Successful Community School Initiatives Inform New Scale-Up Guide

The Coalition for Community Schools is proud to release its new guide, *Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy*. Built on the experience of the growing number of local community schools initiatives across the country, the guide will help school districts and their public and private community partners organize and mobilize the resources of the entire community to support student success.

“As our schools and communities face the demanding task of educating an increasingly poor and diverse student population they must work together,” said Martin Blank, Coalition Director and President of the Institute for Educational Leadership. “This guide shows them how to get the results that community schools are seeing across the country.”

In Tulsa, for example, school and community leaders have created the Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative (TACSI). They built a collaborative leadership structure that shares responsibility for getting results. Together, the school districts, city, community agencies, OU-Tulsa and other community partners now operate 31 community schools. Research shows that students in high-implementing TACSI community schools outperformed non-community schools by 32 points in math and by 19 points in reading.

Today there are more than 80 school districts and communities with community schools and many others in the planning stage. The guide highlights community school systems in Chicago, Cincinnati, Evansville (IN), Lehigh Valley (PA), Kansas City, Multnomah County (OR), Oakland, South King County (WA), and Tulsa.

Coalition Chair Ira Harkavy, Director of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania said, “The community school is the best vehicle available for knitting together school and community assets to achieve real change. The results we are seeing argue that place-based initiatives such as Promise Neighborhoods, Choice Neighborhoods and Cradle to Career Models intended to improve the lives of students, families, and communities *must* include community schools.”

*Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships* is an interactive web-based tool that helps school and community leaders scale up community schools according to a 6-stage process for building a scaled-up system. It presents key milestones, sets end-state benchmarks for scale-up, and includes stories from successful community school systems. You can watch videos of community leaders scaling up community schools, ask questions to the field about each scale-up stage using LinkedIn, read scale-up stories, and add your own!

Whether you’re starting with one community school or scaling-up to multiple community schools, this Guide will help your community move forward and improve outcomes for children together.

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