

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY



The Children's Aid Society
www.childrensaidsociety.org

21 Community Schools

<http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/communityschools>

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

PARTNERS

- ◆ NYC Department of Education
- ◆ NYC Department of Youth and Community Development
- ◆ NYS Education Department
- ◆ NYS Office of Children and Family Services
- ◆ Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
- ◆ American Ballet Theater
- ◆ Boys and Girls Clubs of America
- ◆ Columbia Presbyterian Hospital
- ◆ Developmental Studies Center
- ◆ Mount Sinai Medical Center
- ◆ NYC Department of Health
- ◆ Cornell University

RESULTS

- ◆ CAS Community Schools outperformed comparable NYC schools in achievement and student attendance.
- ◆ 80% of CAS schools received grades of A or B in 2007-8 on the NYC Department of Education Progress Reports, increasing 20% from the previous year.
- ◆ CAS Community Schools have far higher attendance than peer schools, and Community Schools with on-site health clinics have higher attendance than those without.

The Children's Aid Society has contributed to this developing knowledge base through a variety of external evaluation studies conducted since 1992 by teams from Fordham University, the Education Development Center, ActKnowledge and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Taken together, these studies showed a variety of positive results from implementation of the Community Schools strategy: improved student achievement; increased parental involvement; higher student and teacher attendance; improved school climate; decreased special education referrals; and improved mental and physical health.

BACKGROUND

The Children's Aid Society (CAS), one of the largest and oldest child and family social welfare agencies in the country, engaged the New York City school system in discussions about collaboratively integrating its resources and expertise into neighborhood schools. In 1992, CAS began its first community school. The goal of CAS Community Schools is to promote students' learning and healthy development in ways that prepare them for productive adulthood. Operating in several of New York City's neediest neighborhoods (Washington Heights, East Harlem, South Bronx), these schools represent long-term partnerships with the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and seek to offer a comprehensive, integrated approach to education. In these community schools, the NYCDOE and CAS work together to unite the most important influences in students' lives—schools, families and communities—and to create a web of support organized around the framework:

- ◆ A strong core instructional program designed to help all students meet high academic standards;
- ◆ Enrichment activities designed to expand students' learning opportunities and support their cognitive, social, emotional, moral and physical development; and
- ◆ A full range of medical, mental health and family support services designed to safeguard children's well-being and remove barriers to learning.

LEADERSHIP

At the **building level**, the Children's Aid Society Community Schools staff are fully integrated into each school's Leadership Team, School Safety Committee, Pupil Personnel Team and other governance, planning and decision-making bodies. Most schools also hold annual planning retreats that involve DOE and Children's Aid staff.

At the **central level**, the Children's Aid Society has organized a partnership and quality assurance infrastructure that includes the following elements: regular Principals' dinners that bring together Children's Aid and DOE leadership; monthly Work Group meetings for role-alike groups within the Children's Aid team (Community School Directors, Program Directors, Parent Coordinators) focused on professional development and group problem-solving; and an Annual Summer Institute for Directors that provides an intensive professional development and planning opportunity.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

In the Children's Aid Society's Community Schools model, expanded educational, health, social and recreation services are provided, including:

- ◆ An expanded-day program that offers educational enrichment before school, after school, holidays, weekends and summers;
- ◆ Medical, dental, mental health and social services;
- ◆ A comprehensive parent involvement program;
- ◆ Early childhood education; and
- ◆ Adult education.



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