

Sunbeam Family Services Transforming Former OKC Elementary School Into Head Start Center For High Risks Children

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The “Pathway to Greatness” initiative in Oklahoma City left 15 schools vacant. According to the school district, they are negotiating or have completed lease agreements on 13 of those buildings.

Sunbeam Family Services said they have signed the lease and are currently moving into Pierce Elementary. Work is already underway transforming the former elementary school into an early head start center for high-risk children ages zero to three.

Sunbeam will have 12 classrooms for 96 students in the school and the rest of the building will be used for office space.

Fortunately, for Sunbeam, the transformation should be an easy one.

“This building was well-loved by Oklahoma City Public Schools and it’s evident, and so it’s just some tweaking for the little kids as opposed to elementary-aged students,” explained Paula Gates, Sunbeam’s Director of Early Childhood Services.

In March, Sunbeam's program received an additional \$3 million in federal funds, allowing them to move into six new locations.

“So perfect timing with the Pathway to Greatness with the school district,” said Gates.

Pierce Elementary was built in the 50s but was renovated with MAPS money.

But Sunbeam picked it because of one reason: the zip code.

“We knew that families in this area need high-quality childcare and early education,” said Gates.

Sunbeam is already enrolling children for their new site and hopes to be moved in by the end of the year.