Community Schools
National Awards for Excellence
2007

Strengthening schools, families & communities
About the Coalition for Community Schools

An alliance of more than 170 national, state and local organizations, the Coalition represents community development and community building; education; family support and human services; government; health and mental health services; policy, training and advocacy; philanthropy; and school facilities planning and youth development organizations, as well as local, state and national networks of community schools.

Mission Statement

The Coalition’s mission is to mobilize the assets of schools, families and communities to create a united movement for community schools. Community schools strengthen schools, families and communities to improve student learning.

Coalition for Community Schools Staff

Martin J. Blank, Staff Director
Amy C. Berg, Research Director
Maame Ameyaw, Program Assistant
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Steering Committee

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Community Schools National Awards for Excellence

To highlight the expansion and effectiveness of community schools, the Coalition for Community Schools annually awards schools and communities that demonstrate excellence. This year’s awards are being given to three individual schools and three community-wide initiatives.

Schools:
- Carlin Springs Elementary School in Arlington, VA
- Fair Street Elementary School in Gainesville, GA
- Sayre High School in Philadelphia, PA

Communities:
- Independence, MO
- Multnomah County, OR
- Tukwila, WA

These schools and communities have demonstrated excellence in their efforts to develop well-integrated, purposeful partnerships, to involve community and families in the life of the school and to build deep and lasting connections with the community. The school and community receiving this award has demonstrated that they also are moving toward results—academic, attendance, social emotional, health, family involvement and civic—that it has set for itself. Although each of these schools and communities has different assets, they share a common vision and are working to create the conditions for learning.

**Condition #1**: The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students.

**Condition #2**: Students are motivated and engaged in learning—both in school and in community settings, during and after school.

**Condition #3**: The basic physical, mental, and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed.

**Condition #4**: There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families, and school staff.

**Condition #5**: Community engagement promotes a school climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful and connects students to a broader learning community.

**Condition #6**: Early childhood development is fostered through high quality, comprehensive programs that nurture learning and development.

It Takes a Village...or a Community

To create these conditions, community schools work with partners in the community, and with parents and families, to build exciting, innovative places that serve the entire community. Our award winning schools have discovered that engaging partners helps them to provide the opportunities and supports that young people need, while allowing teachers to do what they do best—teach.

Partners range from county services that provide healthcare and mental health services to local financial institutions that offer financial literacy and information on home ownership. At Sayre High School, for example, University of Pennsylvania faculty and students in

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**What is a community school?**

A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between school and community. It has an integrated focus on academics, youth development, family support and community development; its curriculum emphasizes real world through community problem solving and service. By extending the school day and week, it reaches families and community residents. Thus the community school is uniquely equipped to develop an educated citizenry, and to strengthen family and community.

[www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)
medicine, nursing, dentistry, social work, education, law, and arts and sciences, work at Sayre through internships, courses, and research projects. Curricula are designed to not only teach students about health but also to prepare Sayre students to deliver health promotion and education to the community.

**Schools Can’t do it Alone**

What’s going on in these community schools is not the only thing that is unique about them. How they work – the glue that holds them together and sustains the work – is unique as well. Most community schools have some type of council or committee that brings together the principal, teachers, parents, community partners, community residents and students, among others, to plan and guide the work at the school. For example, in Multnomah County, at each school, a School/Neighborhood Site Council of parents, teachers, community members, and students assesses neighborhood needs and implements strategies to achieve the aforementioned results. Planning at the site level is also guided by parameters that encourage developing comprehensive services and supports for families; building on existing work and strengths of the school and community; demonstrate active involvement of school, community and parents in designing and carrying out the program; and assure accountability by focusing on measurable results and benchmarks.

Each of these schools and communities also has a Community School Coordinator at the schools who is responsible for mobilizing and coordinating school and community resources. Coordinators are employed by the school or a lead community-based organization. Leaders in these places know that bringing different groups together does not just magically happen; it requires dedicated personnel who know both the school and the community.

Finally, each of these efforts has leadership coming from inside and outside the school system. Cities, counties, local non-profit organizations, local foundations, United Ways and others are in the mix together with school leadership.

**Achieving Results for Students and Families**

Each of the awardees has a precise focus on student outcomes. Carlin Springs Elementary school, for example, has met their adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals since becoming a community school. Eighty percent of students who were enrolled in the after school program at Carlin Springs have shown some improvement in homework completion, behavior, and class participation, since the school became a community school; they have also been absent and tardy fewer days than other students. Through an intentional, well-coordinated approach, the school has integrated school-day instruction, after-school programs, and parent skill programs into a cohesive set of year-round opportunities that promote student achievement and stable, healthy families.

Academic achievement is clearly a primary goal in these schools and communities, but it is not the only outcome they are seeking. In Tukwila, Washington, where family mobility is a significant challenge, mobility rates have begun a steady decline. The City Council, interested in the cause of the decline, interviewed parents to find out why they were staying in the city; over 90% of the parents interviewed attributed schools, and the safe place that they provide children after school, as the primary motivation for staying in Tukwila.

**A Final Thought**

These schools and communities know that there is no silver bullet solution in education. They have discovered instead that preparing young people for life in the 21st century requires forging collaborative relationships where communities, schools and families reach across boundaries that once divided them to speak and act with one voice – every child deserves every chance to thrive.
Carlin Springs Elementary School, School Award Winner, 2007
Carlin Springs Elementary
Arlington, Virginia

Results

Carlin Springs is making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in all areas.

Over the last 3 years, the number of students staying after school for enrichment programs jumped from 60 to 250; and 80% of these students showed academic improvements.

Among parents attending ESL classes focused on understanding the school system, 95% attended their parent-teacher conferences.

Through an on-site awareness program run by the Arlington Co. Fire Department compliance with car seat and seatbelt safety laws increase from under 50% to over 90% in 2006.

Who’s Who
At Carlin Springs

Corina Cornel, Principal
Linda Henderson, Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families
Miguel Ley, Assistant Principal
Anne Vor der Bruegge, Community School Coordinator

For more information, contact Anne Vor der Bruegge at anne_vorderbruegge@apsva.us or (703) 228-8409

Imagine a school where teachers and parents work together to help children learn and develop; a place where local arts groups, businesses, faith-based organizations and county services all come together to improve the lives of young people and their families. At Carlin Springs Elementary School, in Arlington, VA, students are thriving because the school, county and the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families have come together to create a place that does all of this and more.

Most of Carlin Springs’ students come from immigrant families and more than half are English language learners. Many live in poverty. These factors often spell trouble for schools. But at Carlin Springs, students are succeeding and developing a lifelong passion for learning. They learn in ways that bring the curriculum to life. For example, the student-run branch of the Arlington VA Federal Credit Union and the banking club sponsored by E*Trade Bank integrate real-world issues into the curriculum. Building on the economics units in grades 2-5, students learn all aspects of savings, budgeting, and the functioning of credit unions and banks.

As is often the case at a community school, parents are also thriving. Carlin Springs extends education opportunities to parents, including English and computer literacy classes, parenting classes, and workshops on education-related topics. Parents have been trained to review immunization records at community health fairs and encourage other families to have their children immunized. Forty-two parents and 33 community volunteers assist in the school on a weekly or even daily basis.

To support family partnerships, teachers conduct home visits to strengthen their connection to more isolated families. To facilitate visits, teachers bring scrapbook materials—and a translator when necessary—to work with the student and his or her family to create a book that the student can share with the class. During home visits, teachers learn about how to better support learning, and teachers learn about the hopes and dreams that parents have for their children. These visits also encourage the family to take advantage of the opportunities available at the school through its community partners.

Carlin Springs has blossomed as a community school since it hired a full-time Community Coordinator. The Principal and Community School Coordinator work together to integrate the many parts of this initiative into a well-coordinated approach to raising student achievement and strengthening families.

About Carlin Springs

The school’s 22204 zip code has been described as “a world in a zip code,” due to its ethnic diversity: 90% of Carlin Springs’ students come from immigrant families from 35 countries. 63% of students are considered English language learners. Carlin Springs’ diverse student body also includes 81% of students who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch, as well a high rate of student mobility. In this dynamic environment, the Carlin Springs Community School has built an international community of families, staff, and partners.

Some Key Partners at Carlin Springs

AHC, Inc. (Arlington Housing Corporation)
Arlington County Departments
Health and Human Services
Fire Department
Parks and Recreation
Employment and Education Program
Arlington Jaycees
Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families
Arlington Transit
Arlington Virginia Federal Credit Union
Capital Area Food Bank
Children, Youth and Families
Computers for Students
E*Trade
Girl Scouts
Greenbrier Learning Center
John Snow International
Junior Achievement
Junior League of Northern VA
Marymount University
Department of Athletics
National Science Foundation
Northern VA Community Hospital
Project Family
Results

Fair Street has made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the past five years in all areas.

For 5th graders the percentage passing for reading rose from 75% in 2003 to 91% in 2006 and for math it rose from 78% to 88% during the same time period.

The percentage of 3rd graders passing state tests in reading rose from 76% in 2003 to 94% in 2006.

Parent surveys indicate that parents strongly agree that they are incorporated in school decision-making and that Fair Street offers a high quality education.

Who’s Who At Fair Street

Carol Brimson, Primary Years Program Coordinator and Literacy Coach
Christine Brosky
William Campbell, Asst. Principal for School/Community Services
Merrianne Dyer, Principal
Kim Hall, School Counselor

For more information, contact Merrianne Dyer at merrianne.dyer@gcssk12.net or 770-536-5295

Gainesville population has become more diverse over the years, Fair Street has held its place as the heart of its community.

The school’s unique partnerships benefit both the school and larger community. Through the school’s efforts, Southside Park, a first-class recreational facility, has been built for the community. The school houses historical archives to preserve artifacts and its role as a historical landmark of the African American community in Gainesville and Hall County. Brenau University’s College of Education also uses Fair Street classrooms as professional development sites.

Fair Street is open late into the evening hours and all day on weekends to provide after-school programs, parenting and adult literacy classes, and access to the gym, computer lab and library for students and families.

Families use the schools as an extension of the school day programs and for weekend leisure and recreation. Through health screenings, mental health services, parent programs and resource materials, the school extends special assistance to both families and community residents. For students, Fair Street offers eye glasses, dental care, and mental health counseling, as well.

Fair Street engages students in interdisciplinary, international and service learning. Each year, students select a global and local service project that is linked to the curriculum. For the last three years, Fair Street sent materials and school supplies to support a school in Zambia and coordinated a teacher exchange with the school. This year, Fair Street students are leading a recycling program with the Gainesville City Waste Management Service and the local government. Each of these projects link to objectives across the school’s math, literacy, science and social studies curricula.

According to the school’s principal, Merrianne Dyer, this approach is working. “The achievement gap is closing for all of our students,” said Dyer.
Results

School attendance increased 10% and suspensions decreased 50% between 2005-6 and 2006-7.

More students now consider careers in medicine due to the health-field pipeline program.

90% of Family Fitness Night participants say they are eating healthier and exercising more.

Sayre graduated its first cohort of parents and students from REACH, an anti-truancy program, last January. Participants have been more involved in the school since the end of the program.

Who’s Who At Sayre

Scott Baier, HPDP Program Coordinator
Chris Bower, Director of Community Schools
Jessica Brown, Urban Nutrition Initiative Coordinator
Catherine Dully, Beacon Director
Tessa Johnson, Family and Adult Coordinator
Dana Price, Peer Health Education Coordinator
Adrienne Ralston, REACH Anti-Truancy Coordinator
Alan Speed, Intake Social Worker
Joseph Starinieri, Principal
Tanya Thompson, Community Development Coordinator
Jae Williams, Asst. Director of Youth Development
For more information, contact Cory Bowman at bowman@pobox.upenn.edu

What do college students, an Ivy League university, an urban health crisis and teenagers living in poverty all have in common? Too many times, the answer is “not a thing” but at Sayre High School in West Philadelphia connections are being made that could very well save lives.

Responding to the issues that plagued his students – violence, gangs, drugs and a lack of access to basic health and dental care - the principal of Sayre School approached Penn’s Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) in 2002 with the idea that having a health center on site would be a boon to the students and the community. Around the same time, a group of Penn undergraduates were focusing their efforts on helping to solve the healthcare crisis in West Philadelphia. The students’ research and work with the community led them to propose the establishment of a community health promotion and disease prevention program at Sayre.

Penn faculty and students in medicine, nursing, dentistry, social work, education, law, and arts & sciences, work at Sayre through internships, courses, and research projects. The curriculum is designed to not only teach students about health, but also to prepare Sayre students to deliver health promotion and education to the community. In a Medical Intake Procedures course, for example, Sayre eleventh-graders work along with Penn students to learn to perform basic medical intake operations, including how to record blood pressure, height and weight, glucose levels, reflexes, and vision. Students also learn about prominent health problems in the community such as hypertension, obesity and diabetes. At the health center, which opened in 2006, students then apply what they have learned to assist Penn doctors and health professional students in providing intake services, medical information, and referrals for community patients. Students are learning by actively serving their community.

As a city-funded Beacon Centers site, Sayre extends its health focus into the after school hours through a variety of academic, enrichment, and fitness programs for youth of all ages. On Saturdays, Penn uses Sayre’s gym to hold youth basketball league games; on weekdays, Penn volunteers conduct after school practices and tutoring sessions for students in the league.

About Sayre

Sayre High School is a site of UPenn’s University-Assisted Community School Initiative. 100% of its students are eligible for lunch subsidies and 100% of its 700 students are African American.

With the support of the University’s Center for Community Partnerships, Sayre houses a school-based community health center.

Sayre’s HPDP curriculum focuses on preparing students for careers in the health field.

Learning is active here: Sayre and Penn students learn about health and careers together in the classroom, apply the knowledge via service-learning, and educate others in the community.

Some Key Partners at Sayre

City of Philadelphia
National Students Partnership
Neighborhood Town Watch
Philadelphia Beacons initiative
Philadelphia School District
University of Pennsylvania (various departments within schools of: Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Education, Social Work, Law, & Arts & Sciences)
University of Pennsylvania Center for Community Partnerships
The West Philadelphia Neighborhood Link
Independence School District
Independence, Missouri

Results
Early childhood & family programming have resulted in over 80% of kindergartners having contact with the district before entering school.

Students involved in the extended program show improvement in almost every measurable area: participation, self-reliance, homework completion, attendance, academic achievement, and more.

Family School Liaisons have worked with families during 17,170 home visits during the last 3 years.

The District won the state Distinction in Performance award for a perfect Annual Performance Report, as well as the Civic Star for Missouri, in 2006.

Who’s Who In Independence
Dr. Joanie Hartnett, Asst. Superintendent for Middle School/ Professional Development
Jim Hinson, Superintendent
Gayle Hobbs, LINC President
Sanidi Kiehne, Asst. Superintendent for Elementary/ Curriculum & Assessment
Don Reimal, Mayor
Dr. Ed Streich, Asst. Superintendent for High School/ Curriculum & Assessment
Jana Waits, School Board President

For more information, contact Elizabeth Streich at bstreich@indep.k12.mo.us or 816-521-2700

Everyone in Independence plays a role in educating young people. Each elementary and one high school has a School/Neighborhood Site Council that includes parents, teachers, community members, and students. These councils assess needs for their neighborhood and school and then implement action plans aimed at improving the well-being of students, families, neighborhoods and the community. In Independence, the public believes that a caring community builds on its strengths to provide meaningful opportunities for young people.

Initiated with the Schools of the 21st Century approach, the community schools approach has grown over time in the Independence School District and was solidified in 1996 with a new partnership called LINC Caring Communities. The Local Investment Commission (LINC) creates a community governance model driven by direct involvement of informed families and citizens.

The supports and opportunities use a strengths-based, holistic approach including family goal planning, resource referrals, parenting and child education, long-term informal support and interventions, and crisis intervention. Participation is voluntary. The Dental Clinic, serving kindergarten through fifth grade, is a partnership between the District and Samuel Rodgers Health Services, a non-profit dental provider in the community. Children are transported from one school to the Dental Clinic each day on a rotating schedule that allows all children to be served. Transportation is funded by the H&R Block Foundation. A Samuel Rodgers dentist provides free dental care by accessing Medicaid, private insurance plans, and local grants for every student in need. Currently the local mental health center is working with the Independence School District to develop an early intervention program that will provide children and families quick and easy access to psychiatric care and in-home therapeutic services. This new collaboration with agencies not previously involved in the school system is evidence of the impact of a community schools philosophy and commitment.

Buildings are used beyond the school day on a regular basis. Evening and weekend access allows buildings to become community centers during non-school hours. Volunteers within the schools, from mentors to boosters, improve the quality of education by increasing services to students during, before and after school and connecting the broader community to the lives of children. Volunteers from schools, “return the favor” by working in the community with groups like Hillcrest Ministries Homeless Shelter. These efforts build a sense of civic duty in students and create a valuable resource for the community.
Regularly participating students have shown strong gains in academics; attendance; behavior; and youth assets, including gaining confidence in school subjects.

70% of regular participants had increased state benchmark scores in reading and 71% had increased state benchmark scores in math.

93% of SUN students report that they have at least one adult whom they can go to for help.

Teachers report 70% of students have improved homework completion rates, 80% have improved academic performance and 79% have a more positive attitude toward school.

SUN Community Schools help students and communities succeed by expanding the use of neighborhood schools. Programs are added for students and families before or after regular school hours, focusing on academics, recreation and enrichment. Health and social services, such as career counseling, are also provided. Many activities at a SUN School are open to the entire community. Since each school and neighborhood is unique, each SUN School looks different and will evolve over time.

SUN Schools build upon positive assets already in communities and link those with the activities offered in the school. SUN Schools tailor their events, classes, services and activities to what the local community wants, through the use of an Advisory Committee. Using an evaluation team to measure its impact, the SUN schools initiative celebrates its successes and continuously improves SUN School programs and their impact in the community.

Involving, serving, and responding to children, families, residents throughout the county, SUN Schools have become embedded in their communities. Touching all families by making every school a community school are long-term goals for Multnomah County and for the state. The success of SUN Community schools is illustrated by the growing demands among principals and communities to expand SUN to their schools too.
Tukwila Community Schools Collaboration
Tukwila, Washington

Located just south of Seattle, Tukwila is the most diverse city in Washington State. Residents speak over 60 different languages and are highly mobile. Poverty, high drop-out rates and a lack of connections to the community are just some of the issues that the Tukwila Community Schools Collaboration (TCSC) has tackled since its inception in 2001. With a strong conviction that community resources had to be engaged to help the children and families living in Tukwila, TCSC was created to develop full service community learning centers. The city of Tukwila is a major supporter of the initiative, investing $100,000 of city funds this year.

All of Tukwila’s schools are community schools. They provide support to youth as they transition from elementary to middle and middle to high school and a safe place after school for students to receive academic support and enrichment. Tukwila’s community schools successfully engage all of the city’s population, including its large population of foreign language speaking and recent immigrant families. Community Liaisons involve non-English speaking families from four of the five major language groups by both providing information on how the school system works – like how their children qualify for and “graduate” from English language classes, what to do when your child misses schools, etc.- and bringing community concerns back to the schools. A good example of this exceptional two way communication was a recent Latino Parent night that focused on student discipline. Through a question and answer period, parents identified concerns about gang activity. This concern resulted in a gang awareness forum held for parents and school staff.

Parents and community residents actively participate in and help to lead Tukwila’s community schools. Parents, community residents and business, non-profit and school professionals make up TCSC’s Board of Directors. And community members offer educational and recreational activities—running a chess club, teaching a reading program, coaching sports – throughout all five schools, either through the City’s Parks & Recreation department, or as independently-initiated programs.

All the principals at Tukwila’s schools noted that the partnership with TCSC was one of the primary reasons for meeting their annual yearly progress goals. The involvement of teachers and para-professionals in extended learning day activities has created a seamless transition for students from the regular school day into after hours programs. The result has been a cultural change within the District that brings the community into the schools and the schools out to the community.

Results

Since 2001, decreased absentee & drop-out rates have decreased for middle and high school students; on-time graduation rate increased.

Elementary teachers report TSCS’ extended day program improves students’ homework completion, in-class behavior and participation.

For families participating in TCSC programs, the mobility rate is 5% compared with the district average of 23%.

Reading, math and writing scores for middle school and high school students are well above neighboring districts.

Who’s Who In Tukwila

John Barbee, Foster High School Site Coordinator, TCSC
Verna Griffin, Tukwila City Council President
Lynda Hall, Elementary Program Director, TCSC
James Hammond, Superintendent
Cory Manago, Tukwila School Board, President
Steve Mullet, Mayor
Deborah Salas, Executive Director, TCSC
Willie Seals, Showalter Middle School Site Coordinator, TCSC
Alma Villegas, Executive Assistant/Latino Community Liaison, TCSC

For more information, contact Deborah Salas at salasd@tukwila.wednet.edu or 206-901-8044

About Tukwila

The city of Tukwila is a multi-ethnic suburban community experiencing urbanization, immigration, transience and rapid growth. It is home to a continuous influx of refugees from around the world. All schools in this community are community schools. Tukwila has become a model for surrounding communities who hope to replicate Tukwila’s successes beyond the city limits. Tukwila has an enrollment of 2100 students in 5 schools.

Some Key Partners in Tukwila

Arts Corps
Bezos Family Foundation
City of Tukwila
Key Bank
Marguerite Casey Foundation
Medina Foundation
Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation
Puget Sound ESD
The Seattle Foundation
Somali Community Services Coalition
Starfire Sports
STEPS to a HealthierUS
The Stuart Foundation
Tukwila City Parks & Recreation Department
Tukwila Children’s Foundation
Tukwila School District
Virtu asiatraining.com
Washington Education Alliance
HEROS
Washington Reading Corps
The Coalition for Community Schools is an alliance of national, state, and local organizations in education, K-12, youth development, community planning and development, family support, health and human services, 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.

Our mission is to mobilize the assets of schools, families, and communities to create a unified movement for community schools. Community schools strengthen schools, families, and communities so that together they are better able to improve student learning.

The Coalition for Community Schools members include the following organizations: