


The Power of Community Schools





Community Schools are a highly effective strategy for improving student success by integrating academic supports, family engagement, and community partnerships.


Research shows that students in Community Schools **achieve higher academic performance**, including improved **math and literacy proficiency**, increased **graduation rates**, and **better attendance**. These schools provide services such as well-being support, afterschool programs, and college and career readiness. Additionally, Community Schools support **teacher retention and professional development**, creating a more stable and effective learning environment. **For every dollar spent, there is a \$15 return on investment**. By addressing both academic and non-academic barriers, Community Schools ensure that all students have the support and opportunities needed to thrive.

A Community Schools Overview

 Community Schools are neighborhood hubs, uniting families, educators, and community partners so that all children and youth can thrive.

 Each Community School is uniquely designed to meet local needs. Today, there are between 8,000 and 10,000 Community Schools nationwide that serve rural, suburban, and urban communities, addressing key challenges in K-12 education by improving student attendance, student achievement, and family engagement.

 The Community Schools movement has grown rapidly in recent decades, thanks in part to the public investments by The U.S. Department of Education. Their Full-Service Community Schools Program, housed in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), has played a crucial role in this expansion. Since 2008, 114 grants have been awarded, with 91 currently active across 39 states, totaling nearly \$940 million in support of Community Schools.

 At both the school and district levels, Community School Coordinators build partnerships with students, families, educators, and local organizations. They develop student-centered programs such as tutoring, mental health services, and innovative teaching strategies —ensuring students have the tools to succeed.



Check out the Coalition for Community Schools Here!

Supporting All Students

- Connect with your policymakers on all levels of government to share the impact Community Schools has had on your community.
- **Community Schools Work!**

Improved Student Attendance & Engagement

- Community schools have significantly reduced chronic absenteeism across 39 states, and across urban, suburban, and rural areas ([Germain et.al, 2024](#)).

Higher Academic Achievement

- Schools implementing the Community School strategy report higher math and literacy scores, with some schools seeing double-digit gains in proficiency due to extended learning time, tutoring, and wraparound supports ([Covelli et.al, 2022](#)).

Stronger Family & Community Partnerships

- Community Schools strengthen family-school relationships, using methods such as home visits, parent engagement workshops, and community resource hubs. Increasing family participation in education leads to better student outcomes ([Provinzano & Mayger, 2022](#)).

High Return on Investment (ROI)

- There is a high return on investment for Community Schools, with a \$15 return on investment for every \$1 invested ([Bowden, et.al, 2017](#)).



Community Schools Clearinghouse

Check out the Coalition's Clearinghouse of nearly 550 pieces of research on Community Schools.

Want to include research not yet in our Clearinghouse? Complete this form!





Visit our Research Practice Network to access over 35 webinars on timely research and practice on such topics as:


- Addressing Chronic Absence Through Community Schools
- Collaborative Leadership in Community Schools
- The Importance of Community Schools and Out-of-School Time Partnerships
- & More!

For our RPN site - [Check out this link!](#)

Community Schools Increase...

 **Student Attendance:** The New York City Community Schools Initiative (NYC-CS) significantly reduced chronic absenteeism by 7.4 percentage points in elementary/middle schools and 8.3 percentage points in high schools, with the influence of mental health yielding even stronger positive impacts on chronic absenteeism ([Johnston et al., 2020](#)).

 **Math & Literacy Proficiency:** In Pensacola, Florida, C.A. Weis Elementary's Community Partnership Schools™ significantly improved math and literacy scores, narrowing the achievement gap while non-CPS students saw declines. This resulted from community-informed approaches to classroom management and a weekend backpack food program ([Johnson, 2020](#)).

 **Family Engagement:** Oakland Unified School District's (OUSD) Community Schools initiative built strong school-agency partnerships, enhanced service provider collaboration, trained specialized personnel, and provided staff development and family engagement resources. These district-level supports have enabled the integration of whole child educational practices in multiple schools, leading to a 13% percent increase in the district's graduation rate ([Klevan et al., 2023](#)).

Community Schools are Evidence-Based

Powerful Student and Family Engagement

Community Schools in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico, had higher attendance rates over district schools without this strategy. Driven by expanded learning time, strong family partnerships, and collaborative leadership, Community Schools engaged families and offered academic and social support, leading to improved attendance ([Oakes & Espinoza, 2020](#)).

Collaborative Leadership, Shared Power and Voice

Woodcreek Elementary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania successfully integrated the Principal and Community School Director (CSD) into a shared leadership model, blending academic and non-academic supports to deepen their connections to the school and community. This resulted in teacher transfer requests dropping from over 50% to only two requests, signaling strong collaboration and school stability ([Provinzano, Sondergeld, & Knaggs, 2020](#)).

Expanded and Enriched Learning Opportunities

The West Kern Consortium's Community Schools initiative in rural California achieved significant academic growth despite pandemic challenges. They successfully implemented programs, maintained services and support through the pandemic period, and showed academic improvements from 2020-21 to 2021-22 ([Maier, 2024](#)).

Rigorous, Community-connected Classroom Instruction

Adlai E. Stevenson Elementary School in Michigan demonstrated a strong return on investment with the support of United Way. They collaborated with local organizations, including General Motors and Ford, and increased afterschool programming from 2 to 17 partners in 4 years, strengthening student supports ([Stanford, 2024](#)).

Culture of Belonging, Safety, and Care

Felicitas & Gonzalo Mendez High School in East Los Angeles built shared leadership and inclusive environment leading to a nearly 90% graduation rate and 90% college-going rate by 2020. Since 2011, Mendez had zero expulsions, and in 2021, 75% of students reported feeling safe and happy. These outcomes highlight the power of Community Schools in creating supportive, student-centered environments ([Thompson, 2021](#)).

Integrated Systems of Support

Indiana's Muncie Community Schools, established a health clinic that facilitated 3,442 student visits in its first two years, addressing critical health needs and improving overall student well-being. They also increased learning through technology and adopted best-practice informed literacy and math curriculum ([Graves, 2023](#)).

Text boxes are linked with the source!