

# COMMUNITY SCHOOL STANDARDS





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# INTRODUCTION



*A community school is a public school—the hub of its neighborhood, uniting families, educators and community partners to provide all students with top-quality academics, enrichment, health and social services, and opportunities to succeed in school and in life.*

The Community School Standards are designed to engage and support the community schools movement as a standards-driven, evidence-based strategy to promote equity and educational excellence for each and every child, and an approach that strengthens families and community.

The standards have three objectives:

- To help new community schools more effectively develop and implement their community school plans;
- To assist existing community schools to strengthen the quality of their practice and document outcomes; and
- To provide a consistent language and framework for advocacy, technical assistance, research, funding, and policy efforts.

## **BACKGROUND**

The community school strategy makes explicit that in order to significantly improve the academic and developmental outcomes of children, schools and community partners—e.g. families, community and faith-based organizations, local government, institutes of higher learning, public agencies, law enforcement, United Ways and others—must work together to ensure that all students have an equitable opportunity to succeed in school.

While the rationale behind a comprehensive approach to student-centered learning is simple, actual implementation requires a transformational shift in the way that public schools function, and in the way that community partners interact with public schools. And it also demands change in all of the adults working with children and youth.

Community schools around the country have spent years honing their practice and identifying what works where and under what conditions. These voluntary standards draw on the work of these and other practitioners across the country and offer a touchstone of our collective wisdom that can also be tailored to individual contexts. These standards will help improve the quality of community school implementation.

### **COMMUNITY SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN FEDERAL LEGISLATION**

The new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) contains several key provisions throughout the bill that advance the vision of community schools. The law specifically defines community schools in Title IV, Part F, Subpart 2—Community Support for School Success:

The term ‘full-service community school’ means a public elementary school or secondary school that “(A) participates in a community-based effort to coordinate and integrate educational, developmental, family, health, and other comprehensive services through community-based organizations and public and private partnerships; and (B) provides access to such services in school to students, families, and the community, such as access during the school year (including before- and after-school hours and weekends), as well as during the summer.

There are important provisions throughout the bill that advance the community schools strategy, including the requirement for broader indicators beyond academics in state and district accountability systems; tools and resources to boost results-focused school-community partnerships for young people’s success, including integrated student supports, needs assessments, and professional development for educators to work more effectively with families and communities; and supportive programs including Promise Neighborhoods and 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

The legislation recognizes that achieving excellence in American education depends on providing access to opportunity for all children, and that increasing inequality—driven by external social, economic and community factors traditionally viewed as outside of the domain of schools—have a significant influence on student outcomes and the persistent achievement gap.

Specific areas where community schools can find supportive language in ESSA include:

- School Quality Indicator for State Accountability Systems: Title I
- Reporting on chronic absence, school climate, and safety; rates of suspensions, expulsions, and school-related arrests; and bullying: Title I state and local school district report cards
- Improving school conditions for student learning: Titles I (SEA and LEA plans) and Title IV, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant
- Well-rounded education: Title I schoolwide programs and targeted assistance schools, Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant
- Comprehensive Support and Improvement and Targeted Assistance for Improvement: Title I
- Needs Assessments
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Full-Service Community Schools Program, Promise Neighborhoods Program: Title IV

For more information about these programs, visit the Coalition’s [federal policy webpage](#).

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Seven principles guide the community schools approach to school transformation, and provide a framework that undergirds each of the community school implementation standards.

1. **PURSUE EQUITY**—Educational excellence and equity are inseparable. Community schools work actively to identify and confront policies, practices and cultures that keep students of different backgrounds and races from achieving equitable outcomes. Community schools proactively and intentionally empower those typically disempowered by barriers to participation.
2. **INVEST IN A WHOLE-CHILD APPROACH TO EDUCATION**—Meaningful teaching and learning embraces but goes beyond mastery of core academic subjects to include youth development principles; holding high expectations for children, youth, and adults; and developing their social-emotional, health, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.
3. **BUILD ON COMMUNITY STRENGTHS TO ENSURE CONDITIONS**—Community schools utilize the assets of the entire community—including the gifts of people who live and work there, parents, families, residents and community partners to create the optimal learning conditions for each student.
4. **USE DATA AND COMMUNITY WISDOM TO GUIDE PARTNERSHIPS, PROGRAMS, AND PROGRESS**—Reliable and community-specific data, coupled with the wisdom of youth, families and residents, guides how educators and community partners work together to achieve measurable results.
5. **COMMIT TO INTERDEPENDENCE AND SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY**—Student success requires explicit investment in collaborative planning and implementation between educators and community partners and across program areas and disciplines. Mutually agreed upon results and related indicators, as well as written agreements enable educators and community partners to hold each other accountable.
6. **INVEST IN BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS**—Deep collaboration takes dedicated effort and time, and becomes evident in the daily formal and informal social exchanges within a school community and between the school and the broader community. Trusting relationships fuel school transformation by helping to create a nurturing safe, respectful climate where caring adults, families and students come to rely on each other as part of a shared approach to student success.
7. **FOSTER A LEARNING ORGANIZATION**—Improved student learning depends on a school community where educators and community partners work together towards continuous improvement. Time and support are available for individual and collective reflection and adjustment as well as shared learning and professional development, to facilitate responsiveness to student needs.

In combination, and when guided by a coherent and rigorous vision of how students, schools, and communities can thrive, these principles provide a strong foundation for the pursuit of the community school strategy.

# COMMUNITY SCHOOLS STANDARDS



The standards include two parts. The first part covers the structures and functions of a community school. The second part addresses the core program elements that occur in community schools. A glossary can be found after Part 2.

## **PART 1: COMMUNITY SCHOOL STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS**

Part I identifies the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that school and community partners need in order to plan and implement successful and impactful community schools.

Each standard is organized into three levels – the standard, related elements, and indicators of performance. Each standard addresses the broad category of community schools implementation. The elements within each standard reflect specific features of high level implementation. The indicators, which are forthcoming, serve primarily as examples of how a community school practitioner and partners might demonstrate the elements along an implementation continuum of a comprehensive and coherent community school strategy.

### **1. Collaborative Leadership: Nurtures shared ownership and shared accountability.**

- 1.1.** Interdisciplinary, cross-sector community partners share responsibility and accountability for student and school success.

**INDICATORS**

- Partners are active at the school (e.g., attendance at leadership meetings).
- MOUs define specific agreements, including desired results, between the school and its partners.
- Partners are explicitly included as part of the School Improvement Plan.
- To build trust and buy-in, schools and partners goals and priorities reflect the one another.

**1.2.** A representative site-based leadership team, including families, students, community partners, unions, neighboring community residents, the principal, community school coordinator, teachers, and other school personnel and community partners, guides collaborative planning, implementation, and oversight.

**INDICATORS**

- Site leadership team is representative of the school and community.
- Regularly scheduled meetings agenda and minutes.
- Clear definition of leadership team roles, responsibilities, and empowerment to make decisions.

**1.3.** The principal works with the community school coordinator, partners and staff to actively integrate families and community partners into the life and work of the school.

**INDICATORS**

- Principal meets regularly with the site-based leadership team.
- Principal is open to and has mechanisms in place to hear and act on input from school staff and families.
- Community school coordinator sites on the school leadership team.
- Principal meets regularly with community school coordinator.
- Principal is familiar with local community assets.

**RESOURCES**

**Building a Leadership Team** – A webpage describing the components of a site leadership team and hiring a community school coordinator (CCS).

**Family Partnerships Resources** – Multiple toolkits and guidance for family leadership, school governance and site planning (San Francisco Unified School District).

**School Leadership Teams** – A brochure that defines what a student leadership team is and the roles stakeholders serve on the team (New York City Department of Education).

**Community & Family Engagement** – Principals Share What Works- A collection of best practices that highlight the experiences of principals in family and community engagement (CCS).

**2. Planning: Incorporates the assets and needs of school, family, and community in the school improvement plan.**

**2.1.** A commitment to a shared vision and mission of student success drives educators, families, and community partners in their planning.

**INDICATORS**

- Shared vision statement has been created and signed by all partners.
- The shared vision drives planning for the school.

- 2.2.** Data on school and community indicators, disaggregated by race, gender, disability, income, and other relevant factors, informs the school improvement goals and plan.

**INDICATORS**

- School and community partners regularly collect school data on student need and community school performance, as well as macro-community data (poverty, trauma, health, housing).
- Data is collected on how well partners meet their goals and objectives as stated in School Improvement Plan.
- Data is reviewed regularly by the site leadership team.
- Data is used to inform the School Improvement Plan.

- 2.3.** A needs and assets assessment of the school, student, families, and neighboring community is conducted regularly to inform the school improvement plan.

**INDICATORS**

- Input from students, families, teachers, school staff, and community members and partners informs the needs and assets assessment.
- Needs and assets assessment is updated every three years.
- Needs and assets assessment report is publicly available.
- Agenda of leadership team includes an analysis and update of the needs and assets assessment.

- 2.4.** The School Improvement Plan explicitly outlines the role of school staff, families, community partners, multi-disciplinary teams, and the community school coordinator in helping to achieve specific results.

**INDICATORS**

- Families, community partners, and community schools coordinators are listed in the plan, their roles are defined, and goals for each are set.
- Plan describes how families and partners participated in its development.

- 2.5.** The academic and non-academic results and related indicators that the community school seeks to attain are specified in the School Improvement Plan.

**INDICATORS**

- The School Improvement Plan includes academic and non-academic results/indicators.

- 2.6.** The School Improvement Plan identifies and aligns a range of evidence-based programs and practices to achieve desired results.

**INDICATORS**

- Menu of partners with evidence-based programming is used by site leadership team.
- Illustration (e.g., theory of change) of how programs and services align with the desired results.
- Site coordinator ensures alignment and coordination of programs and practices with one another and with School Improvement Plan.
- Whole school and community-driven continuous improvement strategies are used to identify new programs and practices.

**2.7.** The School Site Leadership team plays a decision-making role in the development of the school improvement plan.

**INDICATORS**

- School Site Leadership Team is involved with the development of the School Improvement Plan.
- School Site Leadership Team meeting agenda and notes discuss the School Improvement Plan.
- School Site Leadership Team officially endorses the School Improvement Plan (e.g., through a recorded vote).
- Formal and informal surveys or interviews with members of the School Site Leadership Team regarding satisfaction with their decision-making role(s).

**2.8.** A mechanism for measuring progress toward desired results and indicators is defined in the plan.

**INDICATORS**

- Method for tracking results and indicators is in place
- Partnership with researchers who measure progress and provide feedback
- System-level support for data collection and use
- Use of qualitative and quantitative data in measuring progress (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups)

**RESOURCES**

**Developing a Shared Vision and Strategic Plan** – A webpage with example toolkits and other resources from community school initiatives on how to start and sustain a community school (CCS).

**How to Craft an Effective School Improvement Plan** – A guide detailing five concise steps to creating an effective a school improvement plan (EdSurge).

**Education Update** – A six-part framework for developing a school improvement plan (ASCD).

**Best Practices in School Improvement Planning** – A planning tool focused on how to combine data and people together when working on school improvement in a three- part improvement plan (Hanover Research).

**Needs and Capacity Assessments** – A diverse set of tools and examples on how to properly conduct a needs assessment with community, existing partners and new partners (CCS).

**Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD)** – A website that connects users to various resources on effective community building such as online training videos, podcasts and toolkits (ABCD Institute, Northwestern University).

**Mapping Community Assets Workbook** – A workbook that highlights valuable information and strategies to guide sustainable community building (ABCD Institute, Northwestern University).

**The New Paradigm for Effective Community Impact** – A table outlining the attributes of asset based community impact work (ABCD Institute, Northwestern University).

**Family Leadership, Governance and Site Planning Toolkit** – A resource that provides multiple toolkits and guidelines on how to engage parents in site planning and advocacy (San Francisco Unified School District).

**Selecting Evidence-Based Programs** – A guide breaking down the process of selecting evidence-based programs and how they should be implemented (Youth.gov).

### **3. Coordinating Infrastructure: Facilitates coordination of school and community resources.**

- 3.1.** A dedicated full time Community School Coordinator facilitates alignment of school, family and community resources.
- *Position description outlines that a full-time coordinator is, at minimum, responsible for: joint planning with principal and school leadership team; recruitment, facilitation, and convening of partners; collaboration with school staff; facilitate regular partner meetings; data use to determine services and program needs and gaps and recruit partners to fill gaps.*
- 3.2.** The Community School Coordinator is a member of the school's leadership team and supports the community school site-based leadership team.
- *Coordinator sits on the school leadership team.*
  - *Records of conversations between coordinator and team members that include interventions and changes in practice.*
- 3.3.** The Community School Coordinator facilitates close communication among the principal, teachers, other school staff, and community partners.
- *Regularly scheduled meetings principal and coordinator*
  - *Meetings with grade level teams.*
  - *Facilitates (or oversees facilitation) of ongoing family member group meetings.*
- 3.4.** The Community School Coordinator facilitates school and partnership data collection, sharing, and analysis.
- *Coordinator facilitates data sharing agreements between school and partners.*
  - *Data are reviewed regularly by the Site Leadership Team and partners.*
  - *Coordinator is trained in the use of appropriate data collection and analysis.*
- 3.5.** School personnel and community partners are organized into working teams focused on specific issues identified in the needs and assets assessment (e.g., mental health, after school, or mentoring).
- *Clearly defined purpose for each group.*
  - *Rosters of working teams include families, students, and relevant community partners.*
  - *Agendas and action updates of working teams.*
- 3.6.** School personnel and community partners assess the effectiveness of their relationships on a regular basis in order to continuously improve opportunities and supports.
- *Agreement on responsibility for shared results.*
  - *Evaluations of partner programs (including satisfaction) in meeting stated goals/needs.*
  - *Discussion about partnership relationships/effectiveness and Senior Leadership Team agendas.*
  - *Participant satisfaction feedback (youth, families).*

**Building a Leadership Team** – A tool highlighting which stakeholders should be included when building a leadership team for your community school (CCS).

**Community School Coordinators Network** – A hub of resources for community school coordinators (CCS).

**Strengthening Partnerships: Community School Assessment Checklist** – This resource is an interactive tool for schools and communities to evaluate their partnerships (CCS).

**Community Schools: Promoting Student Success, a Rationale and Results Framework** – A framework explaining the necessity to expand community schools for student success, which also defines some community school goals (CCS).

**Partnership Effectiveness Continuum** – A tool for assessing and developing successful partnerships and relationships (Wallace Foundation).

**Principles of Effective Partnerships** – A guide outlining the components needed for successful partnerships between schools and community partners (National Center for Community Schools, CAS).

#### 4. Student-centered data: Guides opportunities and support to individual students.

- 4.1. Data systems and protocols are in place to assure access to relevant individual and aggregate information and to assure transparency of decision-making.
- School uses a data system and all staff and partners are trained to use it.
  - Coordinator and partners have access to school data (including student level).
  - Student and school-level data reports are reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and multidisciplinary teams.
- 4.2. Policies and procedures are in place to safeguard student and family confidentiality.
- Data sharing and use agreements conform to legal requirements.
  - Students and families sign data release forms.
  - School handbook describes data use for families and students.
- 4.3. Interdisciplinary teams, with the assistance of the community school coordinator, use data to prioritize resources and prepare individualized plans to make sure every student gets the opportunities and supports they need.
- Team meeting agendas include review of data.
  - Response is differentiated based on data (e.g., response to intervention, multi-tier system of support).
  - Coordinator identifies programs and partners based on data-driven student needs.
- 4.4. Agreements are in place to share student data and data on services being provided to individual students among school personnel, community school coordinators and community partners.
- Data sharing agreement documentation (e.g., memoranda of understanding).

## 5. Continuous Improvement: Deepens the impact of the community school.

- 5.1.** Individual student data, participant feedback, and aggregate outcomes are analyzed regularly by the site leadership team to assess program quality and progress and develop strategies for improvement.
- School data teams include data analysis in their regular meetings.
  - School and partners have a plan and tools (e.g., school climate survey) to collect feedback from appropriate stakeholders.
- 5.2.** Issues requiring policy or procedural changes and resource needs are communicated to leaders and staff at the systems level.
- Procedures for communicating issues in place.
  - Networks of coordinators and principals discuss and raise common policy and procedural challenges.
  - School representatives participate in initiative-wide meetings communicate policy and procedural issues.
- 5.3.** Strategic opportunities for joint professional development are identified through data analysis and continuous improvement efforts and enable educators, community partners and families to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to work effectively together, share best practices and apply those practices in their work.
- Professional development calendar and agendas.
  - Partners' staff are invited to school and school district professional development and professional learning communities.
  - School staff are invited to partner professional development .
  - Professional development needs of school staff and partners is established by those who receive the professional development.
  - Community schools professional development written into union agreements .
  - Professional development is tied to school-wide needs and data assessment.

### RESOURCES

[Community Schools Scaling Up Guide \(Stage 6: Continue Improvement and Expansion\)](#) - How to continuously improve your work through data, stakeholder engagement, and professional development (CCS).

## 6. Sustainability: Ensures ongoing operations of the community school.

- 6.1.** A strategy for continuously strengthening shared ownership for the community school among school personnel, families, and community partners is in place.
- Senior leadership team regularly reviews progress with the whole school community.
  - Partners, school, families and community acknowledge and celebrate success.
  - Banners, logos, websites, and communications identify school and partners as a community school.
  - School facilities are readily accessible for community events and community school celebrations.

- 6.2.** School personnel, unions, community partners and leaders, and families publicly celebrate successes, and advocate for community schools within their organization and across their community.
- Credit is shared for school success.
  - Public meetings to educate the community and partners about community schools.
  - Parents, students, and families get advocacy training.
  - Media stories and op-eds about the community school.
  - Meeting agendas with elected officials.
  - Visits to successful community schools.
  - Updates about community schools are on agendas for a partner organizations internal meetings.
- 6.3.** A plan and process to sustain funding for the community school, including both the position of the community school coordinator and specific programs is in place.
- Coordinator position is funded through school or partner budgets.
  - Programming is funded through school or partner budgets.
  - Coordinator, principal, and other school staff and partners apply for joint grants.
  - Local, statewide, and national organizing to create true sustainability through new taxes, elimination of loopholes, and TIFs with money dedicated to community schools.
- 6.4.** Principals and community partners work with the school site leadership team to prepare budgets with a view to helping sustain the community schools.
- School budget includes funds for community school coordinator or activities (e.g., using Title I funding).
  - School district creates line items for community schools.
  - School and community partners, share and align budgeting process.
- 6.5.** Community partners commit to a long-term relationship with the school, driven by student and school needs, and modify their organization and culture to support the community school partnership.
- Community partners' strategic plans and policies specifically name support for community schools.
  - Community partners' staff positions explicitly support community schools (e.g., community school liaisons or supervisors, and agency directors).
- 6.6.** Community partners help generate funding for programs that will be operated under the umbrella of the community school.
- Community partners fundraise to support community school.
  - Community partners dedicate portions of their budget to support community schools.
  - Community partners tap non-financial assets (e.g., volunteers, mentors).

**RESOURCES**

**Financing your Community School** – Resources to help fund your community school (CCS).

**Sustaining Community Schools** – Resources and tips to help sustain your community school initiative (pp. 49-57) (National Center for Community Schools, CAS).

**The Characteristics of an Effective Community Schools System** – A summary of the four characteristics for scaling up a community school (CCS).

**Local Policy** – Examples of school board and city/county policy (CCS).

## PART 2: COMMON OPPORTUNITIES IN A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

A community school provides an array of student-centered opportunities: programs, supports, and services to enhance conditions for high-quality teaching and learning. Opportunities in a community school are intended to be unique and intentionally responsive to the assets and needs of a particular school community. As student-centered opportunities, practitioners should develop appropriate and meaningful programs, supports, and services that meet the unique needs and interests of each and every child. While program elements are important hallmarks of a community school strategy, piecemeal programmatic investments do not result in a cohesive, sustainable, and transformational community school strategy.

The following opportunities are particularly important from a community school standpoint. Many of these opportunities already benefit from valuable, and evidence-based field-specific implementation standards to ensure high quality service delivery, and we encourage community school practitioners to reference those implementation standards in building and assessing their programs, supports, and services.

Each program element below includes indicators which serve as examples of how a community school practitioner and partners might implement the elements along a continuum as part of a comprehensive and coherent community school strategy.

### 7. Powerful Learning: Engages students as independent learners.

Successful community schools put high-quality learning opportunities in the core of their approach. They focus on ways to support learning during the typical school day and during times for expanded learning opportunities (e.g., afterschool and summer). Student centered learning is responsive to the voice and interests of students and creates meaningful, engaging, and motivating learning opportunities.

- 7.1.** Teachers and community partners work together to provide a well-rounded and enriching core curriculum during and outside of the school day.
  - *Partners participate in school-based professional learning communities.*
  - *Teachers and partners have expertise in project-based learning and deeper learning, including experiences that connect to real-world (specifically community-based) learning experiences.*
  - *Partners provide curriculum-linked learning and developmental opportunities during non-school hours.*
  - *Teachers work with the private sector to implement a career and technical education.*
- 7.2.** Youth development principles, particularly an emphasis on student voice and choice, inform student learning and development strategies.
  - *Students participate in decisions about learning opportunities during and outside of the school day.*
  - *Youth surveys (e.g., school climate, development assets) assess whether students have voice and choice.*
- 7.3.** Partners, educators, and partners receive professional development on youth development principles. Learning opportunities enable students to develop academic, social, emotional, health and civic competencies.
  - *Students have access to a variety of learning opportunities that address multiple competencies.*
  - *Educators and partners have expertise in social, emotional, health, and civic best learning practices.*
  - *Service learning is a core element of curriculum.*

- 7.4.** Students have access to enriching after school programs that are aligned with the curriculum.
- Students and families are asked about out-of-school time learning needs.
  - The coordinator identifies and recruits partners for out-of-school time at the school and in the community.
  - Guidelines are in place to facilitate alignment.
  - Partners have experience aligning school-day and out-of-school time learning experiences.
  - Key staff position (e.g., out-of-school time coordinator) explicitly links out-of-school time learning with core instructional program.
  - Description of after-school program and activities that demonstrate alignment with curriculum.
- 7.5.** Students have access to enriching summer learning experiences.
- List of summer learning opportunities available to students inside and outside of the school.
- 7.6.** Students have access to supportive environments as needed before school and during school breaks.
- School is open early for students needing care and support.
  - Plan is in place to address student needs during breaks.
- 7.7.** Learning experiences incorporate a focus on real world issues and enable young people to be problem solvers in their own communities.
- Field trips to understand real world issues are available.
  - Students hear from local community leaders and residents about real world issues.
  - Curriculum addresses real world issues; students engage in learning about issues and developing solutions.
- 7.8.** Learning experiences in community schools meet quality standards defined by specific program fields (e.g., after school, summer learning, service learning, project-based learning, common core).
- Educators and partners have access to materials, curricula, and training for effective programming and instruction.

**RESOURCES**

**Core Programs Components of CAS Community Schools** – A guidebook describing the core components of a community school system, such as afterschool programs and early childhood education (pp. 24-27) (National Center for Community Schools, CAS).

**School-Age Program Observation Tool** – An instrument to guide student and program observation based evaluations (National Center for Community Schools, CAS).

**Statewide Afterschool Networks Quality Standards** – A guide to quality standards for afterschool programs (Statewide Afterschool Networks).

**Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California** – A guide to California’s quality standards for their afterschool network (Afterschool Network).

**New York State Afterschool Quality Self-Assessment Tool** – New York’s afterschool network program quality standards (New York State Network for Youth Success).

**School Climate Surveys** – Web-based administration platform, including a suite of school climate surveys for secondary students, staff, and families (U.S. Department of Education).

## 8. Integrated Health and Social Supports: Addressing barriers to learning.

In a community school setting, the basic physical, mental, and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed as a core aspect of its work.

- 8.1.** Students and their teachers and families are knowledgeable about the services and supports that are available at, or through, school, including physical, mental, behavioral and emotional health.
- A directory of health and social supports is readily accessible.
  - Teachers know who to reach out to for specific supports for specific children.
  - Community organizations, PTAs, school website, newsletters and bulletin boards communicate available supports.
  - Community events (e.g., health fairs) inform students, teachers, and families about available supports.
- 8.2.** Services and supports are proactive and culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive.
- School staff and partners receive professional development on cultural responsiveness
  - Translation services are available in school to students, parents, and at partner events
  - Organizations with expertise to provide culturally-specific services are involved
- 8.3.** Health and social supports and services respond to the needs of students, and families, and focus both on prevention and treatment.
- Healthy living and health promotion activities are present for student, family, and residents.
  - Array of services responsive to needs (e.g., on site health and mental health services, dental and vision services).
  - Health education opportunities are available.
  - Health services are open to families and neighborhood.
- 8.4.** An interdisciplinary student support team, including specialized instructional support personnel, community partners, other school staff, and involving families where appropriate, develops and oversees a plan to respond to individual student needs.
- Response to intervention system is in place.
  - Student support teams and RTI System Student Support Plans that include student assets and needs assessments that are co-developed with students and corresponding supports or interventions.
  - Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) for all students are in place.

### RESOURCES

**School-Based Health Alliance Core Competencies** – A set of core competencies for school-based health centers, focused on access and accountability (School-Based Health Alliance).

**Standards for School Social Work Services** – Guiding principles addressing multiple domains of practice (National Association of Social Workers).

## **9. Authentic Family Engagement: Embraces families and mobilizes family assets.**

Strong family and community engagement increases the resources and relationships available to enable better learning. Community schools value the experiences of people from diverse backgrounds who are committed to the welfare of the community, and thus, work to identify and deploy numerous resources.

- 9.1.** Teachers and families have trusting and respectful relationships.
- Teachers, and partners where appropriate, conduct home visits.
  - Community organizations and partners facilitate outreach to parents.
  - School personnel attend community meetings and offer assistance at community locations.
  - Surveys of families and teachers assess trusting relationships with families.
- 9.2.** Families have equity of voice and power in the community school's leadership and decision-making structures.
- Families are represented on the Site Leaders Team.
  - Voices of families are included in the needs and asset assessment.
  - Leadership development opportunities are regularly available to families and community members.
- 9.3.** Two-way, culturally and linguistically relevant communication between school and families is proactive and consistent.
- Translations of relevant documents and translators of for key events and interactions (e.g., parent/teacher conversations).
  - Opportunities for parents to meet with educators are offered at different times at day/evening/weekend.
  - Educators are familiar with the cultural characteristics of their students and families.
- 9.4.** Families are empowered and supported to support learning at home.
- Families receive professional development on ways to support student learning.
  - Professional development helps teachers learn how to empower families.
  - Positive feedback about student behavior and performance is provided to parents.
  - Appropriate technology facilitates communications with families.
- 9.5.** The community school recognizes that all adults involved with the community schools and family members must develop the capacity to work together.
- Joint professional development experiences are available.
  - Joint planning for the community schools is the norm .
  - Transparency about the Parent and community partner survey/feedback.
  - Training for all school and partner staff on topics such as customer service, cultural responsiveness.
- 9.6.** Leadership development opportunities are regularly available to families and community residents.
- Leadership development opportunities are available in school or community.
- 9.7.** Educators, families, community partners, and school personnel and leadership demonstrate trusting relationships.
- School climate surveys demonstrate stakeholders have evidence of trusting relationships in the school

RESOURCES

**Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family/School Partnerships** – A book focused on building “strong collaborative relationships” between parents and teachers.

**Parent Teacher Home Visits** – A project promoting a model of teachers visiting student’s homes to enhance connections between teachers and families (Parent Teacher Home Visits).

**National Standards for Family-School Partnerships** – Guidelines from the National PTA on forming and maintaining family-school partnerships (PTA).

**Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships** – The U.S. Department of Education’s guide to forming and maintaining effective family-school partnerships (U.S. Department of Education).

**10. Authentic Community Engagement: Gathers and galvanizes community and neighborhoods resources.**

**10.1.** The school is a venue for exploring assets and addressing challenges affecting the school and the community.

- Community issues and challenges are discussed at school.
- Coordinators, principals, and teachers, as well as partners participate in community asset mapping and community neighborhood walk arounds.
- Community residents are included in Site Leadership Team.

**10.2.** The school building is open and accessible beyond the school day, including evenings and weekends.

- School district policies allow community use connected to the results the schools seeks at no cost.
- Community events, education, and training programs and other opportunities are available.
- Agreement is in place to pay facilities staff for extra time.

**10.3.** Families and community members recognize the school as a hub of learning and community development.

- Turnouts for Parent Teacher Nights
- Turnout for community events held at the school.
- Number of community residents volunteering at schools
- Data Participation in Surveys of family and community residents.

RESOURCES

**Shared Use for Schools** – Resources and organizations on sharing space with schools, a community asset (Safe Routes to School National Partnership).

# GLOSSARY



**COMMUNITY PARTNERS (1.1):** Results-focused partners are essential to a community school. Partners may include local community-based organizations, government agencies, school districts, institutions of higher education, businesses, and faith-based entities.

**COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COORDINATOR (1.3, 3):** The coordinator serves as a bridge between school and community, aligns the work of educators and community partners toward a common set of results, and supports a site leadership team.

**COMMUNITY WISDOM:** Residents, neighbors, families, and local businesses have valuable knowledge about their neighborhood and schools' strengths and needs. When given a voice, communities offer essential information that can better inform community school development.

**CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING:** Schools, together with their communities, must work to fulfill six conditions for learning that we have identified as necessary for every child to succeed, based on an analysis of research. These conditions are:

1. Early childhood development is fostered through high-quality, comprehensive programs that nurture learning and development.
2. The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students.

3. Students are motivated and engaged in learning—both in school and in community settings, during and after school.
4. The basic physical, mental and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed.
5. There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families and school staff.
6. Community engagement, together with school efforts, promotes a school climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful and connects students to a broader learning community.

**DATA PROTOCOLS (4.1):** Data sharing agreements that dictate the permissions and use of data systems.

**DATA SYSTEMS (4.1):** Technology that enables data collection and sharing between school and partner staff.

**ELEMENT:** Within each standard, the elements reflect specific features of high level implementation.

**FUNCTIONS OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL (PART I):** Each of the groups or individuals that comprise the community school is responsible for a core set of functions including programming, continuous improvement, and coordination.

**INDICATOR:** The indicators serve primarily as examples of how a community school practitioner and partners might demonstrate the elements along an implementation continuum of a comprehensive and coherent community school strategy.

**INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLANS (ILP) (8.4):** An individualized learning plan (ILP) is both a document and a process that students use – with support from school counselors, teachers, and parents – to define their career goals and postsecondary plans in order to inform the student’s decisions about their courses and activities throughout high school. Many states have adopted policies that require all middle and/or high school students to develop and maintain an individualized learning plan in order to make schools more personalized and improve student outcomes.

**INTERDEPENDENCE:** Community schools are a results-focused partnership strategy where the work of each partners influences that of other partners and the school.

**JOINT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (5.3):** Professional development opportunities are available to school and partners and are offered by either entity.

**NEEDS AND ASSET ASSESSMENT (2.3):** This assessment identifies the needs of students, schools, families, and the community as well as the assets of individuals, formal institutions and agencies, and informal organizations in the community that can be mobilized to meet these needs.

**NON-ACADEMIC RESULTS AND INDICATORS (2.5):** While all results and indicators can contribute to academic outcomes, “non-academic” refers to all the results and indicators that do not specifically measure academic outcomes. Examples include school climate, student engagement, and family engagement.

**PROGRAM ELEMENTS (PART II):** Every community schools offers a variety of programming aligned to its specific needs and goals. There are common programmatic elements that most typically occur in all

community schools including student centered learning and development, health and social services and supports, and family and community engagement.

**SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY INDICATORS (2.2):** Observable information that measures or identifies a particular result the community school is working toward. Examples include attendance rates, school climate, and immunization rates.

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (2.4):** Schools are responsible for developing an annual plan that describes their instructional choices, education resources and supports, staffing decisions, and partnerships that they are required by districts and/or states to complete. The plan includes target goals and may include a theory of change. It guides the implementation of learning and other activities in the school.

**SCHOOL STAFF (2.4):** This includes all the adults hired to work in the school such as the principal, teachers, guidance counselors, support staff, administrators, janitors, and nurses.

**SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY:** Clear, mutually agreed-upon results drive the work of community schools. Data helps partners measure progress toward results, and agreements enable them to hold each other accountable and move beyond “turf battles.”

**SHARED OWNERSHIP (6.1):** Together, partners engage in collaborative decision making and take ownership of their efforts to help all students succeed. School and community partners share resources, information, and accountability for results with the intention of fundamentally transforming the current education system. They develop a balance of power and equal voice among partners, even though their resources may not all carry the same dollar value.

**SHARED VISION:** Each partner, member of the school staff, and participating families and community members have contributed to and embraces the ideas and goals of the community school.

**SITE-BASED LEADERSHIP TEAM (1.2):** The site-based leadership team gives families, young people, and residents a voice and involves them, along with educators and community partners in the planning, implementation, and oversight of the community school. The coordinator helps staff and facilitate this team in partnership with the principal.

**STANDARD:** Addresses the broad category of community schools implementation.

**STRUCTURES OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL (PART I):** Structures include the organizational elements of a community school including the school site team, partners, and the community school coordinator.

**SUSTAINABILITY (6):** Durability of community schools grows out of an infrastructure that supports a collaborative system based on a long-term vision, continually measures progress against a clear set of benchmarks, and develops the ability to finance the functions of community schools. To ensure continuation and deepening of the work, community schools marshal the capacity to capture and retain the political support of key sectors of the community—parents and residents, voters, taxpayers, and policymakers.

**TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS:** Trust is essential to a thriving community school. Partner and school leaders depend on one another to meet obligations, to respect one another's work, and to help one another improve. Trusting relationships are built from working together, addressing conflicts, transparency, and regular and open communication.

**WHOLE-CHILD:** Children come to school with a wide variety of strengths and needs. Research has demonstrated that a variety of factors contribute to a child's growth and success including health, mental health, youth development, social emotional learning, family life, and academics. Community schools must be attentive to all off these factors in orders to help the whole-child.

**WORKING TEAMS, SCHOOL LEVEL (3.5):** School personnel, community partners, and other stakeholders may create groups to work on particular areas relevant to achieving community school results such as attendance, behavior, or family engagement.



# COMMUNITY SCHOOLS STANDARDS 2017

## SELF-ASSESSMENT



Each community school develops along a continuum. And each community school operates differently than another one across town or across the country. However, we know that there are similarities across community schools that have successfully implemented their strategy in how they are structured, what types of programs they offer, and how they operate.

These standards are designed to help community schools determine for themselves to what extent and how well they are implementing the various components of being a community school. The Coalition for Community Schools has designed this self-assessment so that community schools can reflect about their development, assess progress, and plot a course for continuous improvement.

### HOW TO USE THIS SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Coalition recommends asking people representing different roles in your community school – principal, coordinator, parent, educator, partner, and others – to take this self-assessment and to think hard about their development by scoring their community school on each standard and element as well as writing notes about their perception of progress within each standard. Then, you should sit down together and discuss what you and your colleagues and partners think you are doing well, and about what areas you think you could improve. Together, you will discover a new path that brings all the assets of your school and community together to create community schools where children learn and thrive.

<b>1. Collaborative Leadership: Nurtures shared ownership and shared accountability.</b>	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
1.1. Interdisciplinary, cross-sector community partners share responsibility and accountability for student and school success.	1	2	3	4
1.2. A representative site-based leadership team, including families, students, community partners, unions, neighboring community residents, the principal, community school coordinator, teachers, and other school personnel and community partners, guides collaborative planning, implementation, and oversight.	1	2	3	4
1.3. The principal works with the community school coordinator, partners and staff to actively integrate families and community partners into the life and work of the school.	1	2	3	4
<b>Overall Rating</b>	1	2	3	4

**Notes:**

<b>2. Planning: Incorporates the assets and needs of school, family, and community in the School Improvement Plan.</b>	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
2.1. A commitment to a shared vision and mission of student success drives educators, families, and community partners in their planning.	1	2	3	4
2.2. Data on school and community indicators, disaggregated by race, gender, disability, income, and other relevant factors, informs the school improvement goals and plan.	1	2	3	4
2.3. A needs and assets assessment of the school, student, families, and neighboring community is conducted regularly to inform the School Improvement Plan.	1	2	3	4
2.4. The School Improvement Plan explicitly outlines the role of school staff, families, community partners, interdisciplinary teams, and the community school coordinator in helping to achieve specific results.	1	2	3	4
2.5. The academic and non-academic results and related indicators that the community school seeks to attain are specified in the School Improvement Plan.	1	2	3	4
2.6. The School Improvement Plan identifies and aligns a range of evidence-based programs and practices to achieve desired results.	1	2	3	4
2.7. The School Site Leadership Team plays a decision-making role in the development of the School Improvement Plan.	1	2	3	4
2.8. A mechanism for measuring progress toward desired results and indicators is defined in the plan.	1	2	3	4
2.9. Strong transitions support the seamless transition from early education through college and career and across schools	1	2	3	4
<b>Overall Rating</b>	1	2	3	4

**Notes:**

<b>3. Coordinating Infrastructure: Facilitates coordination of school and community resources.</b>	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
3.1. A dedicated full time Community School Coordinator facilitates alignment of school, family and community resources.	1	2	3	4
3.2. The Community School Coordinator is a member of the school’s leadership team and supports the community school site-based leadership team.	1	2	3	4
3.3. The Community School Coordinator facilitates close communication among the principal, teachers, other school staff, and community partners.	1	2	3	4
3.4. The Community School Coordinator facilitates school and partnership data collection, sharing, and analysis.	1	2	3	4
3.5. School personnel and community partners are organized into working teams focused on specific issues identified in the needs and assets assessment (e.g., mental health, after school, or mentoring).	1	2	3	4
3.6. School personnel and community partners assess the effectiveness of their relationships on a regular basis in order to continuously improve opportunities and supports	1	2	3	4
<b>Overall Rating</b>	1	2	3	4

**Notes:**

<b>4. Student-centered data: Guides opportunities and support to individual students.</b>	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
4.1. Data systems and protocols are in place to assure access to relevant individual and aggregate information and to assure transparency of decision-making.	1	2	3	4
4.2. Policies and procedures are in place to safeguard student and family confidentiality.	1	2	3	4
4.3. Multi-disciplinary teams, with the assistance of the community school coordinator, use data to prioritize resources and prepare individualized plans to make sure every student gets the opportunities and supports they need.	1	2	3	4
4.4. Agreements are in place to share student data and data on services being provided to individual students among school personnel, community school coordinators and community partners.	1	2	3	4
<b>Overall Rating</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

**Notes:**

<b>5. Continuous Improvement: Deepens the impact of the community school.</b>	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
5.1. Individual student data, participant feedback, and aggregate outcomes are analyzed regularly by the site.	1	2	3	4
5.2. Issues requiring policy or procedural changes and resource needs are communicated to leaders and staff at the systems level.	1	2	3	4
5.3. Strategic opportunities for joint professional development are identified through data analysis and continuous improvement efforts and enable educators, community partners and families to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to work effectively together, share best practices and apply those practices in their work.	1	2	3	4
<b>Overall Rating</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

**Notes:**

<b>6. Sustainability: Ensures ongoing operations of the community school.</b>	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
6.1. A strategy for continuously strengthening shared ownership for the community school among school personnel, families, and community partners is in place.	1	2	3	4
6.2. School personnel, unions, community partners and leaders, and families publicly celebrate successes, and advocate for community schools within their organization and across their community.	1	2	3	4
6.3. A plan and process to sustain funding for the community school, including both the position of the community school coordinator and specific programs is in place.	1	2	3	4
6.4. Principals and community partners work with the school site leadership team to prepare budgets with a view to helping sustain the community schools.	1	2	3	4
6.5. Community partners commit to a long-term relationship with the school, driven by student and school needs, and modify their organization and culture to support the community school partnership.	1	2	3	4
6.6. Community partners help generate funding for programs that will be operated under the umbrella of the	1	2	3	4
<b>community school.</b>	1	2	3	4

**Notes:**

<b>7. Powerful Learning: Engages students as independent learners.</b>	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
7.1. Teachers and community partners work together to provide a well-rounded and enriching core curriculum during and outside of the school day.	1	2	3	4
7.2. Youth development principles, particularly an emphasis on student voice and choice, inform student learning and development strategies.	1	2	3	4
7.3. Learning opportunities enable students to develop academic, social, emotional, health and civic competencies.	1	2	3	4
7.4. Students have access to enriching summer learning experiences.	1	2	3	4
7.5. Students have access to supportive environments as needed before school and during school breaks.	1	2	3	4
7.6. Learning experiences incorporate a focus on real world issues and enable young people to be problem solvers in their own communities.	1	2	3	4
7.7. Learning experiences in community schools meet quality standards defined by specific program fields (e.g., after school, summer learning, service learning, project-based learning, common core).	1	2	3	4
<b>Overall Rating</b>	1	2	3	4

**Notes:**

<b>8. Integrated Health and Social Supports: Addressing barriers to learning.</b>	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
8.1. Students and their teachers and families are knowledgeable about the services and supports that are available at, or through, school, including physical, mental, behavioral and emotional health.	1	2	3	4
8.2. Services and supports are proactive and culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive.	1	2	3	4
8.3. Health and social supports and services respond to the needs of students, and families, and focus both on prevention and treatment.	1	2	3	4
8.4. An interdisciplinary student support team, including specialized instructional support personnel, community partners, other school staff, and involving families where appropriate, develops and oversees a plan to respond to individual student needs.	1	2	3	4
<b>Overall Rating</b>	1	2	3	4

**Notes:**

<b>9. Authentic Family Engagement: Embraces families and mobilizes family assets.</b>	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
9.1. Teachers and families have trusting and respectful relationships.	1	2	3	4
9.2. Families have equity of voice and power in the community school’s leadership and decision-making structures.	1	2	3	4
9.3. Two-way, culturally and linguistically relevant communication between school and families is proactive and consistent.	1	2	3	4
9.4. Families are empowered and supported to support learning at home.	1	2	3	4
9.5. The community school recognizes that all adults involved with the community schools and family members must develop the capacity to work together.	1	2	3	4
9.6. Leadership development opportunities are regularly available to families and community residents.	1	2	3	4
9.7. Educators, families, community partners, and school personnel and leadership demonstrate trusting relationships.	1	2	3	4
<b>Overall Rating</b>	1	2	3	4

**Notes:**

10. Authentic Community Engagement: Gathers and galvanizes community and neighborhoods resources.	Ineffective	Partially Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
10.1. The school is a venue for exploring assets and addressing challenges affecting the school and the community.	1	2	3	4
10.2. The school building is open and accessible beyond the school day, including evenings and weekends.	1	2	3	4
10.3. Families and community members recognize the school as a hub of learning and community development.	1	2	3	4
<b>Overall Rating</b>	1	2	3	4

**Notes:**

# ABOUT US

## COALITION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



Because Every Child Deserves Every Chance

The Coalition for Community Schools, housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), is an alliance of national, state and local organizations in education K–12, youth development, community planning and development, higher education, family support, health and human services, government, and philanthropy as well as national, state, and local community school networks. The Coalition advocates for community schools as a strategy to leverage local resources and programs, changing the look and feel of the traditional school structure to best meet the needs of children and families in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

[www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)

## INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP



For a half-century, the Institute for Educational Leadership has championed the need for leaders at all levels to shake off their institutional constraints and work across boundaries to address the needs of young people and their families.

Bound by no constituency, IEL serves as a catalyst that helps policymakers, administrators, and practitioners at all levels to bridge bureaucratic silos and undo gridlock to improve outcomes for all young people and their families. The

work of IEL focuses on three pillars required for young people and their communities to succeed: Involving the broader community with public education to support the learning and development of young people; building more effective pathways into the workforce for all young people and supporting the transition to adulthood; and preparing generations of leaders with the know-how to drive collaborative efforts at all levels.

[www.iel.org](http://www.iel.org)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These standards represent a significant development for the community schools field. Together, individuals and organizations representing different roles in a community school worked to create a set of standards that are based on best practice. The Coalition's various networks, capacity building partners, and Steering Committee all played important roles in the development of these standards. In particular, the Coalition for Community Schools would like to thank our partners at The Opportunity Institute, the Partnership for Children and Youth (Calif.), and the Federation for Community Schools (Ill.) who helped us lead stakeholder engagement sessions, in California, Illinois, and at the National Forum for Community Schools, so that these standards truly represented work in the field. A special thank you to Hayin Kim for her partnership and for sharing our vision.

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