

1. Expanding our early literacy efforts by starting the Imagination Library program, where children birth through 5 will get a book each month
2. Working to increase partnerships with public agencies and private providers to increase awareness and access to mental health supports
3. Build on Promise Scorecard model to improve the quality and transparency of ON data.

Who are the partners?

Three primary entities support the governance team and collaborate to forward the goals of ON: United Community Ministries, a non-profit; Fairfax County Government, and Fairfax County Public Schools.

Other partners include:

- Capital One
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Virginia Dept. of Criminal Justice Services
- The Capital Youth Empowerment Program
- Sequoyah Friends (A team of Sequoyah residents, established by ON reps)
- Northern Virginia Community College
- Project LIFT
- Region 1 Change Team
- Together We're The Answer
- West African Collaborative