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NEW FEDERAL LEGISLATION LIFTS WORK OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

(Washington, DC) – The [Coalition for Community Schools](http://www.coalitionforcommunityschools.org) applauds Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) on their introduction of the Developing Innovative Partnerships and Learning Opportunities that Motivate Achievement (DIPLOMA) Act. The legislation authorizes grants to incentivize partnerships between schools, parents, business leaders, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations in order to ensure the success of our nation's youth.

DIPLOMA reflects the best principles of successful community schools across the nation. It offers a comprehensive results framework, recognizing the multiple factors -- both academic and non-academic -- that affect student success. It strengthens Federal language in ARRA and Title I by encouraging the use of results-focused partnerships to drive the work of schools and their partners -- such that they are prepared for college, careers, and citizenship.

Martin Blank, Director of the Coalition for Community Schools and President of the Institute for Educational Leadership, notes that "Our communities have a major role to play in the education of our children, and the DIPLOMA Act affirms that role and responsibility. DIPLOMA offers a clear partnership framework and the incentives for schools and communities to work together to help students succeed. This legislation will bring to scale effective community schools strategies in diverse places including Cincinnati, Tulsa, Kansas City, New York City, Portland (OR), and South King County WA."

Blank also says, "DIPLOMA provides a vehicle for strengthening the parent, family, and community engagement that U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan called for at the 2010 NAACP National Convention." Duncan stated, "Community leaders and parents must demand and support this change. Turning around a struggling school is hard, hard work. The work must be shaped at the local level with all of the stakeholders at the table." This is just what community schools do and what the DIPLOMA Act promotes.

The Coalition and its partners recognize that there is an inextricable link between strong schools and strong communities. We are committed to working with Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), and other members of Congress to ensure the implementation of DIPLOMA.

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[The Coalition for Community Schools](http://www.coalitionforcommunityschools.org) is alliance of national, state and local organizations in education K-16, youth development, community planning and development, family support, health and human services, higher education institutions, government and philanthropy as well as national, state and local community school networks. The Coalition advocates for community schools as the vehicle for strengthening schools, families and communities so that together they can improve student learning. It is a program of the Institute for Educational Leadership.

For more information on community schools please visit: www.communityschools.org.