



## **Full Service Community Schools Grants** *Case Studies – 2008 and 2010 grantees*

The Full Service Community School (FSCS) grants are efficiently using federal funding to support students and their communities in meaningful ways. Across the country, 64 full service community schools in 21 communities were started by these federal grants. The following cases highlight the impact of the federal grants on the communities.

### **Areas of Impact**

#### **Scaling Up Community Schools Strategy across Communities, Districts and Charter Systems**

- Twelve communities used these federal grants to deepen and scale their community school strategy across multiple school sites.
- School leaders in Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation have created a district-wide community school strategy as a core element to their education agenda.
- The grants have helped charter schools successfully develop and implement strong scaled up and sustainable systems for their community schools. The five charter school sites that benefited in this way from the grant include Green Dot Public Charter Schools, East Austin College Prep Academy Inc., and a network of charter schools in the San Fernando Valley led by Bert Corona Charter School.

#### **Increased Emphasis on Human Capacity and Strong Community Relationships in addressing the need of the Whole Child and their Families**

- For most grantees, the funding helped support human capacity, specifically a community school coordinator, to implement the community schools strategy. The role of the coordinator is crucial in scaling and sustaining the school-community partnerships.
- Grantees are addressing to the unique needs of the whole child and their families within each neighborhood. Grantees such as Green Dot Public Charter Schools are addressing major issues facing the Locke youth through health and mental health services, and the developing Wellness Center. The Wellness Center will provide support services including dance studios and dental clinics.
- For some grantees such as Los Angeles Education Partnerships and Closing the Gap Buffalo, partnerships with the school and community preceded the grants. This prior partnership allowed these grantees to do more and have a greater impact.

#### **Greater Leverage in Blending and Effectively Implementing Federal and State Funding Steams**

- Closing the Gap Buffalo blended both federal and state funding in the expansion of the community schools framework across 10 sites.
- Some grantees such as the Youth Policy Institute and Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation are leveraging other federal funding, such as Promise Neighborhoods grants and School Improvement grants, to integrate and scale the community schools strategy towards school improvement and community development.

## Case Studies

### **Los Angeles Education Partnerships (LAEP) – Los Angeles, CA – 2008**

The Los Angeles Education Partnerships (LAEP) had already started convening community partners to implement community schools before receiving the FSCS grant in 2008. The grant not only helped gather enough money for a school site expansion but also grew this vision by expanding to other school sites.

The grant was directed to build human capacity, so that no money was allocated to programs. Partnerships were required to use existing resources for programs for efficiency and sustainability. It allowed for shared investments and accountability that increased the quality of services. Since there was no increase in the number of programs and services, coordinators were also forced to use the resources and partners more effectively.

The FSCS grant gave the initiative five years of stable funding that helped create consistency in the work and provided enough time to build school leaders, policymakers, and communities as champions. Local schools, including superintendents and principals, started reevaluating their own budgets to build in funding for coordinating staff and an overarching community schools strategy akin to the work of LAEP.

Since 2008, LAEP has expanded its community school strategy to nine schools, six more schools than those included in the initial grant. LAEP plan to expand the strategy into one more school through the School Improvement grants where the cost of the coordinator is funded partly through Title I funds. The initiative continues to play a crucial role is starting the conversation around state and local policies that may support effective implementation and broaden the reach of the community schools.

### **Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation – Evansville, IN – 2010**

The Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) in Indiana uses the community school strategy as a district-wide strategy. EVSC decided to "grow" the successful local Cedar Hall Elementary School full-service school model into other district schools. EVSC's mission is to establish school sites as centers of community in order to support successful youth and family development and to provide equity and excellence for all students. Over 70 community agencies now sit at the table. They are working together to find creative ways to support children and families in the community at the school site.

The district reorganized its structure to integrate the community schools as a core component to the district's strategy. EVSC, led by an Associate Superintendent for Family, School and Community Partnership and supported by a Director of full service community schools, coordinates the work of all the partners and its teams, keeping the school district connected to the community's needs and resources, braiding together funding streams, and coordinating the work of partners.

The community schools strategy is also integrated into other federal funding sources, including the school improvement grants. One of Evansville's most robust community schools, Glenwood Leadership Academy, uses SIG funding to help bring about practices and supports that pave the way for stronger student achievement and a more positive school climate. At Glenwood Leadership Academy, SIG helps pay for the community school coordinator, the startup costs at the school's health clinic, equipment and supplies for the school's community garden, evening computer and leadership classes for adults, a digital marquis that advertises school and community news, reading tutorials, and a restorative practices program.



### **Closing the Gap in School Performance Consortium (CTG) – Buffalo, NY – 2008**

Closing the Gap (CTG) is a highly successful full-service community school strategy that improves the academic success of students in Buffalo Public Schools by addressing non-academic barriers to learning. CTG has been at the forefront of the community schools movement since first implementing the strategy in six of the Buffalo Public School District's lowest performing schools in 2003. Since then, the 2008 FSCS grants helped with the expansion of the initiative by transforming two additional schools using the community schools strategy.

CTG has expanded the community schools framework to an additional ten schools by braiding different funding sources that include partnerships with Buffalo Promise Zones, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, and Perry Choice Neighborhood. Buffalo's local collaborative efforts, including CTG, are bound together by a collaborative platform called Say Yes Buffalo. Say Yes Buffalo, along with their local counterparts, hope to create a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated system of supports for BPS students and families. Closing the Gap is providing the framework for school-based support coordination, integration, delivery and accountability. Based on this framework, they aim to roll out support services within all 58 Buffalo Public Schools over the next four years.

### **Green Dot Public Schools – Los Angeles, CA – 2010**

The Locke Full-Service Community Schools Collaboration received a FSCS grant in 2010 for five Locke schools, primarily in the Watts neighborhood. However, the community schools strategy was introduced to them two years before receiving the grant.

Green Dot is currently in the third year of their FSCS grants. The FSCS grants funded management and capacity geared towards improving school climate, boosting their work around addressing the needs of the whole child. Specific programs that Green Dot has helped develop to address school climate include workshops on teen dating violence prevention and on STDs and teacher professional development on conflict resolution to improve school discipline practices, among others. Green Dot school facilities are kept open until at least 5:00p.m. daily to provide students with safe, enriching after school programs and to allow community groups offering quality services to use the facilities. Keeping schools open later accommodates the schedules of working families, and allowing community groups to use school facilities helps ensure that the local neighborhood takes ownership and responsibility for the school.

The impetus for the community school strategy was collaboration between Green Dot and Los Angeles Unified School District to build a Wellness Center for the Locke community. The Center would address major issues facing the Locke youth including gang and gun violence, and health and mental health services. The Wellness Center would not be located on the Locke High School campus, but only 25 feet away – across the street. It would provide students and their families with socio-emotional supports, a health and dental clinic, nutrition, preventative health, and a dance studio. The Wellness Center is currently in development, and is expected to fulfill many heretofore unmet needs of the community.

Green Dot serves over 10,000 students across 18 schools in Los Angeles, and the community schools work has garnered interest across all schools. In addition to applying for a Promise Neighborhood Grant to help sustain their existing community schools, Green Dot had hoped to expand its work to all their schools. Amino Leadership, the lead applicant for the Green Dot consortium of Local Education Agencies (LEAs), was selected as one of 61 finalists in the U.S. Department of Education's for Race to the Top District competition. Their competitive preference priority was based on Green Dot's successful implementation of the FSCS's school site-based wraparound service model to all participating schools.



### **Youth Policy Institute – Los Angeles, CA – 2008**

Youth Policy Institute (YPI) runs two programs with Full Service Community School grants. Belmont and San Fernando Valley use YPI's saturation services model within the two Los Angeles Promise Neighborhoods where they work. In 2008, YPI received FSCS grants for Belmont FSCS in Pico Union/Westlake. With this grant, Belmont partners with Los Angeles Unified School District in four public schools and one charter school. Starting in 2010, YPI supported five of Bert Corona's charter schools in implementing their FSCS grants.

Based on YPI's experience in providing saturation services in a place-based model for youth and families through initiatives such as Belmont and San Fernando Valley Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) programs, they received a Promise Neighborhood implementation grant in 2012. The grant is aimed at scaling up the community schools strategy to 19 neighborhood schools, while opening six Promise Neighborhood Centers and dozens of satellite centers. Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP), also a grantee of the FSCS program, partner with YPI in Los Angeles.

### **Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center – Indianapolis, IN – 2008**

In 2008, the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center, lead partner for George Washington Community High School (GWCHS) on the Indianapolis Near Westside, received \$2.4 million to focus on a community school high school.

The five-year grant helped deepen the school-community partnerships and supports within one school site by providing funding for a school/community director who works with now more than 70 local organizations to ensure that student and community needs are met. The grant also helped support human capacity through expanding extended learning opportunities and family engagement, key elements of the community schools strategy. The consistency of the grant also helped garner financial buy in for deeper support from Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis. In 2011 the University of Pennsylvania Netter Center for Community Partnerships named IUPUI as a replication site called the Midwest Center for University-Assisted Community Schools. Based on the campus experience with George Washington Community High School and the focus of a 2013 Peabody Journal of Education article, the Center provides technical assistance, training, and assessment services for school communities interested in university engagement throughout the Midwest and beyond.

Since the grant's inception, GWCHS has seen: an increase in graduation rates, 100% college acceptance, 95% of students are receiving at least one support service, and parent engagement doubled in two years. Mary Riggs has now started working with three of the four feeder schools to provide technical assistance for other schools that are establishing the community schools strategy.

Also since receiving the grant in 2008, the school has faced official "school turnaround," the third time in the past decade a significant portion of the faculty was replaced. Simply put, according to Community School Director Jim Grim, "the stability in our school-community are the partners rather than our teachers."

The community school work at GWCHS started much earlier. In 2000, the previously closed high school was reopened as a full-service community school, and received the inaugural National Community School Award for Excellence from the Coalition for Community Schools in 2006. In addition, three recent doctoral dissertations have focused on the George Washington community school experience.



### **Ogden City Schools – Ogden, UT – 2008**

Similar to Mary Riggs, Ogden City Schools received a federal grant to implement the community schools strategy in one school, Mound Fort Middle School. The federal grant provided a backbone and a concrete vision for the community schools strategy at Mound Fort.

Like many grantees, the grant helped provide management support, i.e. a community school coordinator, project manager, and part-time liaison. The coordination reaped support from partners, including institutions of higher education, to provide mental health services, contracted-out summer programming and math tutoring, adult education, and Head Start programs. Since the grant, Mound Fort has improved significantly, moving up the ranks from a low performing to high performing middle school in the state of Utah.

The FSCS grants helped start conversations and garner local support from the United Ways, universities, and other partners to come together. It helped formed a collaborative platform called Ogden United that aimed to create systemic change across Ogden. It has helped scale the community schools strategy to four other schools, supported by the YMCA. Ogden United will help sustain the strategy across multiple schools.

### **Recommendations to Improve FSCS Federal Grant**

As a result of conversations with grantees, the Coalition suggests the Department consider implementing the following, to improve the FSCS federal program in the future:

- Increasing flexibility in the relationship between the grantees and the Department, specifically in negotiating objectives and results. Community schools' sustainability depends on an organic process that allows for collaborative leadership teams of school leaders, community partners, families and others, to determine a common vision and accountability system.
- Creating different levels of funding and flexibilities for levels of implementation of the community school strategy. Community schools that are starting up or scaling up for a various number of years have different priorities, funding requirements, and expected outcomes.
- Requiring grantees to match funds, through grants or in kind from community partners to secure buy in and sustainability of the strategy.
- Requiring longer planning periods to garner and develop strong community relationships and partnerships to support the sustainability of the work.
- Integrating FSCS language into all aspects of the school (e.g., engaged instruction, learning time and opportunities, climate). The FSCS federal program should reflect the alignment between addressing the academic and social-emotional needs of a child. This language should be replicated in all other federal programs, including school improvement grants.
- Requiring grantees to be supported by learning communities, such as the networks supported by the Coalition for Community Schools, as well as existing regional or state community school networks. Grantees such as the Los Angeles Education Partnership, Ogden City Schools, Rhode Island Community Schools Program, George Washington Community School, Boston Public Schools and Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation are already supported by these networks.