National Call to Action: Make the Case for Community Schools

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May 2011
Webinar Agenda

- Current Policy Landscape
- CS Advocacy 101: Prep for June 16th!!!
- Next steps
Why Community schools?
What Matters Beyond School?

- Low birth-weight and non-genetic prenatal influences on children;
- Inadequate medical, dental, and vision care;
- Food insecurity;
- Environmental pollutants;
- Family relations and family stress; and
- Neighborhood characteristics

"Could someone help me with these? I’m late for math class."
What we Know: Conditions for Learning

- Early childhood development programs nurture learning and development
- The school has an engaging core curriculum with high standards, qualified teachers, challenging learning experiences, and high expectations
- Students are motivated and engaged
- Physical, social, and emotional needs are met for youth and families
- Collaboration and mutual respect between families and schools staff
- Community is engaged with the school
Community School: The Vehicle

- A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. It provides academics, health and social services, early childhood development, 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 help students succeed and strengthen families and communities.
Current Policy Landscape
Budget / Appropriations for FY 2012

- $1.8 billion to support comprehensive services, safe school climates, student health and well-being, **full-service community schools**, and expanded school schedules to accommodate both additional learning opportunities and access to comprehensive services outside the traditional school day.
  - Promise Neighborhoods $150m
  - Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students $360m
  - 21st Century Community Learning Centers $1.3b ($100m increase)
  - **Includes Full Service Community Schools**
Appropriations Timeline

- Appropriations subcommittees began hearings (April/May)
- Work on legislation:
  - Subcommittees, then committees mark up various appropriations bills (May/June/July)
- Full House/Senate vote on House/Senate versions of bills
- Conference – House and Senate work out differences, issue conference report
- House and Senate each must vote on conference report (Sept. 30th end of FY2011)
- President signs bill
Community School Advocacy 101
Definition: Advocacy

Advocacy is...
...undertaken to drive change.
...something we all engage in everyday.
...multi-layered, multi-faceted, nuanced.
...the act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy.
Advocacy Basics – What is it?

- Advocacy is sharing your point of view and ideas with legislators with the goal of generating their support for your work
- We all advocate everyday – “that’s not a ham sandwich...”
- It’s an ongoing process
Advocacy Basics – Why do it?

• Why advocate?
  ◦ Legislators and policymakers need to know what works in their communities and how they can support your work
  ◦ Legislators and staffers can’t be everywhere, all the time – sharing information with them helps them do their jobs
  ◦ Generate support (policy change, funding) for our work
Advocacy Basics – How?

- What do policymakers need to hear from us?
  - Impact stories –
    - How has your community school changed outcomes for a student? His/her family?
    - This can be especially powerful coming from the student or family – in person, via a letter
    - Qualitative change
  - Data and outcomes –
    - “Concrete” impacts
    - Data on changes in academic achievement, health indicators, etc.
    - Or...plans you have for evaluating your community school work.
  - Your ASK – what kind of specific support do you want your legislator to provide?
Community School Advocacy

• Schedule your June 16th Visit!
• Register for Advocacy Day!
• Planning your visit –
  ◦ **Who attends the meeting?**
    • You might only be able to have 2-3 people attend the meeting (House offices can usually accommodate 3-4 people; Senate offices, 4-5)
    • If possible, it’s great to bring a student or parent to share his/her story first-hand
    • Everyone should have a role/a time to speak
Community School Advocacy

• What materials should be provided?
  ◦ Materials should be clear, concise, and short, and personalized – use examples from your communities/your legislator’s district
  ◦ One-or-two pager on your community school initiative, including summary of key data points/outcomes
  ◦ Information about your “ask” – overview of relevant legislation with a request to support it, specific language around ESEA reauthorization and community schools
  ◦ For more information...information about where and how a staffer can learn more and contact you
**Community School Advocacy**

- **Conduct your visit** –
  - Identify key messages and who will share them; tailor your points to each person’s strengths in sharing the community school story
  - Understand that you may only have a limited time – keep your messages concise and to-the-point, continuously underscore the importance of community schools in your legislators’ districts
  - “2-minute elevator pitch” – if you had two minutes in an elevator with someone, what would you want to be sure they know about your work?
  - **What is your ask, and who will make the ask?**

- ESEA reauthorization
- Community school legislation
Making Your Ask

• The goal of a meeting with your legislator is for him/her to take specific action on the issue you discussed
• The specific action is your “ask”
• Your ask should be:
  ◦ Clear
  ◦ Concrete
  ◦ Specific
  ◦ “Actionable” – instead of “please support community schools....” the ask could be “please support community schools by ensuring that the relevant legislation is incorporated into ESEA reauthorization”
What is our “ask”?
Appropriations Asks

- Continue distinct funding stream for community schools
  - The Full Service Community Schools Act
  - Congress initiated this program with a $4.91 million appropriation in 2008.
ESEA Reauthorization

- President’s FY2012 Budget proposal and Department of Education Blueprint
  - Full Service Community Schools will be funded under the 21st CCLC bucket
  - Eliminates formula funding to states
- House Education & Workforce Committee
  - Individual bills. Just starting process.
- Senate HELP Committee
  - Writing bill. Expecting bill in coming weeks/months.
ESEA Asks

- Embed community school principles:
  - Require Comprehensive Accountability Frameworks
  - Provide incentives for results driven public/private partnerships
  - Enable Community–School Coordination
  - Promote Family and Youth Engagement
  - Ensure Effective Professional Development
  - Support Capacity- Building
  - Align and Coordinate the Department of Education and Other Federal Agency Resources

- Include community schools as a 5th intervention strategy
  - Supporting Community Schools Act of 2011 (Senate Bill 616), amends part A of Title I of ESEA to authorize local LEAs to use school improvement funds to transform schools identified as needing improvement, corrective action, or restructuring into community schools.
Co-Sponsor Legislation

- Full Service Community Schools Act of 2011
  - Senator Nelson (D-NE)
  - Senator Cochran (R-MS)
  - Representative Hoyer (D-MD)

- DIPLOMA Act of 2011
  - Senator Sanders (I-VT)
  - Senator Mikulski (D-MD)
  - Senator Brown (D-OH)
  - Representative Chu (D-CA) – has not re-introduced yet

- Supporting Community Schools Act of 2011
  - Senator Sanders (I-VT), Senator Mikulski (D-MD), Senator Brown (D-OH)
Things to Keep in Mind

- Appoint someone on your team to take notes
- Plan the anecdotes you will share and gather any supplementary information
- Anticipate questions that a staffer might ask and plan how you will respond
- It’s OK to say you don’t have an answer for a question – say that you’ll follow up with an answer and additional information
- They represent you – be polite, but not intimidated
- You are the expert on the community school model and the work you’re sharing
- You may have as little as 15 minutes to share your story and make your ask – plan accordingly; keep track of time to ensure you can cover all of your messages
- Get business cards from any staff members in the meeting

Follow up the meeting with a thank you and an invitation to visit your schools and see your programs in action
Know Your Legislator

- In advance of the meeting, learn about your member’s background:
  - Party affiliation – know what messages will resonate with your legislator based on his/her party
  - Understand your legislator’s position on different education-related issues and frame your messaging accordingly
  - Committee assignments and any key roles on committees
  - Pre-politics career – what role did your legislator play in your community?
  - Areas of interest – what kinds of legislation has s/he championed in the past? Is it relevant to community schools?
  - Has s/he signed on to community school legislation? If so, THANK him/her for the support
  - Tailor your messaging accordingly – if your legislator has already signed on to community school legislation, remove that from your ask
Stage Fright...

- Keep in mind your key messages and your ask – practicing them in advance will help with this
- By sharing your story, you are helping a legislator and his/her staff do their jobs and understand what’s important in his/her community
- You are the “expert in the room” and have great information to share about community schools and your work
- Keep it simple – this is the first step in building a relationship with your legislator; you will have opportunities to follow up with additional information
What’s Worked in Illinois

- Visits to Springfield/Hill days
- “Smart calls” time around specific initiatives or issues (i.e., a call-in day in support of HB 684)
- In-district visits
- Postcards, letters from stakeholders
- Consistent, frequent communications with legislators – building relationships, developing champions
Next steps...
Next steps after your visit...

- Schedule In-district site visits
- Conduct Letter writing, postcard and phone campaigns to your Members of Congress
- Hold a “Day of Awareness” – multiple activities concurrently
- Add Capitol Hill staffers on your mailing lists (newsletters, event announcements)
- Share information through multiple channels
If You Can’t Get to DC…

- Schedule In-district site visits for June 16th
- Make your “ask” over the telephone! Call your district and D.C. offices
- Coalition will be sending out Advocacy Materials – also look for on their website.
Contact Info

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