



INTRODUCTION

Overview

Welcome to the Community School Evaluation Toolkit. This toolkit is designed to help community schools evaluate their efforts so that they learn from their successes, identify current challenges, and plan future efforts. It provides a step-by-step process for planning and conducting an evaluation at your community school site(s). The toolkit is a practical, hands-on guide that makes it possible for you to improve your community school's effectiveness and to tell your story. Equally important, it offers a menu of data collection tools (i.e. surveys, public databases) for evaluating whether and how your school is achieving results. You can find these tools on line at: http://communityschools2-design.americaneagle.com/resources/community_schools_evaluation_toolkit.aspx.

For whom is the toolkit written?

This toolkit is for community school leaders, i.e., superintendents, local government leaders, foundations, United Ways, principals, site coordinators, curriculum planners, community-based organizations, higher-education institutions, and others. Anyone connected to a community school can facilitate the evaluation process. A background in research or evaluation is not required to use this toolkit effectively. The toolkit highlights strategies for an individual community school but they can also be used for initiatives with multiple community school sites.

What is the purpose of the Toolkit?

This toolkit is designed to help you learn more about planning and conducting an evaluation of your community school or community school initiative. For the purposes of this toolkit, evaluation is defined as an assessment of the performance and consequences of the strategies implemented at a community school or an initiative.

The toolkit is designed to help you:

1. Use existing data sources and collect additional data (if needed) to conduct a low cost evaluation.
2. Identify areas of success and areas in need of improvement in your community school.
3. Gather information that can help you make planning decisions about your evaluation.
4. Facilitate community schools planning to lay a foundation for evaluation. The CCS Results Based Logic Model (see page 8) provides the basis for such planning.
5. Assess the extent to which you are leveraging resources.