Community Schools National Awards for Excellence 2013

Because Every Child Deserves Every Chance
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What Is A Community School?

Community Schools are Smart Schools

Using public schools as hubs, community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities. Partners work to achieve these results: children are ready to enter school; students attend school consistently; students are actively involved in learning and their community; families are increasingly involved with their children’s education; schools are engaged with families and communities; students succeed academically; students are healthy - physically, socially, and emotionally; students live and learn in a safe, supportive, and stable environment, and communities are desirable places to live.

Strategic Alignment

Just like smart phones, community schools have an infrastructure or operating system that strategically aligns ‘apps’ so they work in a synchronized manner. A school-site leadership team, often comprised of educators, parents, community partners, and others, is responsible for creating a shared vision for the school, identifying desired results and helping align and integrate the work of partners with the school. A community school coordinator works hand-in-hand with a supportive principal, and is a member of the school leadership team. The coordinator is responsible for building relationships with school staff and community partners, for engaging the families and community residents, and coordinating an efficient delivery of supports to students both inside and outside the classroom. Data on cognitive, social, emotional, and physical factors, as well as family and community circumstances, drive the work for a community school.

About the Community Schools National Awards for Excellence

To highlight the effectiveness and efficiency of community schools and to recognize the excellent work going on around the country, the Coalition for Community Schools established a national awards program. This year’s program sought individual Community Schools and Community School Initiatives that have been operating for at least three years, are public schools and districts, and have demonstrated success. Three individual schools and two initiatives have been recognized.

This year’s winners of the National Awards for Excellence were judged on the strength of their partnerships, their ability to align services with the school’s or district’s core mission, their engagement families and the community, creation of sustainable policy and finance structures, and highlighting exceptional outcomes resulting from the execution of this work.

All awardees have demonstrated an outstanding ability to bring all of these functions of community schools work—branches of the “smart school apps”—together to leverage each to create an excellent conditions for learning.
The Coalition for Community Schools understands that attaining better results for all children means finding ways to organize multiple like-minded stakeholders. This year’s winning community schools—Harmon Johnson Elementary School, Hillcrest Elementary School, and Roosevelt Elementary School—and community initiatives—Cincinnati Community Learning Centers and Hartford Community Schools—are doing just that. Their focus on creating opportunities for children and engaging families and the community, and their wonderful partnerships, are a testament to the dedication they have for their students, their schools, and to their communities. These local leaders are pursuing an equity agenda that is needed for all our schools.

These community schools and initiatives exemplify one of the Coalition’s core beliefs: schools, communities, and families are inextricably connected and must work closely together for the benefit of every child.

These schools and communities share a common vision for how deep and purposeful partnerships can be well-integrated in the life of the school. They recognize the importance of building strong families and communities around the school and have learned how to sustain their work by leveraging the resources of the entire community. They know that our most vulnerable young people deserve the same opportunities available to their more affluent peers; they know that equity matters. Most importantly, these community schools are seeing results for all students.

- **Harmon Johnson Elementary School** is empowering parents. Parents at Harmon Johnson convinced the school district not to permanently close their school, and in addition to invest $1.4 million for improvements, while spearheading the provision of widely-used health, mental health, and dental services at the school. As a community school, Harmon Johnson had the highest 3-year Academic Performance Index growth of any elementary school in its district.

- **Hillcrest Elementary School** not only increased students’ scores by 11% in both English Language Arts and Math over the last two years, but also created a culture of shared ownership that makes it an increasingly more desirable school in the community. Behavior and discipline have improved significantly and parent participation in teacher conferences has increased by 40% over the past five years.

- **Roosevelt Elementary School** and its community partners have been successful in providing opportunities and supports that increased the number of students performing at proficient or advanced levels in state reading and math tests. Roosevelt has also been able to create a nurturing environment that has increased parent participation and volunteering.

- **Cincinnati Community Learning Centers** have been an important force behind the remarkable academic achievement and civic growth underway in Cincinnati. Cincinnati Public Schools and community agencies and organizations across the health, mental health, college and career, youth development, and other sectors have been committed to establishing a shared vision and strategy to help students succeed.

- **Hartford Community Schools** have been successful in raising math and reading test scores of its students. Hartford’s community schools have also increased student participation and attendance in school activities, and fostered greater community participation and parental involvement. The effectiveness of Hartford Community Schools is particularly remarkable given the economic challenges facing families and neighborhoods in Hartford.

We congratulate the winners, their school systems, and their communities. And we applaud the other applicants for this year’s awards and the many other school and community leaders working together to develop community schools. They are beacons to everyone seeking better outcomes for our vulnerable children and youth. They represent the best of what our society can do when schools and their communities work together.
salutes the 2013 National Community Schools Award for Excellence winners

Casey is a proud supporter of two-generation education strategies that promote family economic success.
Awardee Profiles

School Awardees

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When the Twin Rivers Unified School District took steps to close Harmon Johnson Elementary School three years ago because it was located next to a natural gas storage facility, parents petitioned the school board to keep their students together instead of dispersing them to other schools in the district.

Even though the school was involved in some community school work as part of a state-funded Healthy Start grant, it was this event “that really became the lightning rod that brought the parents together,” says David Nevarez, the principal of Johnson Elementary.

Ultimately, district officials listened to the parents and spent $1.4 million to renovate a nearby campus for the new site. Thus Harmon Jonson 2.0 was born. Because the new site was next to the existing Noralto Elementary School, the two principals along with district staff decided Noralto would serve pre-K-2nd grade and Johnson would have 3rd-6th grade. With a junior high school also nearby, Mr. Nevarez says, “We have lots to build a community around.” Parents even helped teachers pack up and move into the new school over the winter break.

With years of experience in overseeing Healthy Start grants in California, Mr. Nevarez is building upon his prior knowledge to create a thriving community school environment for students, parents and partners in a challenging neighborhood.

Located north of downtown Sacramento in what Nevarez describes as a “gang and drug infested” area, Johnson is becoming a safe and welcoming haven for students and families. Parents and other community activists are lobbying to close down an apartment complex that is viewed as unsafe, and parent leaders are participating in a neighborhood watch program in which they receive training from local police officers.

Parents Help Set Priorities

Each month Johnson and Noralto co-host a “parent-education hour.” At the beginning of each school year, the gathering, which includes parents from both sites, is used to conduct a structured and interactive need assessment process in which parents respond to questions such as:

- Location: Sacramento, CA
- School District: Twin Rivers Unified School District
- Website: johnson.twinriversusd.org
- Grade Levels: 3 – 6
- Number of Students: 580
- Race/Ethnicity
  - Asian/Pacific Islander – 10%
  - Black/African American – 9%
  - Hispanic/Latino – 65%
  - White/Caucasian – 6%
  - Other – 10%
- ELL Students: 69%
- Special Education: 9%
- Free/Reduced Lunch: 97%
- Student Mobility Rate: 24%

Who’s Who

- David Nevarez, Principal
- Terry Press-Dawson, Harmon Johnson Healthy Start Grant Coordinator
What do we need to do in order for your children to be career and college ready? What do we need to do to create a school environment that is positive? What do we need to do to increase student achievement? The responses are collected and sorted. At the end of the year, the parents return to rate how they think the school did on responding to their requests and the data is displayed on a pie chart.

“Immediately, we see how we have done,” Mr. Nevarez says. “It’s a way to hold ourselves accountable. It’s very transparent.”

The parents’ responses last year were organized into major categories, such as English-as-a-second-language classes, GED classes, improved security and healthier school food options.

That list then drives how the school’s Healthy Start collaborative—a committee of community members, parents, and school and district personnel—determines which partners to invite into the school. Terry Press-Dawson, the Healthy Start and community school coordinator, works with Mr. Nevarez to create and maintain those partnerships.

In addition to the collaborative, subcommittees often spin off to work on specific concerns or projects, such as the development of the neighborhood watch program and an expanding community garden.

What do we need to do… for your children to be career and college ready? … To create a school environment that is positive? … To increase student achievement?

Creating Strong Partnerships

Some of the school’s strongest partners are local university students, such as University of California, Davis students, who are gaining experience by tutoring and mentoring Johnson’s youth. Mr. Nevarez never stops trying to cultivate these partnerships himself. During a recent stop at a store in Davis, the town where he lives, he noticed some Asian college students running a car wash. Learning that they were from the Hmong University Student Union, he discovered they had a chapter at California State University, Sacramento. He called the chapter and asked if they would be interested in mentoring students at Johnson, which has a large Hmong population.

A professor at CSUS, who teaches an introductory education course for students possibly interested in becoming teachers, also sends her students to tutor Johnson students in reading. The school also serves as a placement for interns who are earning their master’s degrees in family therapy since Mr. Press-Dawson is licensed to provide supervision. The engineering program sends students to help in the afterschool STEM program.

In another innovative partnership, the University of

Results

Among Students

• 100% participation in daily nutritional snacks and education program
• 60% volunteerism in garden project
• 95% of third graders involved in intensive dental intervention program
• 30% involvement in school-based mental health services
• 45 point gain in school-wide API in past year; 3-year gain of 71 points

Among Families

• 500% increase in parent volunteerism in past 7 years
• 98% of families have health insurance, due to bi-annual health-coverage drives
the Pacific brought its experimental Virtual Dental Home Project to Johnson, linking specially trained dental hygienists with off-site dentists to provide preventative dental care and intervention services. The program helps students develop a positive outlook toward dental visits and keeps them from having to miss school for routine check-ups. Parents also learn to navigate dental services for their children and overcome barriers that might stand in the way of their children receiving the care they need.

A member of the local chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. leads a Youth Aviation Academy class for gifted and talented students, putting them on a track to earn a pilot’s license at age 15. The class also introduces students to the variety of careers in aviation and meets the nonprofit’s goals of reaching low-income students, girls and minority youths.

In addition to fighting to keep Johnston students together and improve conditions within the neighborhood, the school’s parents are also taking an active role in other areas as well. Over the past seven years, the parent volunteer rate has increased dramatically. Parents serve as bilingual instructors in parenting education classes and nutrition and cooking classes. They also assist cafeteria workers—a responsibility that is often assigned to older students in some schools, Mr. Nevarez says. At Johnson, the parents didn’t want students missing instructional time to work in the cafeteria. The involvement of parents at Johnson recently drew attention when the Sierra Health Foundation held a forum at the school to learn more about positive parental involvement in the highest-poverty area of Sacramento. Parents also advocate for Johnson before the school board, arguing, for example, for the district to maintain funding for parent education programs. “Parents have helped us move to the next step,” Mr. Nevarez says.

Vulcan Materials Company, the school’s business partner since 2006, rewards students who excel with incentives, such as NBA tickets and supports the curriculum through, for example, a field trip to a mining company, which connects to three grade-level topics in 4th grade—large corporations, geology and career opportunities. The company provides financial support for soccer team uniforms and school uniforms when families can’t afford them. Employees and Johnson parents also jointly organize food drives, blood drives and bone marrow registration.

“We are very proud to be a partner with Harmon Johnson,” says Lucinda Powell, a district sales manager at Vulcan. “I think the community school model instills a sense of pride in our school and shows what we can achieve when we all work together. [Parents] are involved in making decisions and fighting for what they believe in. They are seeing that they can influence what kind of school and community they want to have.”

While Johnson’s community school programs receive a lot of in-kind donations, Mr. Nevarez is now planning for future financial support for the services provided to students since the Healthy Start grant funding will soon run out. One option is for the virtual dental care services—and other health and wellness services—to be reimbursed by Medi-Cal funding, California’s Medicaid program. Mr. Press-Dawson is also seeking additional state and federal funding.
Dispelling Myths

Johnson’s teachers, Mr. Nevarez says, often don’t see the work being done to provide health care and other support services to their students. But they have been “innovative and driven” participants in providing students with additional academic support.

Teachers designed one program, called What I Need (WIN), that helps students focus on improving in specific areas. Each week, students take a formative assessment on state standards. If they don’t pass, they receive an additional 30 minutes of instruction on those standards. If they don’t pass again, they stay after school for more help from their teachers.

Last year, Harmon Johnson’s Academic Performance Index—an overall measure of student achievement ranging from 200 to 1,000—increased 45 points to 780. Over the past three years, the school’s score has increased 71 points, the largest gain of all the schools in the district. Increasing daily attendance has also been a high priority, and this year the attendance rate has climbed to almost 98 percent.

“I work very hard to dispel the myth that these kids can’t learn because of... outside influences... If you get the help you need, you are able to focus on instruction”
—D. Nevarez, Principal

“I work very hard to dispel the myth that these kids can’t learn because of those outside influences,” said Mr. Nevarez. “There aren’t a lot of school administrators that want to take the time to do this, but if you get the help you need, you are able to focus on instruction.” By removing some of the obstacles that confront our students we are able to close the achievement gap. But this is not a zero sum scenario in which raising student achievement for one group comes at the expense of another. We have high expectations for all students. Teachers incorporate many high-yield strategies with students. By far the most powerful strategy is building strong relationships with students, parents and the community.”

Partners

Always Growing Foundation • California State University Sacramento (READERS Tutoring, Student Multicultural Club, Hmong University Student Association, Writers’ Project, Brandman-Chapman MFT Program, National University MFT and MS in Counseling Programs) • Children’s Choice Pediatric Dental Care • City Council Member (District 2) • Cover the Kids—Sacramento Children’s Health Initiative • Cycle of Success • Department of Health and Human Services (Dental Health Program) • Department of Human Assistance • Department of Transportation • Health Education Council • Health Net • Healthy Eating Partnership • Mutual Assistance Network • Parks and Recreation • Police (North Substation) • Prevention Institute • Roberts Family Development Center • Sac Area Sports • Sacramento Children’s Home (North Sacramento Family Resource Center Site) • Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services • St. Paul Church of God in Christ • Stanford Settlement • Students Today Achieving Results for Tomorrow After School Program • Terkensha Counseling • Tuskegee Airmen • Ubuntu Green • University of California, Davis CRESS Center • University of California San Francisco • University of Pacific • University of Phoenix MFT Program • Vulcan Materials Company • Women Escaping a Violent Environment
When Principal Richard Zapien and Community School Coordinator Stefanie Eldred first arrived at Hillcrest Elementary almost a decade ago, she was the Parent Liaison, and he was the Instructional Reform Facilitator. They encountered animosity between teachers and students, fights breaking out on the playground, and no community partners willing to get involved in such a contentious environment.

“Services can’t be delivered effectively when there is no stability,” says Eldred. So she and the then-principal made improving school climate their top priority—first by building stronger relationships with families in this diverse, southeast San Francisco neighborhood. Other key focal areas were providing professional development for teachers and interventions and support services for students. They knew these changes would translate into better behavior and engagement in the classroom. Eldred explains, “As much as this was about the kids, the teachers were the primary focus of our work when we started. We wanted to help teachers get what they needed to feel supported and to be able to focus on quality and innovative instruction. Without the buy-in of classroom teachers, a community school can only go so far.”

Today, Hillcrest’s climate is far more stable, inviting, and inclusive than it was 10 years ago. Rather than fighting on a regular basis, students are now better equipped to solve their own problems. Teachers lead daily community-building activities in their classrooms that help support a healthy climate, and there is a robust focus on professional development to help teachers meet the needs of their students.

Hillcrest serves 460 students in kindergarten through fifth grades. 90% qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, 65% are English Language Learners, and 16% have special needs. Hillcrest has a wonderfully diverse student body that is 43% Latino, 25% Chinese, 9% African American, 6% Filipino, and 12% Other Non-White.

Hillcrest’s Community School Structure

Hillcrest’s development as a community school began with a state-funded Healthy Start grant in 2006. A broad array of partners at Hillcrest now provide academic support, health and wellness services, parent education and engagement opportunities, out-of-school time programs, community events, mentoring services, and professional development for staff.

A Partner Collaborative, involving both community partners and school administrators, meets monthly to address challenges, set priorities, and measure collective impact. But this is just one structure that supports the work of the community school. A separate collaborative of mental health providers meets bi-weekly to present case studies and consult with one another. There is also a Community School Leadership Team, which meets weekly and includes the after-school director, Principal Zapien and Eldred, and rotating representatives from...
partner organizations. Both parents and partners participate on Hillcrest’s School Site Council, and in 2012, the school created a Climate Committee to continue improving school climate and to address the needs of students with more serious needs, such as symptoms of trauma.

The Afterschool Program

With Hillcrest’s school day beginning at 7:50 a.m. and ending at 1:50 p.m., the school has a longer after-school period than most. This schedule presents the afterschool program (ASP) staff with a significant challenge, but also with an opportunity to use the more than four hours of time to develop programming that provides expanded learning time and really benefits students and families.

When Zapien and Eldred first began working at Hillcrest, about 100 students participated in the ASP, and no spots were available for students in kindergarten or 1st grade. Students attending the ASP were confined to the auditorium and the cafeteria. Eldred explains that teachers had no connections with the ASP staff, and that the ASP staff experienced a lot of turnover. As a result, teachers were not interested in letting the ASP use their classrooms.

Creating a seamless relationship between the school day and expanded learning programs has therefore been a primary focus of Hillcrest’s community school initiative. With students’ literacy development as the program’s overall goal, the ASP is now organized in a systematic way to support the learning that happens during the school day. In 2007, the administration created six, full-time “linked-day” ASP positions—one for each grade level. These employees play an important supporting role in the classrooms for their grade level during the school day and then carry over the same teaching strategies to the ASP using project-based learning and other enrichment opportunities. Linked-day staff members meet regularly with teachers and use the same messages and emphasis on positive climate present during the school day. Hillcrest’s ASP now serves 235 of the school’s 460 students.

To further create consistency for both students and teachers, Hillcrest also invested in the careers of ASP staff. Many of the part-time ASP staff members have transitioned into the linked-day positions, and many linked-day staff members are pursuing careers in teaching and social work, in part due to their experience at Hillcrest.

Literacy-Focused Academics

One of the school’s most significant partners is The Reading and Writing Project of Columbia University’s Teachers College (TCRWP). TCRWP is considered an expert in Balanced Literacy, which is an approach that Hillcrest uses to teach reading, writing and speaking. Teachers, linked-day staff, and community partners participate in professional development focused on Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop that are led by TCRWP Staff Developers. A site-based professional development coach also meets monthly with linked-day staff members to guide them in transferring these practices from the school day into the ASP.

Beyond relying on state tests, to better capture students’ reading growth, the school administers quarterly

Results

Among Students

• 11% increase in California Standardized Test scores across all grades between 2010-12
• Academic Performance Index rose from 674 to 725 between 2010–12
• 100% school staff check in with 2+ students per week about personal matters; 48% check in with 8+

Among Families

• 80 core parent volunteers and committee members, up from five in 2004
• Parents run a food bank that serves 80 families each week
• 90% attendance at parent-teacher conferences, up from 50% in 2005
Fountas & Pinnell benchmark reading assessments so that teachers can better identify which students need additional help. Reading Partners, a key community partner at Hillcrest, also provides a literacy program providing one-on-one tutoring for 50 readers who struggling the most. Student progress is regularly shared with school day teachers, creating a stronger link with ASP and providing even more data to use for planning and instruction.

Since 2010, Hillcrest’s California Standardized Test scores have increased 11% in both math and language arts, and the school’s Academic Performance Index—an overall measure of student achievement ranging from 200 to 1,000—has increased from 674 to 725.

“It’s our moral imperative to teach our students the skills they will need to be successful at school and in their community,” Zapien says. “We have embraced the Common Core State Standards and are providing our staff with rigorous professional development to meet the individualized needs of our students.”

Parent Participation Grows

While the attention to literacy has been comprehensive at Hillcrest, the community partners are serving students and families in many other ways as well. One of the school’s leading partners, Instituto Familiar de la Raza (IFR), supports mental health consultants at Hillcrest—one during the school day and one after school. IFR’s Family Resource Center, Casa Corazon, also provides parenting classes, leadership seminars for parents, and social support groups.

Other services for parents have included English-as-a-second-language and computer classes. Eldred points out that she would also like to see the community school offer job training. The support and services provided to families has resulted in parents taking a more active role in their children’s education. In 2005, only about 50% of the school’s parents showed up for parent-teacher conferences. Now, 95% attend, encouraged by the teachers and supported by simultaneous translation provided by the school in Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. Parent volunteers also run a weekly food bank, in partnership with the San Francisco Food Bank that serves 80 families. A rotating group of parents prepares a fresh fruit snack during recess every day for all 460 students at the school.

In addition to offering academic support, the ASP also has numerous enrichment opportunities. Many Hillcrest ASP students are avid soccer players through the America SCORES Bay Area program. The organization supports five Hillcrest soccer teams that run after school, and the program also incorporates poetry and service learning into its model. The SCORES coach is an integral member of the school staff and is on-site beginning at lunch. The ASP also includes an art club run by a volunteer artist who turns the cafeteria into an art studio every day from 5-6 p.m. When parents arrive after work, they often linger to work on artistic creations with their children, Eldred says.

Working Towards Sustainability

While Hillcrest’s community school initiative was launched with the Healthy Start grant, the program now receives funding from a variety of sources, including the school district, private foundations, a federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant, and state funding through the After School Education and Safety Program.
Through its partnerships with 35 community partners, Hillcrest leverages almost $1.4 million yearly to support services for students, families, and teachers.

San Francisco’s Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) provides funding for after-school and summer programming, but is also playing a leadership role in developing policy and creating partnerships between agencies. As Eldred notes, the community school is actively involved in efforts to grow and sustain community school work in San Francisco. In part because of Hillcrest’s advocacy work with DCYF, for example, the agency now supports out-of-school-time programs at school sites, in addition to those in the community. Hillcrest’s out-of-school programming director is involved in DCYF’s Summer Work Group, and Eldred serves on a Financial Sustainability Work Group.

“One challenge Hillcrest faces is securing ongoing funding for the linked-day staff members. Linked-day staff are currently paid through discretionary Title I funds, a decision made by administrators, along with teachers, because of the deep support all staff have for the program.

Hillcrest leaders are continuing their work to see that community schools grow throughout SFUSD. Both Eldred and Zapien participate in a Sustainability Work Group with SFUSD’s Director of Community Schools, Hayin Kim.

“We’re really good at thinking outside the box and thinking bigger than ourselves,” Eldred says. “We understand that in order to sustain and grow our model, we can’t be a one off. We always have one foot on the macro level, and one foot on site, improving and evaluating our work so that we can help to create a replicable community school model. Our job, after ensuring our own sustainability, is to advocate for every school to have the critical supports and services, as well as the underlying coordination, needed to help every student and family succeed to their fullest potential.”

To sustain and grow our model,... We always have one foot on the macro level, and one foot on site, improving and evaluating our work so that we can help to create a replicable community school model.”—S. Eldred, CS Coordinator

Partners

Access Institute • AcroSports • Balanced Literacy Network • Cal Teach • Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth • Columbia University Teachers College • Deloitte Edgewood Center for Children and Families • Education Outside • ExCEL After School Program • Experience Corps Bay Area • Fresh & Easy • Instituto Familiar de la Raza • Lick Wilmerding High School • One Degree • Packard Foundation • Reading Partners • S.H. Cowell Foundation • SCORES • SF Arts Ed • San Francisco Ballet • San Francisco Coalition for Essential Small Schools • San Francisco Department for Children, Youth & Their Families • San Francisco Department of Health • San Francisco Education Fund • San Francisco Food Bank • San Francisco Foundation • San Francisco State University • San Francisco Symphony • SFUSD • Stanford University’s John Gardner Center • Streetside Stories • Support for Families for Children with Disabilities • University of California Berkeley School of Social Work • Zellerbach Family Foundation
Roosevelt Elementary of Allentown, Pennsylvania is one of 11 community schools supported by United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley’s COMPASS (Community Partners for Student Success) initiative. With more than 35 dedicated partners, including local businesses, nonprofit and community-based organizations, social service agencies, and faith-based organizations, Roosevelt is addressing students’ basic needs, such as health and dental care, as well as providing academic and social support through mentoring and enrichment opportunities.

The El Sistema Lehigh Valley afterschool music program, offered in partnership with Allentown Symphony Association, is just one of many examples of the opportunities provided to students at no cost at Roosevelt, but it clearly demonstrates how multiple partners can work together through a community school model to enrich students’ lives both in and out of the classroom.

Local music companies donate instruments, parent volunteers provide snacks and organize extra rehearsal time, and university students offer academic tutoring during the two-hour-a-day program—all of which is giving students a more positive image of themselves.

According to one student, “these teachers have confidence in us that we can play these instruments. They believe that we can learn.”

The COMPASS Structure

The Boys & Girls Club of Allentown signed on with Roosevelt in 2005 as the first non-profit agency to partner with a COMPASS community school. As lead partner, the Boys & Girls Club of Allentown employs Roosevelt’s full-time community school director, Katherine Jackson, and provides membership benefits to all Roosevelt students enrolled in afterschool programs. The school is also supported by an exceptional partnership with lead corporate partner Air Products, a manufacturer of industrial gases and a Fortune 500 Company.

Similar to other COMPASS community schools, Roosevelt is governed by a core team that includes the

Awardee At-A-Glance

- **Location:** Allentown, PA
- **School District:** Allentown School District
- **Website:** www.allentownsd.org/Domain/886
- **Grade Levels:** Pre-K – 5
- **Number of Students:** 798
- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - Asian/Pacific Islander – 1%
  - Black/African American – 14%
  - Hispanic/Latino – 71%
  - White/Caucasian – 13%
  - Other – 1%
- **ELL Students:** 7%
- **Special Education:** 10%
- **Free/Reduced Lunch:** 87%
- **Student Mobility Rate:** 34%

Who’s Who

- **Heather Bennett,** Principal
- **Katherine Jackson,** Community School Director (Boys and Girls Club of Allentown)
community school director, school principal, chief professional officer of the Boys & Girls Club of Allentown, and a representative from United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley. The team meets monthly to discuss district-level issues relevant to all COMPASS schools, including emerging challenges and opportunities, budget concerns, relationships between providers, and the alignment of programs with academic standards for students.

Roosevelt convenes a leadership team of parents, teachers, and community partners. At the beginning of each school year, Roosevelt’s leadership team looks at a “results-based plan” and “sustainability model” says Jackson “to take account of what is and is not yet being provided at the school. We look at the model to see if there are partners in the community who are able to fill the gaps in support.” An art initiative and a financial literacy course for parents are two programs that were recently added as part of this process. The leadership team also examines state test scores to see which grade levels are in greatest need of academic-focused programs and other supports.

**Dedicated Partners**

Roosevelt’s Breakfast Buddies program is one example of a support system that came out of leadership team discussions around the school’s highest-need students. Now in its fourth year, Breakfast Buddies involves 19 Air Products employees who dedicate an hour each week to mentoring students “who could benefit from a positive relationship with someone outside of their family or the classroom,” says Jackson.

The mentors meet one-on-one with 5th grade students for a hot breakfast and other special incentives. While tutoring and learning activities are included as part of the program, the true purpose of Breakfast Buddies is to foster relationships between the mentors and the students, so that the students learn “that there is someone else in the community who cares about them and wants them to succeed.”

In addition to providing the Breakfast Buddies program and contributing financially to Roosevelt’s community school through United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, Air Products supports students and families in a variety of other meaningful ways.

According to Jackson, “Air Products sets a great standard for future lead corporate partners of the COMPASS initiative” as they bring “a tremendous volunteer base” to all of the school’s evening family engagement activities and provide “unique in-school learning opportunities.”

Air Products employees support science instruction by giving liquid nitrogen science lessons and ice cream-making demonstrations. The company also sponsors and organizes an annual Veterans Day celebration at the school, which includes a special brunch with student leaders and celebratory classroom visits with veterans from the community.

Air Products partnered with student leaders to develop, implement, and evaluate a recycling program at the school after the students saw many of their peers throwing water bottles in the trash.

Last year, Air Products teamed up with the American Heart Association to create a volunteer-led walking challenge to promote heart health. Together, 54 volunteers walked 100 hours with Roosevelt students and families. After the initiative’s initial promotion, teachers continued to walk an additional 3,645 hours with their students.

First Presbyterian Church of Allentown is another close partner of Roosevelt. Each year, members of the church hand-knit over 350 hats for students. The congregation also holds large donation drives to collect shoes,

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**Results**

**Among Students**

- Reading proficiency up from 34% to 53%; math is up from 51% to 63%
- Annual discipline referrals have fallen from 358 to 90
- Attendance is above state expectation of 90% every year

**Among Families**

- 92% participation in parent-teacher conferences
- PTA membership of 62 up from 5 in 2006-07
sneakers, socks, winter coats, gloves, clothing, and toys during a Secret Santa Holiday Drive. The church’s mission team also provides parent education in a Systemic Training for Effective Parenting course, which focuses on building “responsibility, independence, and competence in children.” First Presbyterian’s most dedicated support comes through volunteerism, with an average of 10 volunteers regularly attending evening parent engagement activities at the school.

In recent years, Roosevelt parents have taken a more active role in partnering with school faculty and staff to provide additional opportunities for students and families. The PTA now leads events that used to be organized by school staff members, such as Teddy Roosevelt’s Birthday Celebration and the Winter Celebration. PTA members raised over $8,500 in one school year to fund field trips for all students and to organize community-building activities such as family bingo, bowling, roller-skating, and movie nights. Several parents also lead after-school programs and serve on the school’s leadership team. One parent has even written grant proposals to support community school programs.

Connecting to the Curriculum

In 2007, Roosevelt students did not meet AYP in the reading section of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Members of the leadership team, in partnership with teachers, responded by attending the Governor’s Academy for Urban Education, hosted at Muhlenberg College, to develop a teaching and learning action plan for the school. The result was Book Blast—a school-wide series of monthly evening literacy events that enhance parent engagement and reading comprehension.

At each Book Blast event, volunteers demonstrate a specific reading strategy to parents, facilitate parent-child reading groups, and present new books to all of the participants. Attended by an average of over 200 parents and children and supported by 50 staff and community volunteers every month, Book Blast has generated school-wide excitement for reading and become a “best practice” of the COMPASS initiative.

Roosevelt’s afterschool programs are also closely aligned to their curriculum. “We make sure that all of the providers at our school know what the district is trying to achieve with our students and then we invite them to supplement learning experiences after school with their own expertise and unique offerings,” says Jackson.

Quarterly meetings for all program providers create a community of practice for exchanging ideas, sharing “best practices,” and aligning programs with shared initiatives and state standards. When El Sistema was in its first year, it was led by teaching artists who were “passionate about music and kids,” Jackson says, but needed some guidance on structuring the program around site-specific challenges. Some of Roosevelt’s teachers volunteered to provide “feedback and ideas for better aligning the program with school-wide classroom management strategies.”

Roosevelt’s positive school culture is an outcome of the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) program, which uses techniques to help students develop self-control, emotional understanding, positive self-esteem and relationships, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. Program providers use the same problem-solving strategies that are used during the regular school day to share a consistent message with students after school.

Other partners, such as Muhlenberg College, are supporting students through individual and small group tutoring during the school day. Last year, volunteer tutors provided over 300 hours of tutoring in reading and writing for 132 students as part of the America Reads program, while also challenging the students to think about college and career options. To help students visual-
ize their futures beyond high school, Muhlenberg College also hosted field trips for Roosevelt students. The college’s DanceMax Moving Company helps prepare students for PSSA exams by teaching them memorable song and dance jingles based on key test-taking strategies and concepts.

The rich mix of expanded learning opportunities at Roosevelt has resulted in many more students participating in after-school programs. The number has increased by over 50 percent over the past two years, with more than 57 percent of students engaged in programming. This growth also corresponds with better attendance in school, improved behavior, and increased reading and math scores. As examples of major improvements at Roosevelt from 2006 to 2012, reading proficiency scores moved from 33.8% to 52.8% and the number of office discipline referrals has dropped from 358 to only 90.

**A Plan for Sustainability**

United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley supports Roosevelt’s community school through a three-year grant cycle. Due to the success of the COMPASS community school initiative throughout the entire Lehigh Valley, this flow of support is likely to continue as other nonprofits and corporations seek partnership opportunities with existing community schools. The Boys & Girls Club of Allentown and Air Products have also expressed their commitment to seeking additional resources to maintain and grow the services provided at Roosevelt.

Sustainability can also be viewed in terms of whether students leaving Roosevelt after 5th grade are able to attend schools with the same types of services, programs, and attitudes toward partnership. As Roosevelt feeds into South Mountain Middle School, which is also a COMPASS community school, students are able to continue receiving the same supports offered at the elementary level.

Recently, Jackson says, “the belief in what community schools can provide for students and families has spread to Roosevelt’s many partners. All of our faculty and staff, parents, and program and service providers know that we’re a community school and use that language as a unifying force to seek greater opportunities for our students.”

According to Jackson, “it’s gone well beyond the role of just the director reaching out to the community for support. The deep level of commitment from all of Roosevelt’s partners means that we have many hands extending the reach of impact in our community.”

**Partners**

- ADP
- Air Products
- Allentown Health Bureau
- Allentown Housing Authority
- Allentown School District
- Allentown Symphony Association
- B.Braun
- Baum School of Art
- Boy Scouts Minsi Trails Scoutreach
- Boys and Girls Club of Allentown
- Cedar Crest College
- Community Bike Works
- Community Services for Children
- Da Vinci Science Center
- DeSales University
- Diakon Family Life Services
- El Faro Lighthouse Church
- El Sistema Lehigh Valley
- Embrace Your Dreams
- First Presbyterian Church
- Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania
- Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network
- KBTN
- Lehigh Valley Network
- Miles of Smiles Dental Van
- Lehigh Valley’s Educator’s Credit Union
- The Literacy Center of Lehigh Valley
- Messiah College
- Miller Symphony Hall
- Muhlenberg College
- Paragon Transit
- Penn State Lehigh Valley
- Profits Plus Fundraising
- Push the Rock Ministries
- Sacred Heart Hospital On-Site Health Clinic
- St. Luke’s Hospital
- Target
- Treatment Trends
- Veterans Sanctuary
- United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley
- Zian Evangelical Church
Like many communities facing desegregation, East Price Hill, a neighborhood on Cincinnati’s west side, experienced massive white flight to private schools, leaving the local public school to African-American families moving into the area’s subsidized housing.

However, about seven years ago, the neighborhood began to diversify. Hispanic and other immigrants started moving into local apartments, while a community and housing redevelopment effort was getting underway. Once these new residents were becoming established enough to purchase homes, however, they would move to the suburbs. Advocates at Cincinnati’s Community Learning Center (CLC) saw this challenge as an opportunity to match the needs and character of a neighborhood with its local school, Roberts Academy.

“Part of what we do is establish the school in the context of the community,” says Darlene Kamine, the executive director of Cincinnati’s Community Learning Center Institute (CLCI) and a leading figure in the growth of the CLCs in the city. “The question was how do we create a destination that will bring the whole community together.”

Working with Santa Maria Community Services, a social service agency and a partner with other CLCs in the Price Hill area, Roberts Academy has become home to an International Welcome Center, which is housed in a section of the school’s library and provides language classes, financial education, computer classes, employment assistance, and other services. Spanish is the first language for more than 240 of the school’s 700 students—up from only 17 students in 2006. La Viña Cincinnati, a multi-ethnic, bilingual community church, meets at the school twice a week; a family health center stays open until the evening hours; and, Cincinnati’s Findlay Market—a historic farmer’s market—is establishing a satellite location at Roberts. The school’s 22-acre campus has also become a draw for several nature-oriented partners, including...
some that will provide funds to reclaim a watershed area and start a storm water demonstration project. Through the welcome center, parents and other residents also work together to maintain a large community garden.

“I have personally seen how families have been impacted by the community school approach. I would even go as far as saying that it will be the most important and influential approach to community building here in this city,” says Daniel Minera, the Hispanic outreach director for Gospel City Mission in Cincinnati, and the leader of La Viña. He also tutors and mentors students at Roberts. He added that the school “has become a prime spot for service providers to feel welcome and to be part of the community” and that he sees students “excited about coming to school.”

Roberts Academy is just one example of how Cincinnati’s neighborhoods are being revitalized in part because of CLCs—which are so embedded across the district that Kamine describes them as “just like having a teacher in the classroom.”

While student enrollment continues to drop in many urban school districts, Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) are not only stable, but are also growing at a rate faster than the state predicted. While the district was estimated to have 28,000 students this year, it actually had 34,000—a result that is due in large part to remaking schools into CLCs and engaging community members in deciding what they want in their public schools. In addition to enrollment growth, all school levies have passed since the CLC initiative began, further evidence that Cincinnati residents have regained confidence in their schools and want to be a part of seeing them succeed. Such renewal is also translating into improved student performance—CPS is the highest-rated urban school district in the state, graduation rates have increased from 51 percent in 2000 to over 80 percent, and the achievement gap between white and African-American students has narrowed from 14.5 percent in 2003 to around 1.2 percent in 2010.

Rebuilding Schools as CLCs

CPS, as well as many districts across Ohio, were forced to begin replacing and renovating worn-down school buildings in 1997, after the Ohio Supreme Court declared that the state’s reliance on property taxes to fund education was unconstitutional. Voters initially rejected the district’s $1 billion Facilities Master Plan but later approved it after language was added saying that every school would be built as a CLC.

The CPS School Board further embraced CLCs as an important part of its mission when it passed a policy in 2010, stating that “each school should be a community learning center” and “center of activity” within its neighborhood. The Cincinnati Federation of Teachers also strongly supports the CLC model, viewing it as a support system for teachers. Resource coordinators and community partners focus on meeting important needs for families and resolving problems that might interfere with a child succeeding in school, allowing teachers to focus

Results

- High school graduation rates have climbed from 51% in 2000 to 81.9% in 2010
- The achievement gap between African American students and white students narrowed from 14.5% in 2003 to 1.2% in 2010
- Enrollment declines have been reversed with almost 5,000 more students than projected
- Cincinnati was the first urban school district in Ohio to receive an effective rating and is the highest rated urban school district in Ohio
on teaching.

Now, 35 of the district’s 52 schools are fully implemented CLCs, meaning they have a resource coordinator to develop, oversee and implement partnerships with community providers. The remaining 17 schools are at various stages of implementation and have some partnerships in place. Next year, the number of school-based health centers will grow from 12 to 20, and Kamine says another four are in the works. The Oyler K-12 school opened the country’s first school-based vision clinic, and will host dental services at its site soon as well.

35 of the district’s 52 schools are fully implemented CLCs the remaining 17 schools are at various stages of implementation and have some partnerships in place.

Pleasant Ridge Elementary School provides another example of how CLCs are responding to the desires of the community and bringing a diverse mix of middle-class families back into the school district. Before 2006, enrollment in the school had fallen to 330. But through the action and advocacy of local parents, the school was remade into Pleasant Ridge Montessori, offering a preschool, along with additional services typically provided at CLCs, including a mental health therapist, a weekend meal program, and a technology initiative that provides refurbished computers to families within the school. Now enrollment is over 500 and the percentage of students on free and reduced-price lunches has dropped from 99 percent to 70 percent by increasing the enrollment and not displacing any families. While some feared that white families who came for the Montessori program would leave after kindergarten, that hasn’t been the case.

In other neighborhoods, turning schools into K-12 buildings has been the foundation of the effort to reverse a trend in which many eighth graders from urban Appalachian families would simply quit school rather than leave their neighborhoods to attend high school.

But CLCs are not only seen as a service for families in low-income areas. Hyde Park is one of the city’s most affluent neighborhoods. But, as in many urban areas, parents either sent their children to parochial school or moved to the suburbs. So a coalition of parents lobbied the district for their own neighborhood school, which opened last year as a K-1 and will continue to add grade levels. A preschool is also on the site.

“The staying power has created a strength and provided a kind of foundation that just continues to blossom new growth,” Kamine says.

The district and CLC partners have also collaborated in recent years to provide a summer learning initiative for students in low-performing elementary schools, often providing academics in the morning and an array of enrichment opportunities in the afternoon, including art, music, science experiments, and visits from zoo animals.

At Roberts, for example, partners from the construction industry will work with students this summer to build a shed for the tiller used in the community garden. Other providers will offer a day camp.

The CLC Structure

While the needs and priorities of each school community differ, there are essential elements common to CLCs, including an ongoing commitment to engaging the community and a site-based governance structure, which over-
sees the selection of community partners and evaluates their performance. At each CLC, this group is the Local School Decision-Making Committee (LSDMC), which is responsible for approving a school improvement plan addressing how the comprehensive needs of students will be addressed. LSDMCs work with each school’s resource coordinator to identify which partners and services best fit the needs of that school’s population.

The CLC’s funding structure is self-sustainable largely thanks to diverse, committed funding streams. This diversity ensures that no one entity owns CLCs in any way, but that they remain a reflection of the community. The resource coordinators at each site are then hired by a lead agency, such as the YMCA, a mental health provider or another agency that provides services at the schools.

Service providers across the city are organized into networks of agencies and nonprofit groups that have a similar mission. For example, there is a college access network, a network of health care providers, an after-school network and a recently-added early-childhood network, which is focusing on making schools a hub for 0-5 services and providers in the community. Resource coordinators turn to the providers in these networks when trying to match services or programs to the needs of their schools.

The Cross-Boundary Leadership Team, consisting of leaders of the networks of agencies, is another important body. It ties all of the networks together, focuses on issues that might affect all of the providers—such as changes in federal or state funding—and helps to set priorities for the CLCs.

**Using Data to Track Success**

The impact that CLCs are having on students is monitored through a sophisticated database called the Learning Partner Dashboard, which is considered part of the overall picture of how a school is performing. A project of CPS, with support of business and nonprofit partners, the dashboard is a shared space, which allows partners to enter information on which students they are serving, and, because it is integrated with academic data, it allows educators to view whether those services or interventions are having a positive impact. The tool allows the CLCs to better monitor whether the right services are being provided to students who need them the most.

CLCs are more a part of how schools, parents and community partners interact than ever before, Kamine says. A colorful CLC logo now appears throughout the school district’s newly redesigned website, and neighborhood residents, partners and school leaders regularly organize planning meetings to discuss next steps for their schools.

“Because we’ve had this kind of track record—and it’s pretty clear that this is just the way it is now—it is much easier for us to continue to build on what exists,” Kamine says. “The infrastructure exists and people trust it.”

**Partners**

- Adopt a Class Foundation
- Beech Acres
- Boys and Girls Club
- Central Clinic
- Cincinnati Art Museum
- Cincinnati Federation of Teachers
- Cincinnati Oral Health Network
- College Access Alliance
- Community Arts Initiative
- Community Learning Center Institute
- Early Childhood Network
- Families Forward
- Greater Cincinnati Foundation
- Grad Cincinnati
- Growing Well Cincinnati
- Haille Foundation
- Imani
- Leave No Child Behind
- MindPeace
- Parents for Public Schools
- Robert and Adele Schiff Foundation
- St. Aloysius
- United Way of Greater Cincinnati
- Urban League
- YMCA
Hartford’s community school initiative probably could have been started by any of the four agencies or organizations represented on the leadership team. But what has made the effort so strong in its relatively short five-year life is that partners from across the city are involved and deeply dedicated to expanding and sustaining a model built on best practices.

Mayor Pedro Segarra’s office, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut, and the Hartford Public Schools all financially support and participate in the Hartford Community Schools Partnership (HCSP).

“To have all of the partners is a really important commitment,” says Sandra J. Ward, the director of Hartford Partnership for Student Success (HPSS). “At any point we might have had to hit the restart button by having a new leader. But we’ve weathered all that. We had a new mayor and new superintendent since we started this work.”

Forming a Solid Foundation

The initial community schools were chosen as part of the district’s efforts to improve outcomes in its lowest-performing schools. As the work was beginning in 2008, the Hartford Board of Education adopted a policy providing a framework to grow community schools in the district aided by funding from diverse sources. This framework for community schools required schools to have public-private partnerships, a community school director, and expanded school-based services for students. The district also has a “strategic operating plan” which includes family and community partnerships.

“Schools are really reaching out for partnerships so that educators can be in the business of focusing on education, and the partners provide resources to meet other needs that get in the way of learning,” Ward says.

About the Initiative

Hartford Community Schools is a strategy for organizing and connecting community resources to schools in ways that support student achievement and family stability and foster health communities. HCS is committed to public-private partnerships to promote excellence at all levels, from the classroom to school- and district-wide initiatives.

Awardee At-A-Glance

- **Location:** Hartford, CT
- **School District:** Hartford Public Schools
- **Website:** www.hartfordschools.org/index.php/our-schools/community-schools
- **K–8 Schools:** 6
- **6–10 Schools:** 1
- **Number of Students:** 4,100
- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - Asian/Pacific Islander – 3%
  - Black/African American – 28%
  - Hispanic/Latino – 57%
  - White/Caucasian – 7%
  - Other – 5%
- **ELL Students:** 26%
Meanwhile, the city government had reorganized several departments into a new Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation, which Ward says more closely matches the concept of creating continuity between children’s lives in school and out of school.

As the five community schools were getting started, Ward says the directors and agency staff were also “saturated with the best quality training,” including from the National Center for Community Schools with the Children’s Aid Society in New York, so they would understand the philosophies behind community schools.

In the 2001-12 school year, partners leveraged additional funding to support the expansion of the initiative. They were able to add two schools, bringing the current total to seven.

“The success of the Hartford Community Schools partnership is mainly due to the intentional synergy among the various systemic initiatives already in place at our major institutions impacting children, youth and families,” says Jose Colon-Rivas, the director of the city’s Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation. “Our belief is that all students can thrive under the right conditions, and that learning and outcomes should not reflect differences in race, gender, income, and class.”

A Collaborative Framework

In addition to the leadership team, a management team made up of senior managers from the city, the school district, the United Way, the foundation, two agency representatives and two principals also lead HCSP. Hartford community schools use a lead agency model in which a partner organization is selected by the school through a competitive process that includes a request for qualifications, a site visit and an interview. That agency then hires the community school director and other staff, and helps integrate other partners into the work. Rather than creating a new committee to oversee the partnerships and programs at the school level, community school directors, lead agency representatives and other staff sit on each school’s governance council, which also includes parents.

The lead agencies and other partners, Ward says, have really shifted away from a competitive relationship to a “more collaborative framework.” For example, Village for Families and Children, a lead agency and a mental health partner, helped to secure satellite clinic status for all of the community schools, which allows children and families to more easily access services and not miss school.

To knit the after-school and summer programs to-

“All students can thrive under the right conditions... learning and outcomes should not reflect differences in race, gender, income, and class.” —J. Colon-Rivas, Director, DFCYR

Results

• Between the 2009-2010 and 2011-2012 school years, reading proficiency scores increased by over 10 percentage points
• School attendance for children participating in afterschool programs has increased school attendance by 1% – 3%
• Proficiency across math, reading and writing performance increased or remained the same across all three years for after-school participants, while performance decreased in math and writing for non after-school participants
together with the school’s academic goals for students, each community school also has an educational coordinator, who is often a full-time teacher, but then works on a part-time basis for the lead agency. This coordinator serves as a bridge between the regular school day and out-of-school-time programs by developing curriculum that supports learning goals and reviewing data to determine the needs of students at each grade level. This educator also provides training in instructional strategies to other after-school, youth development staff members to create more consistency for students. Several of the lead agencies also use the same incentives used during the regular instructional day as part of the schools’ Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports program. At Alfred E. Burr Elementary School, for example, students are rewarded with Burr Bucks that they can spend in the school store or use for other privileges.

A pre-K-8 school, Burr Elementary, Ward says, has been a strong example of building a community school environment and “integrating it into the culture of the school.” The school’s lead agency, Village for Families and Children, has provided financial literacy programs for parents and teen outreach and service-learning programs in the school’s middle grades to steer students toward “using their leadership abilities for good.” The school also has a strong volunteer-run reading program.

At another school, Burns Latino Studies Academy, students in the after-school program stay for dinner, residents in the area are involved in neighborhood beautification projects, and parents are becoming more active in leadership roles at the school.

“We want parents to come to the turkey dinners, but we also want them to be involved in the governance of the school.”
—S. Ward, Director, HPSS

Monitoring Data

Data is increasingly playing a part in how HPSS tracks its success and plans for the future. Recently, Ward convened a Data Committee on Partnerships, which includes representatives from the city, the school district, community agencies, funders and Achieve Hartford!, the local education fund. The group is looking at how to better monitor the impact that partnerships are having, not just in community schools, but also in out-of-school-time programs. The committee is also discussing how partners will play a role in developing Student Success Plans,
which were mandated by state law and must cover the three areas of academics, college and career readiness and social-emotional development.

HCSP is seeing increases in math, reading and writing scores for students in afterschool programs, as well as greater participation among parents and increases in students’ access to health and dental care and mental health services.

**Planning for Future Growth**

In 2012, the HCSP leadership team created the Hartford Partnership for Student Success (HPSS) to pursue a “broader agenda.” With Ward becoming HPSS director, a new coordinator of the Hartford Community Schools Partnership came on board in April.

One of the priorities of the agencies and funders involved in community schools in Hartford is improving early-childhood services in the city. To address those needs, the community school initiative is one of six sites in the country to receive a Mind in the Making grant funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and administered by the Institute for Educational Leadership. Based on the book by the Family and Work Institute’s Ellen Galinsky on the seven essential skills young children need, the project aims to integrate Mind in the Making lessons into the work community schools are doing in early childhood.

Another goal as HPSS looks to scale up is to replicate elements of the community school model—such as on-site mental health services and high-quality out-of-school-time programs—at other schools. Leaders also want to expand high-quality afterschool and summer programs that provide academic support, mentoring and social skills development. One challenge, however, Ward says will be maintaining and continuing to expand services at the existing seven schools.

The city’s initiative is also beginning to have an influence at the state level. State legislation was just passed to support full-service community schools. State education leaders last year included community schools as one of the “turnaround” strategies that schools could use under the state’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver plan.

HPSS leaders submitted testimony emphasizing that community schools should connect to a school’s “core instructional program” and offered other lessons they have learned in their work.

“I get a little emotional about it,” Ward says, about how far the initiative has come. “At the end of the day we have a lot of people that are just committed to kids. We’re all in this for the same purpose.”

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**Partners**

Achieve Hartford! • Boys and Girls Club of Hartford • Catholic Charities • City of Hartford • COMPASS • Youth Collaborative • Connecticut State Department of Education • The HartfordHartford Foundation for Public Giving • Hartford Public Library • Hartford Public Schools • Hartford Symphony • Travelers • Trinity College • United Way of Central and Northern Connecticut • United Way Women’s Leadership Initiative • The Village for Families and Children • Wadsworth Atheneum
VISION
The Coalition for Community Schools believes that strong communities require strong schools and strong schools require strong communities. We envision a future in which schools are centers of thriving communities where everyone belongs, works together, and succeeds.

MISSION
The Coalition advances opportunities for the success of children, families, and communities by promoting the development of more, and more effective, community schools.

FUNDERS
The Coalition’s national work is supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Charles Stuart Mott Foundation, JP Morgan Chase Foundation, Stuart Foundation, The Atlantic Philanthropies, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

VISION
A society that uses all of its resources effectively to provide an equal opportunity for all children and youth to learn, develop, and become contributing citizens of our democracy.

MISSION
To equip leaders to work together across boundaries to build effective systems that prepare children and youth for postsecondary education, careers and citizenship.

GOALS
• To foster local action and build the capacity of school and community leaders to organize community schools
• To create a supportive policy environment for community schools
• To demonstrate the effectiveness of community schools
• To communicate the importance and value of community schools to the public, policymakers, and opinion leaders

About the Institute for Educational Leadership

About IEL
For a half-century, the Institute for Educational Leadership has championed the need for leaders at all levels to shake off their institutional constraints and work across boundaries to address the needs of young people and their families. Bound by no constituency, IEL serves as a catalyst that helps policymakers, administrators, and practitioners at all levels to bridge bureaucratic silos and undo gridlock to improve outcomes for all young people and their families. The work of IEL focuses on three pillars required for young people and their communities to succeed.
• Involving the broader community with public education to support the learning and development of young people.
• Building more effective pathways into the workforce for all young people and supporting the transition to adulthood.
• Preparing generations of leaders with the know-how to drive collaborative efforts at all levels.

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CMSD Community Wrap Around Schools, Cleveland, OH
Cranston Family Center and COZ, Cranston, RI
Dayton Neighborhood School Centers, OH
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