Community Schools are not new in New York State, but implementation of the strategy to help improve schools and provide enriching opportunities for students, has been growing all across the state. Building upon the work of Coalition for Community School’s partners such as The Children’s Aid Society, Beacons, Say Yes to Education and Harlem Children’s Zone, in January 2013, Governor Cuomo established a new Education Reform Commission that recommended community schools as a strategy to help strengthen the academic pipeline from pre-kindergarten through college in some of New York’s neediest neighborhoods. The New York State Education Department, in conjunction with the Governor and the Council on Children and Families, has released a RFP for a $15 million community schools competitive grant.

We are very pleased to see continued momentum at the state level for policies and funding that are supportive of community schools. Below are brief descriptions of the community school work happening with Coalition partners all across New York State:

**Community Schools Grow in New York State**

**Momentum for Community Schools Grows in New York City**

Union and District Administrators Unite to Open Community Schools

Early this year, Partnership for New York City (a network of the city’s top CEOs), the City Council, and the teachers’ union (UFT) collaborated to launch a pilot grant program to open six community. The program gave $60,000 to each of the six schools to allow those schools to construct community partnerships that will provide services tailored to the needs of the school and surrounding population. The six schools will work in partnership with the Children’s Aid Society.

More recently, the Union’s Community Learning Schools Initiative received a $700,000 grant from the New York State Senate that will help fund 16 community schools this year. Click here to read more.

**Cincinnati’s Community Schools are a Model for New York Schools in Mayoral Race**

In the city’s recent Mayoral race, Cincinnati’s community schools were a model for education reform agendas for democratic candidates, such as Christine Quinn and now primary winner Bill de Blasio (see article by the New York Times). In a letter to the editor also published in The New York Times, Natasha Capers, a parent leader and spokeswoman for A+ NYC, offered the PS 2013 Education Roadmap that highlights community schools as a plan for the city schools.

The movement in New York City has been significantly influenced and inspired by Coalition partners such as the Children’s Aid Society, Harlem Children’s Zone, and Beacon Schools.

**Children’s Aid Society**

The Children’s Aid Society (CAS) currently operates 21 community schools in New York City. These community schools are the result of partnerships between CAS, the New York City Board of Education, the school district and community based partners. CAS, through its National Technical Assistance Center, also offers training and guidance in all aspects of designing and implementing the CAS community school model to suit the unique needs and strengths of individual communities.
Resources from CAS

- Building a Community School: A Guide for Action
- Measuring Social Return on Investment for Community Schools: A Practical Guide and Case Study
- Community Schools in Action: Lessons from a Decade of Progress

Harlem Children's Zone

Launched in 2001, the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) combines educational, social, and medical services to improve outcomes for low-income children in seven public elementary schools, and two charter schools. The Administration’s federal Promise Neighborhood grants are modeled after the HCZ strategy. The community schools strategy is a vehicle for a successful Promise Neighborhood strategy. Beacon Schools (see below) are the center of HCZ in New York.

Beacon Schools - Youth Development Institute

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. Beacons have been replicated in San Francisco, Minnesota, Savannah, and Philadelphia.

Movement beyond New York City – Buffalo and Syracuse

Say Yes to Education

In both Buffalo and Syracuse, Say Yes to Education brings together public-private partnership, to organize people, time, money, and resources to provide holistic, year-round support to students throughout their K-12 years and beyond.

In Buffalo, Closing the Gap in School Performance Consortium (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. Starting with six of Buffalo’s lowest performing schools in 2003, the initiative expanded to include two additional schools in 2008 with funding support from the U.S. Department of Education. Closing the Gap has partnered with other place-based strategies to implement the community schools framework in expanding ten additional schools.