



SCALING UP SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS STRATEGY

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Why Build a Scaled-Up System of Community Schools?

Community schools, with their emphasis on intentional partnerships, represent the most effective approach to addressing both the in-school and non-school factors that influence student achievement. The impact of poverty, changing demographics, chronic absence, health and many other factors simply cannot be ignored if students are to succeed. Of course our schools need qualified teachers and strong principals: and like all public institutions, schools must be accountable for performance. But communities must share responsibility for helping young people succeed.

Community schools are the vehicle for making this happen. They come in all shapes and sizes, yet each one is designed as a center of community—a place and a set of partnerships connecting school, family, and community. Community schools have a vision of students succeeding in school, graduating, and becoming productive parents, workers, and citizens. As they work toward this vision, community schools align school and community resources so that the essential conditions for learning are in place.

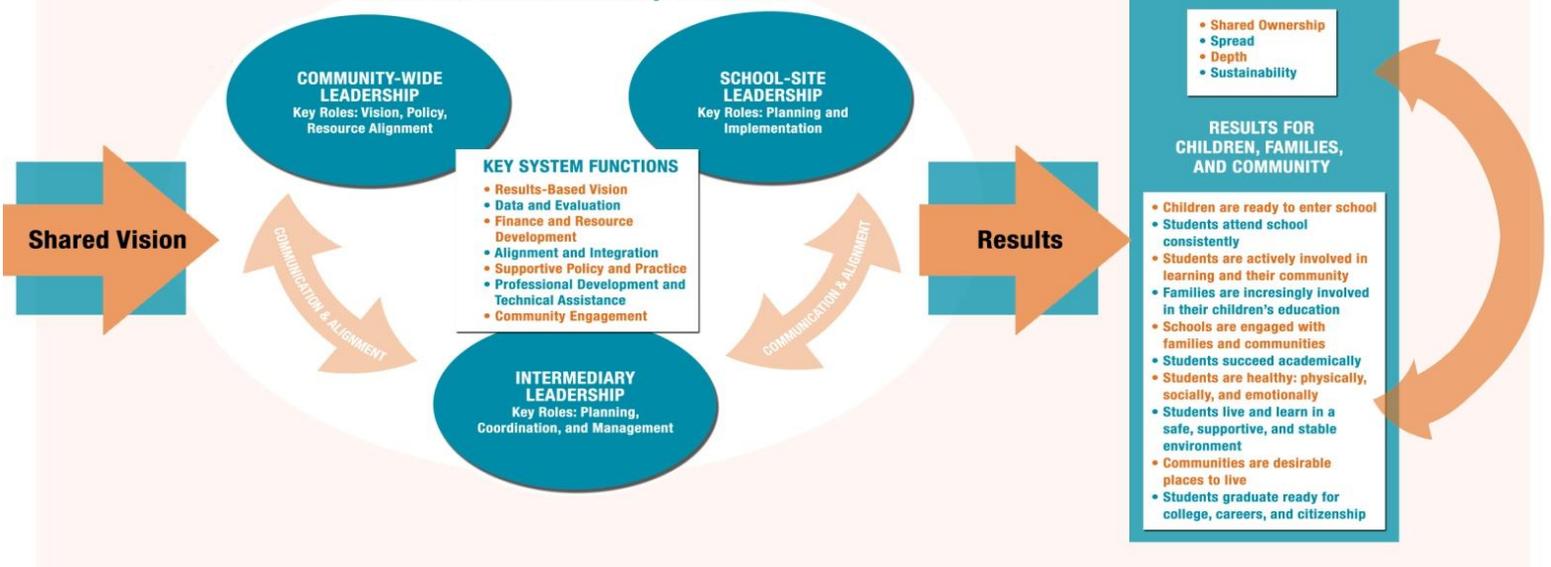
Who Should Use this Guide?

School and community leaders, including parents, teachers, principals and community partners; school district, civic, business, and government leaders; and funders at the local, state, and national levels.

This Guide is helpful for anyone engaged in a place-based strategy including community schools, Promise Neighborhoods, Choice Neighborhoods, and other cradle-to-career efforts.

Building a Scaled-Up System

Collaborative Leadership Structure



Community School Results

- Students in high-implementing Tulsa community schools outperformed students in non-community schools by 32 points in math and by 19 points in reading.
- Glenclyff High School in Nashville has increased its graduation rate - 66.4% to 81.2% from 2007-2008 to 2010-2011.
- Oyler Community Learning Center, a K-12 school in Cincinnati has moved from Academic Emergency to Academic Watch and is now in Continuous Improvement for the second straight year. The school has improved its Ohio Performance Index by 21.7 points since 2006-2007.
- Community schools across the nation are seeing results in achievement, attendance, graduation, parental involvement, health, and more.
- For more results, visit www.communityschools.org/results

The **Conditions for Learning** include:

- Early childhood development programs nurture growth and development.
- The school offers a core instructional program delivered by qualified teachers; instruction is organized around a challenging and engaging curriculum with high standards and expectations for students.
- Students are motivated and engaged in learning—in both school and community settings—before, during, and after school and in the summer.
- The basic physical, mental, and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed.
- Parents, families, and school staff demonstrate mutual respect and engage in effective collaboration.
- Community engagement, together with school efforts, promotes a school climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful, and that connects students to a broader learning community.

Public schools cannot create all of these conditions alone. But experience shows that vision-driven, results-based partnerships can. Such partnerships build relationships among schools and other sectors of the community with a vested interest in the well-being of children and families. Local government, United Ways, community-based youth development organizations, business, higher education, public and private health and social service agencies, neighborhood groups, civic and faith-based organizations, families, and residents are all involved.

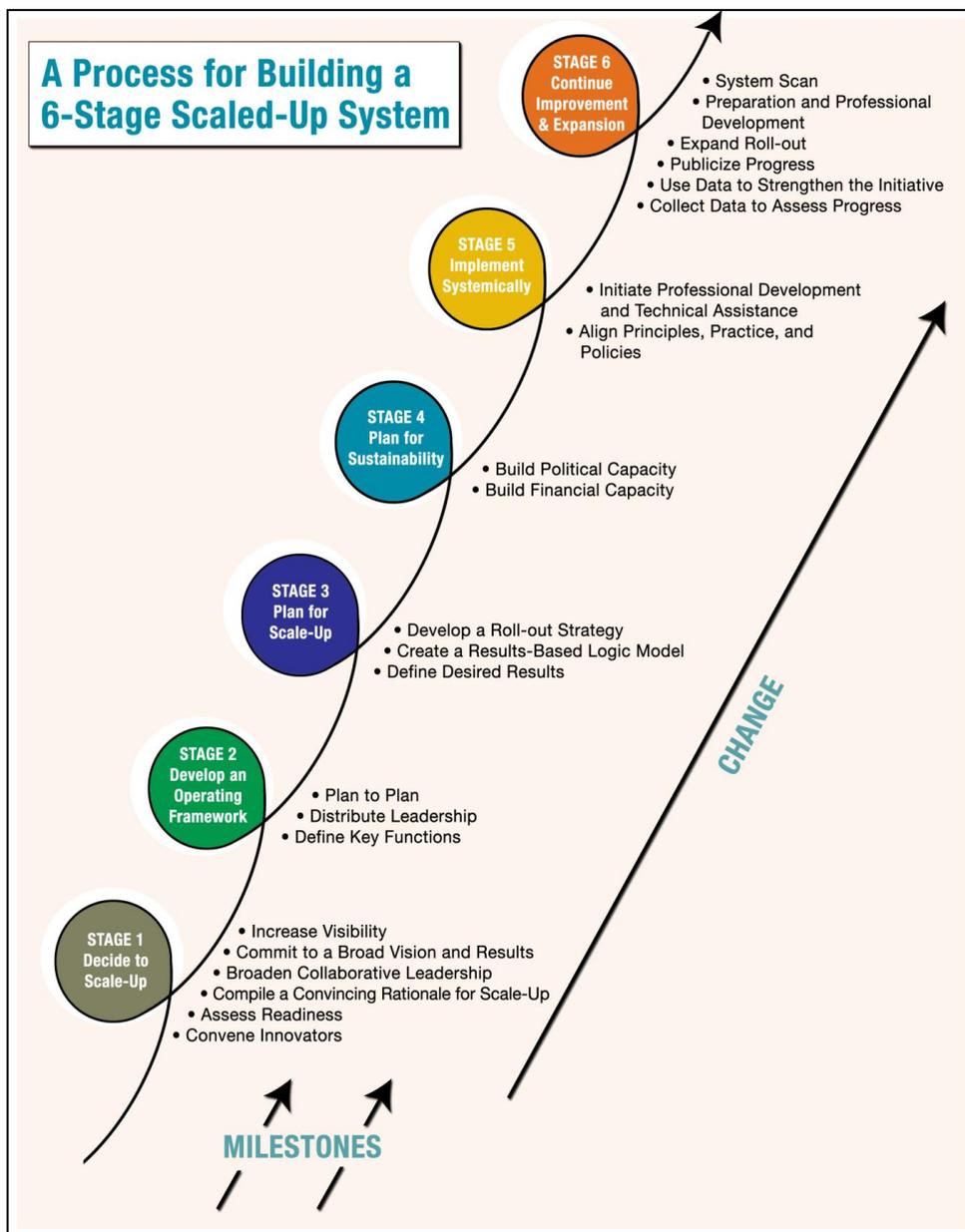
The Challenge: Growing Systems of Community Schools

There are several thousand community schools across the country and many others offer some variant of a community school strategy to better meet child and family needs—and they are making a difference in a wide range of indicators that lead to school success, including academics, attendance, and family participation. In order to wrap their arms around all their children, however, schools and communities need to expand, deepen, and sustain a scaled-up system of community schools.

Scaling up community schools is no pipe dream. A growing number of local initiatives are meeting the challenge and the readiness of schools and community partners to build a sustainable and coordinated system of community schools has never been greater. *Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy* draws on the experience of these local school and community leaders. It lays out a vision-driven approach to building a scaled-up system focused on results.

What Does it Take to Build A Scaled-Up System of Community Schools?

A scaled-up system of community schools refers to a *vertical network* of schools from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 in a single attendance area with all schools linked *horizontally* across one or more school districts. *Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy* builds on both practice and research to describe the what, why, and how of system-wide expansion of



community schools. The Guide introduces a 6-stage spiraling process for moving toward a scaled-up system. Rather than providing a rigid formula or lockstep set of requirements, the Scale-Up Spiral helps school systems and communities at many different starting points begin building collaborative leadership and functional capacity—while staying focused on results. Each stage includes a set of milestones and end-state benchmarks.

Who Will the Guide Help?

The guide is written for a wide audience and for communities at different points in planning for, implementing, and sustaining a community schools strategy. *Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships* recognizes that school and community leaders will be at different points in exploring, planning, implementing and sustaining a community schools strategy. For those who have individual community schools, or recognize the need to deepen their school and community partnership, the Guide provides an opportunity to think about why and how to take on a scale-up effort. For those already working toward scale-up it offers insights and field-based guidance immediately useful in deepening and sustaining your work. Those with no earlier involvement with community schools will have the opportunity to consider the logic and value of community schools, and learn how to bring with a systems approach.

Leaders of place-based initiatives such as Promise Neighborhoods, Choice Neighborhoods, cradle-to-career efforts, and other community collaboratives will all find valuable resources and tools in the Guide and will see how community schools should be at the heart of their efforts as well.

What's in the Guide?

- **Rationale for community schools**
- **Essential characteristics of an effective scaled-up system of community schools**
- **Six-stage spiraling strategic process to help schools and communities steer their scale-up work**
- **Field experiences illustrating the stages of scale-up, including vignettes, videos, and case studies from nine communities**
- **Resources – tools, sample policies, and more**
- **Discussion boards for users to share and learn with one another**

To learn more about *Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy*, please contact Reuben Jacobson at the Coalition for Community Schools – jacobsonr@iel.org, (202) 822-8405. Coalition staff and partners are available to help your community build a scaled-up system of community schools through telephone consultations, site visits, and presentations.

www.communityschools.org/scalingup

ABOUT THE COALITION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: The Coalition for Community Schools is an alliance of P-16 education, local government, youth development, health and social services, community development, and higher education organizations as well as local community school initiatives. The Coalition believes that strong communities and strong school and strong communities are inextricably connected. We envision a future in which schools are centers of thriving communities where everyone belongs, works together and succeeds.