



*Because Every Child Deserves Every Chance*

## Community Schools Across the Nation

### A Sampling of Local Initiatives and National Models

**COMMUNITY SCHOOLS** are alive and growing, serving millions of students across the nation. Today, there are a number of national models and local initiatives that create their own flavor of community school. This brief provides an overview of leading initiatives.

Community schools connect school and community to serve the common good and to achieve these results:

- ▶ Children are **ready to learn** when they enter school and every day thereafter.
- ▶ All children and youth are **engaged in academic experiences** and enriched opportunities that help them see positive futures and achieve to high standards.
- ▶ Students are **healthy—physically, socially, and emotionally**.
- ▶ Youth are **prepared for adult roles** in the workplace, as parents and as citizens.
- ▶ Families and neighborhoods are **safe**, supportive, and engaged.
- ▶ **Parents and community members are involved** with the school and their own life-long learning.
- ▶ Students are **engaged in real-world problem solving** as part of their curriculum and contribute to their communities.

#### How do community schools tap into the community?

Volunteers come to community schools to support student academic, interpersonal, and career success. Before- and after-school programs build on classroom experiences and help students expand their

horizons, contribute civically to their neighborhood, and have fun. Family-support centers at the community school facilitate parent involvement and enrichment classes for adults around topics such as child rearing, employment, housing, and other services. Medical, dental, and mental-health services are readily available. Parents and community residents use the school as a place for community problem solving. Individual schools and the school system work in partnership with community agencies, parents, students, and neighborhood residents to operate these unique institutions, deciding together how to support student learning.

#### What Is A Community School?

A community school is a place and a set of partnerships between the school and community resources. The community school strategy integrates academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and civic engagement to improve student learning and to develop stronger families and healthier communities.

Community schools are centers of the community—open to everyone—all day, every day, evenings, and weekends. Families, local government, higher education institutions, businesses, community-based organizations, and local citizens are all involved.



Learn more about becoming a community school at: [www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)

## LOCAL INITIATIVES

### Chicago Community Schools Initiative

In 2001, when a group of business and philanthropic leaders approached the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) with a proposal to seed new “community school” partnerships through a public/private venture, The Chicago Schools Initiative (CSI) was born. Leaders of the CSI proposed raising private money, backed by matching funds from the district, to expand a pilot program that paired schools with community organizations. These schools emerged as full-service community schools. Today, Arne Duncan, the superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools supports over 150 community schools as part of his strategy to improve outcomes for children. Under the CSI, a school joins with a lead partner agency (LPA) that has at least three years of experience in adult and youth programming. The school’s advisory committee, the school, and the LPA develop a range of voluntary after-school and weekend programming for students, including a mix of sports and recreation, arts and cultural activities, tutoring, and academic enrichment. Programming for adults is included in the form of English as a second language (ESL), career education, nutrition, and parenting classes. Funding is leveraged among the partnership to provide for additional services, including on-site medical and dental care. Read more about CSI at: [www.annenberginstitute.org](http://www.annenberginstitute.org)

### Communities in Schools (CIS)—Houston

CIS—Houston is an affiliate of the national CIS model. It is the only comprehensive, campus-based, dropout-prevention program in Houston that addresses the academic, physical, and emotional needs of at-risk students on a year-round basis. In 2007, nearly 36,000 students received 400,000+ hours of a variety of direct service through CIS, with an average annual cost per student of only \$225. They have achieved a 98 percent stay-in-school rate, a 79 percent graduation rate, and a 90 percent rate of improvement in academics, behavior, and/or attendance. CIS—Houston removes obstacles to learning by providing and coordinating social services directly at the school campus—easing the burden on parents, freeing teachers to teach, and allowing students to learn. Read more at: [www.cishouston.org](http://www.cishouston.org)

### Sayre High School, Philadelphia, PA

Sayre High School is a community school operating in partnership with the Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania. As a community school, Sayre not only has a health clinic and after-school program, but they infuse community issues directly into the curriculum. Through a methodology called *service learning*, teachers and students tap into the community to address health challenges such as lead-based paint, obesity, and hypertension, building awareness that helps the community at large. The university’s facility and its students in medicine, nursing, social work, dentistry, and law assist students and teachers at the community school. All Sayre students are invited to participate in internships at the university. The Netter Center partners with ten other schools in West Philadelphia. Attendance at Sayre is significantly higher than citywide averages. Read more at: [www.upenn.edu/ccp/uacs/university-assisted-community-schools.html](http://www.upenn.edu/ccp/uacs/university-assisted-community-schools.html)

### Schools Uniting Neighborhoods Community Schools

Throughout Multnomah County, 54 Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Community Schools coordinate to provide educational, recreational, social, and health services across six school districts. SUN Community Schools are a collaboration of Multnomah County Department of Human Services, the City of Portland

Parks and Recreation, nonprofits, and local school districts. SUN Community Schools seek to unite the neighborhood by extending the school day and serving as a community “hub.” Extended-day academic and enrichment programs are linked with the school day and include family involvement and strengthening programs; health and social services for students, family, and community members; community events; and adult education classes. Direct services are supported by partnerships with other community institutions, such as libraries, parks and community centers, neighborhood health clinics, and area churches and businesses. SUN Community Schools serve citizens of all ages—from preschoolers to seniors—with a focus on students in the immediate school community. Participating students have shown strong gains in academics, attendance, behavior and youth assets, including gaining confidence in school subjects and teamwork. Learn more about SUN Schools at: [www.sunschools.org](http://www.sunschools.org)



### Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative (TACSI)

The TACSI community school initiative operates in participating neighborhood elementary schools in the Tulsa and Union districts. It is an initiative of Tulsa’s Metropolitan Human Services Commission and is both coordinated and supported by the Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa. The Council, founded in 1941, is a non-profit, citizen-led, United Way agency that provides leadership to help the community work together in identifying and addressing its health and human service needs. TACSI is establishing 12 community schools—six in Tulsa and six in Union. The initiative has a strong health component through a partnership with the Oklahoma University at Tulsa Health Sciences Center. Working groups focus on early childhood, health and health education, mental health and social services, family and community engagement, youth development and out-of-school time, neighborhood development, and life-long learning. Learn more about the Tulsa Area Community Schools at: [www.tacsi.org](http://www.tacsi.org)

### United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley’s Community Partners for Student Success Initiative (COMPASS)

Led by the United Way of the Lehigh Valley’s COMPASS Initiative, schools and their surrounding communities are helping local students prepare to graduate from high school ready to lead meaningful and productive lives. The COMPASS Community Schools Initiative began in 2005 to engage leaders in the business community, medical clinics and linked healthcare services, family centers, preschools and daycares, comprehensive after-school programs, community service programs through local colleges, and more. Serving as an intermediary, COMPASS convenes partners, funds and sustains the process of relationship building, and provides the training and technical assistance needed to develop a results-based community school strategic plan. At present, the regional initiative—involving two counties, three school districts, and five lead partner agencies—spans rural, suburban, and urban communities to serve 11 schools. Data collected provide evidence of improved student behavior, academic performance in reading and math, family health and sustainability, parent involvement, and youth community involvement. Read more about the COMPASS model in this article: [www.communityschools.org/CCSDocuments/community\\_schools\\_the\\_united\\_way.pdf](http://www.communityschools.org/CCSDocuments/community_schools_the_united_way.pdf)

## NATIONAL MODELS

### Beacons Schools

Beacons are school-based community centers located throughout all five boroughs of New York City. Beacons emphasize the view that positive outcomes for youth result from opportunities to develop their talents and potential. In combination with community-wide support services and closer connections between home and school, these opportunities are intended to improve the learning and development of young people. Community-based organizations with expertise in youth and community development lead Beacons at independent schools. Beacon-style community schools have been replicated in San Francisco, Minnesota, Savannah, and Philadelphia. Read more the Beacon model at: [www.fcny.org](http://www.fcny.org)

### Children's Aid Society

The Children's Aid Society (CAS) serves more than 150,000 children and their families at more than 20 schools throughout New York City, in partnership with the Department of Education. CAS schools combine the best educational practices with a wide range of vital in-house health and social services to ensure that children are physically, emotionally, and socially prepared to learn. Open early mornings, afternoons, evenings, weekends, and summers, the school serves as a true center of neighborhood life. It is more than a place where children attend classes. They also receive medical and dental care; speak to a counselor about a problem; stay after school to build reading skills, play chess, work on a computer, take art and music lessons, get help with homework, and practice sports; and attend summer camp. Through its National Technical Assistance Center for Community Schools, the model has been adapted by public schools throughout the U.S. and as far away as Vietnam. Learn more about CAS at: [www.childrensaidsociety.org/communityschools](http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/communityschools)

### Communities in Schools

The Communities in Schools (CIS) model is used by 200 local affiliates in 27 States, reaching over two million young people. CIS is the nation's largest dropout prevention organization, serving to champion the connection of needed community resources with schools to help young people successfully learn, stay in school, and prepare for life. The model focuses on bringing caring adults into schools to address children's unmet needs. CIS provides the link between educators and the community so that teachers are free to teach and students who may be in jeopardy of dropping out have the opportunity to focus on learning. For 30 years, the model has based its work around "Five Basics": 1) A one-on-one relationship with a caring adult, 2) A safe place to learn and grow, 3) A healthy start and a healthy future, 4) A marketable skill to use upon graduation, and 5) A chance to give back to peers and community. To learn more about CIS, please visit: <http://www.cisnet.org/default.asp>



### National Community Education Association

Community education is an educational philosophy "based on the principles of community involvement and lifelong learning, expands the focus to include enhanced educational opportunities for all, structured parent and community involvement, community partnerships in support of education, and increased interagency cooperation." The goal of this philosophy is to create educated communities. National Community Education Association (NCEA) advocates for community education by working with related organizations, at the national, state, and local levels, to promote:

- ▶ Parent and community involvement in public education
- ▶ The formation of community partnerships to address community needs
- ▶ The expansion of lifelong learning opportunities for all community residents.



Numerous rural and suburban school districts have community education programs in place. Learn more about community education at: [www.ncea.com](http://www.ncea.com)

### Schools of the 21st Century

The School of the 21st Century (21C) is a model for school-based child care and family support services. There are currently over 1,300 21C schools across the United States. 21C was conceptualized at the Yale University Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy by Professor Edward Ziegler, one of the architects of the federal Head Start program. This model transforms the traditional school into a year-round, multi-service center providing high-quality, accessible services from early morning to early evening. It also eliminates the distinction between child care and education, recognizing that learning begins at birth and occurs in all settings. The ultimate goal of the 21C model is to help provide affordable, accessible, and high-quality services for all families—regardless of income level—to ensure the optimal development of children. Read more about 21C schools at: [www.yale.edu/21C/index2.html](http://www.yale.edu/21C/index2.html)

### University-Assisted Community Schools

Based out of the University of Pennsylvania, The Netter Center for Community Partnerships, is a national partner in the community schools movement. The University-Assisted Community School Program engages students (K–16+) in real-world, community problem solving that is integrated into the school curriculum as well as through extended day programs. The university community school model has also been replicated nationally. From 1994–2004, 23 colleges and universities participated in the Netter Center's national replication project, through which local sites adapt the university-assisted community school approach, while an additional 75 teams of higher education, community, and school partners have been trained in this model. Many others from across the U.S. and around the world visit the Netter Center to study university-assisted community schools. For more information, please visit: [www.upenn.edu/ccpl/uacs/university-assisted-community-schools.html](http://www.upenn.edu/ccpl/uacs/university-assisted-community-schools.html)

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