

S.616 – The Supporting Community Schools Act

What is a Community School?

A community School is a strategy for organizing the resources of the community around student success. It is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources that provides an integrated focus on academics, services, supports, and opportunities that lead to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities. The Community School is a reform model that is effectively transforming low performing schools across the country by positively impacting school readiness, parent involvement, academic support and success, student physical, social, and emotional well-being, and community engagement. The Community School model reflects the belief that we need to educate the whole child and create communities where students, their families, and their schools thrive.

What are the Demonstrated Benefits of a Community School Model on School Improvement?

- Community schools increase and sustain capacity through diversified financial support and leverage, on average, 3 dollars from private and other sources for every 1 dollar of government funding provided to the schools. According to Secretary Duncan, for every dollar spent on community schools, the United States is getting back 5, 6, or 7 dollars from the business community, non-profit organizations, social service agencies, and State and Federal governments.
- Research indicates that more than half of the factors that influence student achievement occur outside of the classroom. Children are more likely to succeed in school when their comprehensive needs are met. These are just a few examples of demonstrated results from the 49 states that have implemented the Community School model:
 - ✓ In Oklahoma, the Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative (TACSI) operates 18 community schools. Researchers compared the 18 TACSI schools to 18 non-TACSI schools and found that students in TACSI schools that had deeply embedded the community school model scored significantly higher than comparable students in non-TACSI schools on mathematics achievement tests. These schools had higher ratings of instructional leadership and effective supervisory practices, a stronger culture of faculty trust, and higher levels of student trust of teachers, school identification among students, parent trust in school, and school outreach.
 - ✓ In Multnomah County, Oregon, Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN), seventy-five percent of SUN students have increased state benchmark scores in Reading and 77% in Math. Average daily attendance is at 94%. Eighty-eight percent of students improved in at least one interim academic or youth asset measure.
 - ✓ All Cincinnati, Ohio public schools are using some level of the community school strategy. It is the first urban district in the State to receive an “effective” rating. Oyler Elementary School, where 92% of the students receive free or reduced lunch, once threatened with closure, has achieved more than its expected level of growth for more than 2 consecutive years, with its performance index improving by 6% in the last 2 years alone. Overall enrollment in CPS has been declining and has reversed with almost 6,000 more students than projected.
 - ✓ In Providence, Rhode Island, Bailey Elementary School made adequate yearly progress in mathematics and reading for the first time in 4 years. In reading, students in grade 3 went from scoring 27% proficiency in 2007 to 41% in 2009, scores for students in grade 4 jumped from 28% proficiency to 59% during the same period, and students in grade 5 moved from 12% proficiency to 39%.
 - ✓ In Tukwila, Washington, Community Schools Collaboration’s on-time graduation rate has increased annually since 2001 and the rate of absentee and drop-outs for middle and high school students also has dropped.
 - ✓ The Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) reported that CCP partner schools University City High School and Ecotech had average daily attendance rates of 79% and 87% respectively compared to the citywide high school average daily attendance of 65%.

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- Provides for the inclusion of the Community School model as a permissible intervention model for schools in need of improvement in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Specifically, it would amend Sec. 1003(g)(9) to allow local educational agencies to use Title I funds under this subsection to transform a school identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, under Title I, section 1116, into a community school.
- Supports community-school coordination in prevention and intervention programs for children and youth who are neglected, delinquent, or at risk by permitting the use of Title I funding for a community school coordinator responsible for creating and coordinating results-focused partnerships that support the goals of the community school, integrating school and community resources based on individual student needs, engaging families and community members, mobilizing partners, coordinating resources, and helping to align and leverage resources and integrate funding streams.

Organizations Supporting S.616

1. American Association of School Administrators
2. American Camp Association
3. American Counseling Association
4. American Federation of Teachers
5. American Public Health Association
6. ASCD
7. California School Health Centers Association
8. The Children's Aid Society
9. Coalition for Community Schools
10. Communities in Schools
11. Federation for Community Schools
12. First Focus Campaign for Children
13. Michigan's Children
14. National Association of State Directors of Special Education
15. National School Boards Association
16. National School Climate Center
17. National Summer Learning Association
18. Public Education Network
19. Rural School and Community Trust
20. Save the Children
21. United Way Worldwide
22. Yale School of the 21st Century (21C)
23. Yale University, Mutt-i-grees Curriculum Initiative
24. Youth Policy Institute