

## Community and School in the *Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the ESEA*

Dear Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Kline, and Members of the House Education and Labor Committee,

The Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) is the nation's largest alliance of organizations in education, youth development, health and mental health services, social and emotional learning, community development and related fields, involving more than 150 organizations. The Coalition advances opportunities for the success of children and youth, as well as their families and communities by promoting the development of more, and more effective community schools.

The community schools strategy is a results-based, systemic approach to education that supports a comprehensive education reform agenda. Community schools have grown through the innovative uses of federal, state, and local resources and strong local leadership. Schools are in every community and include community-based organizations, local governments, colleges and universities, health and social service agencies, recreation and other youth development groups, business, and other untapped civic resources. The community schools approach draws these entities into school reform efforts—aligning, coordinating, and leveraging public and private resources to achieve a common result—high academic achievement for all.

Community schools integrate multiple components emerging as part of the Department of Education's reform strategy:

- Increased learning time, including enriched learning opportunities through service-learning, experiential learning, and work-based learning;
- Comprehensive services to high need students;
- Family and community engagement;
- Opportunities for socio-emotional development;
- Partnering with parents and parent organizations, faith- and community-based organizations, health clinics, other State or local agencies, and others to create safe school environments that meet students' social, emotional, and health needs; and
- Curriculum and instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school.

Cultivated by a growing number of innovative school leaders, community schools are reporting real results that impact students and communities. They are reducing dropout rates, increasing classroom attendance, improving student behavior, and improving tests scores in math and reading, and successfully engaging more parents in the education of their children. Community schools have improved management and governance of resources by actively engaging the resources of community partners, aligning these stakeholders toward a common outcome—improved student outcomes. Community partners, through the community school approach, ease the burden of designing, planning, and scaling-up reform because they bring needed expertise, resources, and funding to turn around efforts.

**Community schools represent the “community-oriented” schools referenced in the Race to the Top Guidelines and the phrase “making schools the centers of community,” as noted in the Administration's *Blueprint for Reform*.**

# Coalition for Community Schools



*Because Every Child Deserves Every Chance*

## STEERING COMMITTEE

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*Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania*

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*Association for the Supervision and Curriculum Development*

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*National Education Association*

**Mary Jo Pankoke**  
*Nebraska Foundation for Children and Families*

**Terry Paterson**  
*AfterSchool Matters*

**Jane Quinn**  
*Children's Aid Society*

**Beth Robertson**  
*National Community Education Association*

**Brent Schondelmeyer**  
*Local Investment Commission*

**Sharon Adams Taylor**  
*American Association of School Administrators*

**Roger Weissberg**  
*Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning*

**Martin J. Blank**  
*President, Institute for Educational Leadership*

The *Blueprint* highlights partnerships. What is needed is ESEA is a clear model for how these partnerships can work in a results-focused way. Community schools provide the strategy to create and sustain such a partnership model. The new ESEA needs to create incentives to grow and sustain these partnerships, so that local education agencies and community partners can come together to focus on enabling students to be ready for college, career, and citizenship.

The Department of Education already has recognized the community school as a strong partnership vehicle in its Title I guidelines. The community school strategy must now be explicitly included in the ESEA statute. Revision to ESEA should also recognize the community school as the primary vehicle for aligning federal programs with state, local, and private funding streams to support student success. The community school strategy provides incentives for results-driven partnerships to align funding streams. This is the kind of efficiency we need, especially in the current economic environment.

## **ESEA RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Integrate *Community* into All Aspects of ESEA**

The Coalition proposes that Congress:

- Set a community engagement policy that ensures LEAs work together with community partners to, for example, prepare plans to address non-academic factors influencing student success and developing engaging and enriching learning experiences during the school day and beyond. Activities may include elements of Transformational Model and RTT priorities: comprehensive services, increased learning time strategies, socio-emotional development, family & community engagement, partnerships with various community agencies, and enriched learning experiences during school and after school including service-learning, experiential learning, and work-based learning.
- Ensure that LEAs engage community stakeholders in planning and decision-making with regard to school reform models.
- Incorporate families and community partners into all references to strategies aiming to improve performance of Title I schools and persistently low-performing schools.
- Require states and LEAs to collect and publish data on non-academic factors related to student learning and development, e.g., attendance, truancy, early chronic absenteeism, reading by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

### **Build On Title I Recognition of Community Schools (Title I Uses Guidance, September 2, 2009)**

The Coalition proposes that ESEA:

- Include language explicitly defining community schools (see below) and authorizing community schools as a strategy under Title I broadening the focus beyond health, social, and nutrition to include an array of other supports and opportunities including after school enrichment, college preparation, and mentoring.
- Cite community schools as an allowable vehicle for integrating the various elements of support needed for student success in the intervention models proposed by the Administration.
- Explicitly authorize use of funds to finance community school coordinators to partner with the school principal to leverage community resources and integrate them to create a range of extended learning opportunities, social and emotional services, comprehensive services, increased learning time, and other support functions.

**Title I ARRA defines** a community school as both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. It provides academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement, and brings together many partners to offer a range of support and opportunities for children, youth, families, and communities. The school is generally open for extended hours for everyone in the community. Community schools may operate in all or a subset of schools in an LEA. This definition specifically allows spending on coordination. (See <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/titlei-reform.doc>, p. 29.)

### **Authorize Full Service Community Schools**

The Full Service Community Schools grant program was started through Congressional appropriation. We suggest that the Full Service Community Schools Act be officially authorized under Title IV of ESEA. A robust and flexible funding stream for community schools can expand the visibility of this effective approach; help develop a stronger knowledge base; support deeper research on community schools; and demonstrate how to glue together the assets of schools, at all levels of government, and include communities in the shared enterprise of educating our children and youth.

**Consolidate Federal Programs:** We strongly support the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, the Well-Rounded Education, the Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students Program, and Promise Neighborhoods proposed in the ESEA *Blueprint*. Woven together at the local level these programs can provide major elements of community schools. We support the consolidation of programs in order to provide greater flexibility to local leaders. **Alignment and Coordination of Education and Other Federal Agency Resources**

In a time of scarce resources it is imperative that Congress find ways to make the most effective and efficient use of federal dollars. The Coalition proposes the inclusion of specific provisions that provide explicit incentives for alignment and coordination of federal funding streams at the local level based on a results framework.

We ask Congress to include **common language** in the various programs of ESEA to facilitate the alignment and coordination at the school site. ESEA should give priority to applicants that demonstrate how the program will be integrated into a comprehensive school-based strategy to improve student achievement and student growth. It should require schools and communities to develop comprehensive results frameworks and expect that all ED programs will be aligned with these results frameworks. Specifically, we propose that grantees demonstrate:

1. How their work fits into a comprehensive results framework. Results might include:
  - Children are ready for school;
  - Students are engaged and achieving;
  - Students are physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally healthy;
  - Schools and neighborhoods are safe and provide a positive climate for learning;
  - Families are supportive and engaged in their children's education;
  - Graduates are ready for post-secondary education & 21st Century careers; and
  - Students are contributing to their communities.
2. How funding from one program will be integrated and aligned with other federal funding streams (e.g. Title I, 21st Century Learning Centers, and the proposed new programs: Well-Rounded Education; Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students).
3. Identify a mechanism at the school site to manage the alignment and coordination of programs under ESEA as well as community partners. Community schools research shows that this role is best played by a community school coordinator.

### **Supplemental Education Services (SES)**

As presently designed, SES is too narrowly focused and does not give LEAs the flexibility to respond to the varied needs of students and their families in low performing schools. As LEAs seek to pursue the different intervention models to turn around the lowest performing schools, we propose that Congress:

- Broaden the definition of SES beyond tutoring and transportation to include comprehensive supports for students and families, extended learning opportunity, and more intensive parent and community engagement, as well as tutoring. Evidence based strategies should be required. To use SES funds in this way, LEAs would provide a needs assessment to justify specific services.

### **National Capacity Building Center for Community Schools**

In order to align, coordinate, and integrate the array of education programs as well as funding from other federal agencies, a National Capacity Building Center should be authorized in ESEA. A National Center is essential to highlight the intent of Congress to better align and coordinate multiple federal programs through the community schools approach. Such a Center would provide tools, resources, training and technical assistance to local education agencies, communities and states seeking to better align and integrate funding streams. It also would prepare instructional materials and resources and professional development opportunities to assist principals and teachers to provide more engaging instruction including a focus on the community where students live.

### **Community Schools Evaluation**

We propose that Congress invest in a national community schools evaluation strategy. Currently, federal funds do not exist for the evaluation of community schools. The national evaluation can be informed by the Coalition's recently developed Results Framework for Community Schools.

### **Family Engagement**

We propose that Congress:

- Redefine **Family Engagement** as the following: *A shared responsibility of families and schools for student success, in which schools and community-based organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development. This shared responsibility is continuous from birth through young adulthood and reinforces learning that takes place in the home, school and community.*
- Incentivize effective family engagement and encourage local solutions by increasing the set-aside for effective family engagement from 1% to 2%.
- Expect states to develop a statewide infrastructure for effective family engagement, including refining the role of the Parental Information and Resource Centers to focus on statewide leadership, capacity-building, training, and technical assistance.

### **Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals**

Teachers and principals must be able to work more effectively with families and community partners to reach our national education goals. We ask Congress to more explicitly require all teacher and principal preparation and professional development to include a focus on:

- Working effectively to engage families in the education of their children;
- Working with community partners to support students and their families and overcome barriers to learning;
- Offering more engaging instruction in core academic subjects, including a focus on the context of the community where students live; and
- Providing enriched learning opportunities during and after school including community-based learning opportunities such as service-learning, experiential learning, work-based learning, civic and environmental education.

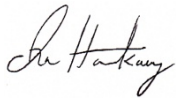
**National Commission on School and Community Partnerships**

We urge Congress to establish a Cabinet- level interdepartmental commission including leaders from the public and private sectors and states and local communities, to report on how the federal government, can more effectively integrate resources across federal agencies to support student learning and healthy development and enable all students to be college and career ready.

**Conclusion**

Finally, we ask that the Committee hold hearings on how communities are mobilizing their resources to support student success. There is much to learn from local leaders involved in such efforts. The Coalition would be pleased to work with you to arrange such a hearing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input.



Ira Harkavy

*Chair, Coalition for  
Community Schools Steering  
Committee*



Martin J. Blank

*President, Institute for  
Educational Leadership;  
Director, Coalition for  
Community Schools*



Lisa Villarreal

*Co-Chair, Coalition for  
Community Schools Steering  
Committee*

# The Coalition for Community Schools Partners

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/ COMMUNITY BUILDING**

Center for Community Change  
Community Agencies Corporation of NJ  
Development Training Institute  
National Congress for Community Economic Development  
National Council of La Raza  
National Neighborhood Coalition  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
National Urban League  
Police Executive Research Forum  
The Harwood Institute

## **EDUCATION**

American Association for Higher Education  
American Association of School Administrators  
American Federation of Teachers  
American School Counselor Association  
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania  
Council of Chief State School Officers  
Council of the Great City Schools  
Developmental Studies Center  
Learning First Alliance  
National Association for Bilingual Education  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Association of State Boards of Education  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Center for Community Education  
National Education Association  
National Parent Teachers Association  
National School Boards Association  
Pacific Oaks College, CA

## **FAMILY SUPPORT / HUMAN SERVICES**

Alliance For Children and Families  
American Public Human Services Association  
CASEL (Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning)-U. of Illinois at Chicago  
Child Welfare League of America  
Family Support America  
National Center for Family Literacy  
The Educational Alliance  
United Way of America

## **GOVERNMENT**

### ***Local and State Governments***

National League of Cities  
National Association of Counties  
National Conference of State Legislatures\*  
National Governors' Association\*  
The U.S. Conference of Mayors

### ***Federal Government***

Learn and Serve America  
21st Century Community Learning Center Program  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## **HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH**

American Public Health Association  
American School Health Association

National Assembly on School-Based Health Care  
National Mental Health Association  
Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education and Recreation  
UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools  
Center for Health and Health Care in Schools, George Washington University

## **LOCAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL NETWORKS**

Achievement Plus Community Learning Centers, St. Paul, MN  
Alliance for Families and Children, Hennepin County, MN  
Baltimore Connections, MD  
Bates College/Lewiston Public Schools, ME  
Birmingham Public Schools, AL  
Boston Connects, MA  
Boston Excels, MA  
Boston Full Service Schools Roundtable, MA  
Bridges to the Future, United Way of Genesee County - Flint, MI  
Bridges to Success, United Way of Central Indiana - Indianapolis, IN  
Bridges to Success, United Way of Greater Greensboro - Greensboro, NC  
Bridges to Success, United Way of Greater High Point - High Point, NC  
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, GA  
Chelsea Community Schools, MA  
Chicago Coalition for Community Schools, IL  
Chicago Public Schools - The Campaign to Expand Community Schools in Chicago  
Community Agencies Corporation of New Jersey, NJ  
Community College of Aurora/Aurora Public Schools, CO  
Community-School Connections, NY  
Community Schools Rhode Island, RI  
Dorcas Place Adult and Family Learning Center  
Jacksonville Partnership for Children, FL  
KidsCAN!, Mesa, AZ  
L.A. Urban Education Partnership  
Lincoln Community Learning Centers Initiative, NE  
Local Investment Commission (LINC), Kansas City, MO  
Minneapolis Beacons Project, MN  
Montgomery County Public Schools - Linkages to Learning  
New Paradigm Partners, Turtle Lake, WI  
New Vision for Public Schools, NY  
Project Success, IL  
Rockland 21st Century Collaborative for Children and Youth, NY  
School Linked Services Inc., Kansas City, KS  
SCOPE (School and Community Organized to Provide Excellence), Central Falls, RI  
St. Louis Park Schools, MN  
St. Louis Public Schools, Office of Community Education, MO  
Schools United Neighborhoods (SUN), Portland, OR  
University of Alabama-Birmingham/Birmingham Public Schools, AL  
University of Dayton/Dayton Public Schools, OH  
University of Denver/Denver Public Schools, CO  
University of Kentucky/Lexington Public Schools, KY  
University of New Mexico/United South  
Broadway/Albuquerque Public Schools, NM  
University of Rhode Island/Pawtucket Public Schools, RI  
West Philadelphia Improvement Corps (WEPIC)

### **NATIONAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL NETWORKS**

Beacons Schools Youth Development Institute at the Fund for the City of New York  
Children's Aid Society  
Communities in Schools  
National Community Education Association  
Schools of the 21st Century, Yale University

### **PHILANTHROPY**

Carnegie Corporation  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund  
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation  
KnowledgeWorks Foundation  
Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation  
Polk Bros. Foundation  
Rose Community Foundation  
The After-School Corporation  
The Wallace Foundation

### **POLICY, TRAINING AND ADVOCACY**

After School and Community Education Resource Network  
American Youth Policy Forum  
Children's Defense Fund  
Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth  
Coalition for Our Children's Schools  
Collaborative for Integrated School Services, Harvard Graduate School of Education  
Cross Cities Campaign for Urban School  
Education Development Center  
Eureka Communities  
Family Friendly Schools, VA  
Foundations, Inc.  
Institute for Educational Leadership  
Institute for Responsive Education  
Institute for Social and Education Policy, New York University  
National Center for Schools and Communities, Fordham University  
Joy Dryfoos, Independent Researcher  
National Child Labor Committee  
National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education  
National Youth Employment Coalition  
Parents United for Child Care, Boston MA  
Public Education Network  
RMC Research  
The Finance Project  
The Rural School and Community Trust  
The Summer Learning Association

### **SCHOOL FACILITIES PLANNING**

Concordia, LLC  
Council of Education Facilities Planners International  
National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities  
New Schools / Better Neighborhoods  
Smart Growth America  
21st Century School Fund

### **STATE ENTITIES**

California Center for Community-School Partnerships/Healthy Start Field Office  
California Department of Education  
Child and Family Policy Center  
Community Schools, RI  
Colorado Foundation for Families and Children  
Education Leadership Beyond Excellence  
Foundation Consortium, CA

Illinois Community School Partnership / Voices for Illinois Children  
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation  
New Jersey School-Based Youth Service/Department of Human Services  
Office of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers, Frankfort, KY  
Ohio Department of Education  
State Education and Environment Roundtable  
Tennessee Consortium of Full Service Schools  
Washington State Readiness-To-Learn Initiative

### **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Academy for Educational Development  
AED Center for Youth Development and Policy Research  
America's Promise  
Association of New York State Youth Bureaus  
Big Brothers, Big Sisters  
Boys and Girls Clubs of America  
California Afterschool Partnership/Center for Collaborative Solutions  
Camp Fire USA  
Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund  
National Collaboration for Youth  
National Institute On Out-of-School Time  
National School-Age Care Alliance  
Partnership for After-school Education  
The Forum for Youth Investment  
The Summer Learning Association  
YMCA of the USA