

ACT Now and Community Schools

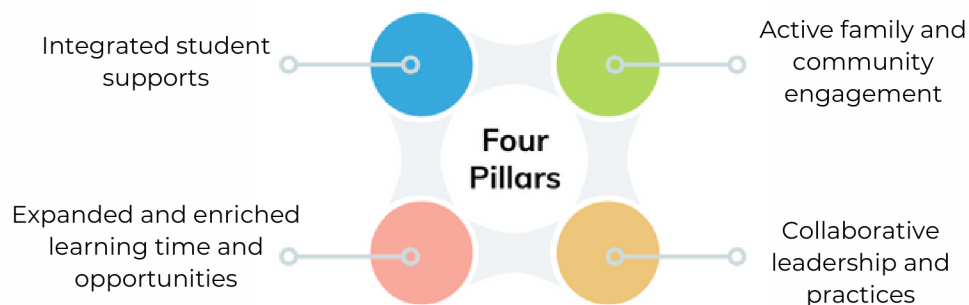


ACT Now (Afterschool for Children and Teens Now) is a statewide coalition that aims for ALL youth in Illinois to have access to high-quality and affordable out-of-school time programs. We do this through legislative advocacy, building effective partnerships, providing professional development trainings, and sharing free resources for the field.

Our stakeholders include program providers, policymakers, community advocates, and youth organizations.

Community schools are any school that collaborates with families and community organizations to offer comprehensive educational experiences and resources for students' achievement. Each community school is a unique reflection of the needs and assets of its community although they all include the following: 1) Integrated Student Supports; 2) Expanded and Enriched Learning Time; 3) Active Family and Community Engagement; and 4) Collaborative Leadership Practices.

Four Pillars of Community Schools



ACT Now convenes the only statewide professional development specifically for community school practitioners. Since 2018, the coalition has grown this statewide network to improve access to resources, provide advocacy support, and work towards the goal of every school in Illinois as a community school.

ACT NOW AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

GENERAL FREE RESOURCES

ACT Now provides communications templates, report assistance, and toolkits free for the field.

CS GUIDING TEAM

This group meets quarterly throughout the fiscal year to develop a work plan and allocate priorities for our statewide work.



RESOURCE SURVEY

Each year, ACT Now surveys the community school field to gather data, better understand needs, and develop resources for the upcoming year.

ACT NOW

Afterschool for Children & Teens

QUARTERLY CS CONVENINGS

ACT Now convenes the only statewide professional development specifically for community school practitioners. These convenings happen quarterly in three regions: Chicago, Chicago suburbs, and downstate. The convenings include policy updates, networking, presentations from partners, and group work time based on the meetings topic.

Past topics include:

- Family Engagement
- Advisory Boards
- Community Schools Models
- Policy and Advocacy
- Funding
- Mental-Health First Aid
- The Four Pillars

On May 3rd, 2023, ACT Now held an in-person statewide convening focused on Collaborative Leadership. This event was a full day of learning sessions, networking opportunities, and community-building with nearly 130 attendees.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

ACT Now advocates for community school funding at the state level and helps facilitate legislative site visits. We provide advocacy resources and materials, strategies for taking action, tips for community driven advocacy, and more.