

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

PROVIDENCE FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOL INITIATIVE



www.dorcasplace.org

5 Community Schools

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

PARTNERSHIPS

- ◆ Dorcas Place Adult and Family Learning Center
- ◆ John Hope Settlement House
- ◆ Providence YMCA Youth Services
- ◆ Making Connections, Providence
- ◆ Providence Public School District
- ◆ Mayor's Children and Youth Cabinet

RESULTS

Providence started to fully implement the FSCS strategy during the 2008-09 school year. Early results from Bailey Elementary School, the first FSCS, are positive. In 2009 Bailey met AYP in both math and reading for the first time in 4 years. In reading, third-graders went from scoring 27 percent proficiency in 2007 to 41 percent in 2009; fourth-graders jumped from 28 percent proficiency to 59 percent during the same period and fifth-graders moved from 12 percent proficiency to 39 percent.

BACKGROUND

Superintendent Tom Brady recognized the success of a local 2008 Federal Full Service Community School (FSCS) grant-funded initiative led by Dorcas Place Adult and Family Learning Center. Impressed, he decided to scale up the community school strategy for maximum impact in his district. Brady realized that if he was serious about expanding the community school strategy, he would need strong leadership in the Central Office dedicated to Providence's community school work. In summer 2010 he hired Rebecca Boxx as the District's Full Service Community School Director, to work with community partners in scaling up community schools across the district and working towards a sustainability strategy; creating an "anchor" for FSCS inside the District. The Providence FSCS Initiative will create an easily accessible, comprehensive set of services based in the school. By integrating these services with existing school systems and curriculum, children and families will experience success and maximize learning.

In carrying out this mission, PPSD embraces these values : advocacy, collaboration, community, family, empowerment, compassion, diversity, hospitality, life-long learning, respect and responsibility.

LEADERSHIP

Dorcas Place Adult and Family Learning Center, in partnership with the Providence Public School District, is the intermediary responsible for the management and coordination of the FSCS initiative. The initiative also receives guidance from the Mayor's Children and Youth Cabinet - a city-wide group comprised of community, city and district leaders focused on student success - and an Internal Advisory Board within the PPSD. This Board includes, Chief Academic Officer Dr. Sharon Contreras, and PPSD's Operational Directors (i.e., literary specialists, head of health, etc.). The Board brings together PPSD departments in an effort to better align their work with community partners.

Each school site has a Site Director, employed by a community partner who collaborates closely with the school principal and manages all activities to outcomes. Using weekly team meetings and an integration tool, all activities are closely aligned to common standards and school day instruction. Community partners also play an important part in school governance structures and teams including school improvement planning.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Providence's community schools provide services such as:

- ◆ **Family Literacy** - families participate in classes at the elementary school that teach English as a Second Language while promoting family involvement in the school and allowing parents to practice literacy skills with children
- ◆ **Out of School time** - children are enrolled in before and after-school programming at the school. Academic enrichment and experiential learning are targeted to academic needs of students.
- ◆ **Wraparound Case Management** -students with behavioral issues participate in a family-based intensive case management program. A clinical team creates an individual family plan and provide counseling, family supports and additional services to strengthen the family.
- ◆ **Nutrition Services** - children and families participate in healthy eating classes, fun nutrition workshops, and playful exercise classes. An organic produce market occurs at the school weekly.
- ◆ **Family Engagement** - Families are intentionally involved in every aspect of this project. Families are surveyed about their needs and wants for services and monthly family events will address those needs. The SIT, PTO and Governance Council for this program will cultivate parents as leaders of the school and facilitate a school atmosphere that is welcoming to families.

