PART IV: Community Schools- Research, Strategies & Practices

The page highlights research, strategies, and practices as it relates to the development, implementation, and sustainability of community schools. (Updated June 6, 2023)

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RESEARCH

Evaluations

- **Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools: An Assessment of the Impact of the New York City Community Schools Initiative** (2020)
  Rand Corporation
  The study assessed the impact of the New York City Community Schools Initiative (NYC-CS) through the 2017–18 school year. The study assessed the effects along seven outcome domains (attendance, educational attainment, academic performance, disciplinary incidents, teachers' shared responsibility for student success, student connectedness to adults and peers, and family empowerment opportunities) and explored the extent to which there was variation in programmatic impact based on student and school-level characteristics.

- **Community Schools in Practice: Research on Implementation and Impact** (2016)
  Research for Action
  This research brief examines existing research on comprehensive community schools, then looks at two promising examples of community schools: the United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley's Community Schools and the School District of Cincinnati. The research brief concludes by offering lessons learned on community schools and a set of policy considerations for leaders.

Reviews

- **Technical Assistance Needs Assessment** (2022)
  Community Schools Forward
  A report summarizing the findings of a national study about the technical assistance needs and assets of community schools.

- **Full-Service Community Schools Are Critical Investments for Children and Families in Poverty** (2022)
  Child Trends
  This resources compiles research about how community schools can ameliorate conditions of poverty and extend educational opportunities to underserved students.

- **How the Science of Learning and Development Can Transform Education – Initial Findings** (2020)
  Science of Learning & Development Alliance (SoLD)
  Brief summarizes initial findings from research that addresses opportunities, equity, learning and youth development.

- **Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A review of the Evidence** (2017)
  Learning Policy Institute (LPI)
  Report examines 143 research studies on each of the four community school pillars, along with evaluation studies of community schools as a comprehensive strategy. In each area, the report synthesizes high-quality studies that use a range of research methods, drawing conclusions about the findings that warrant confidence while also pointing to areas in which the research is inconclusive. Reports includes a compendium.

- **Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement** (2017)
  National Education Policy Center
  Report examines the research on community schools to explore whether the 2015 federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) opens the possibility of investing in well-designed community schools, and how school, district, and state leaders can implement community school interventions in schools targeted for comprehensive support.

- **Community Schools as an Effective Strategy for Reform** (2016)
  National Education Policy Center
  This policy memo compiles research on how community schools can serve as an effective strategy for U.S. education reform.

STRATEGIES

General Resources

- **Framework: Essentials for Community School Transformation** (2023)
  Community Schools Forward
  This resource, from leading experts in community schooling, presents a framework for transforming schools with the community school model.

- **Theory of Action for Community School Transformation** (2023)
  Community Schools Forward
  This resource, from leading experts in community schooling, unpacks the essentials of community school transformation and shows the activities community schools undertake as they move from their initial commitment to the strategy to full implementation through the context of the continuous improvement cycle.

- **[Stages of Development](#)** (2023)
  Community Schools Forward
  This resource, from leading experts in community schooling, outlines the stages of development of community schools and strategies for moving through the stages.

- **[What the Four Pillars of Community Schools Look Like in Action](#)**
  Learning Policy Institute (LPI)
  Infographic on the four pillars of community school

- **[Education Interview of the Month: Greg Smith Interviews Jeannie Oakes on Community Schools](#)** **(2017)**
  National Education Policy Center
  Lewis and Clark College Emeritus Professor of Education Gregory A. Smith interviews Jeannie Oakes, Professor Emeritus at UCLA. Greg and Jeannie explore the characteristics, history, and benefits of community schools.

Case Studies

- **[Community Schools Story Map](#)** (2023)
  The Partnership for the Future of Learning
  This interactive map highlights the stories of community schools and the impact they're having across the U.S. The stories published on the map show how community schools strategies work in different places and at different stages of development.

- **[District Leaders' Strategies for Funding and Implementing Community Schools](#)** (2022)
  Child Trends
  This brief presents the findings of a case study of four LEAs implementing the community schooling strategy. After describing implementation and funding strategies in each of the four focal LEAs, the brief then offers five strategies for scaling up funding to community schools, based on CS leaders' insights about sources, roles, and practices.

- **[Community Schools and Extended Learning Bureau](#)** (2021)
  New Mexico Public Education Department
  A brief describing the state of community school implementation in New Mexico.

- **[Return on Investment of a Community School Coordinator: A Case Study](#)** (2021)
  Apex & ABC Community School Partnership
  This case study looked at Manzano Mesa Elementary school in Albuquerque, New Mexico to show the return on investment of a community school coordinator.

Funding

- ***[Federal Resources to Support Community Schools](#)*** *(2023)*
  White House
  This January 2023 toolkit describes how federal programs can support community school activities with additional information on how grantees can apply and access technical assistance.

- ***[District Leaders' Strategies for Funding and Implementing Community Schools](#)*** *(2022)*
  Child Trends
  This resource breaks down how four school districts used different funding strategies to meet their specific geographical context and how those strategies changed as each district went from starting to implement community schools, to expanding, and eventually reaching most students in the district.

- **Recent Funding Approaches and Sources for Community Schools** (2022)
  Child Trends
  This resource, accompanied by an infographic factsheet, identifies common sources of federal, state, local, and private funding to community schools and includes an annotated bibliography of literature on community schools' funding approaches and sources.

- ***Investing in Community Schools: How States and Districts Can Use Federal Recovery Funds Strategically*** (2021)
  Learning Policy Institute
  This fact sheet describes how states and districts are using and can use federal recovery funds to support community schools.

- **Frequently Asked Questions Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Support Full-Service Community Schools & Related Strategies** (2021)
  U.S. Department of Education
  Document includes frequently asked questions intended to support state and local efforts in effectively using American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds to advance evidence-based full-service community schools and related approaches.

Family & Community Engagement

- **NCSRC Summer Chat Series on Community Engagement** (2021)
  National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC)
  NCSRC held a series of three short "summer chats" inspired by the publication of our report, How Charter Schools Can Leverage Community Assets through Partnerships.

- **Focusing on Families: How Districts and States Can Support Families to form Strong Partnerships with Schools** (2018)
  Jaimie Grazi Orland (Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Mid- Atlantic)
  Article describes lessons learned from the field on the impact of strong partnerships between schools and families.

- **Using Digital Tools and Social Media to Engage Families in School Improvement Initiatives** (2018)
  Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Central
  Central webinar presents research-based strategies to engage families in school improvement initiatives. Presenters will discuss tools, resources, and strategies that support the communication, through a thoughtful and coordinated process, of key messages related to school improvement goals and strategies. The webinar will highlight digital tools and social media used by state and local education agencies to engage families to support school improvement initiatives.

PRACTICES

Implementation Guides

- **Outcomes and Indicators for Community Schools: A Guide for Implementers and Evaluators** (2023)
  Community Schools Forward
  This tool is designed to support implementers and evaluators in assessing and informing progress towards the goals of family & community engagement and engaging and transforming the lives of young people in school. This includes outcomes and indicators that can be used to measure progress and data to guide the continuous improvement of local community school strategy.

- [**Addressing education inequality with a next generation of community schools—A blueprint for mayors, states, and the federal government**](#) (2021)
  Center for Universal Education at Brookings- Task Force on Next Generation Community Schools
  Guide geared to inform federal, state, and local level officials how to successfully invest in addressing education inequality and scaling a next generation of community schools to neighborhoods across America.

- [**Collaborating to Transform and Improve Education Systems- A playbook for family-school engagement**](#) (2021)
  Center for Universal Education at Brookings
  Guide addresses family engagement as it relates to school improvement. The playbook demonstrates the effectiveness of family-school engagement—namely the collaboration between the multiple actors, from parents and community members to teachers and school leaders—has an important role to play in improving and transforming education systems to achieve four main goals: (1) improving the attendance and completion of students; (2) improving the learning and development of students; (3) redefining the purpose of school for students; and (4) redefining the purpose of school for society.

- [**Nine Elements of Effective School Community Partnerships to Address Student Mental Health, Physical Health and Overall Wellness**](#)
  Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), Coalition for Community Schools (CCS), and National Association for School Psychologists (NASP)
  Guide outlines nine key elements necessary for creating and sustaining effective partnerships to improve student mental health, physical health, and overall wellness.

Playbooks

- [**Financing Community Schools: A Framework for Growth and Sustainability**](#) (2018)
  The Partnership for the Future of Learning
  Brief is a companion to the Playbook, introducing a framework for financing community schools that reflects tested practices. It also provides examples of how community schools at varying stages of development can identify and implement financing strategies.

- [**Community Schools Playbook**](#) (2018)
  The Partnership for the Future of Learning
  This Playbook provides tools for advancing community schools as a strategy to improve schools, provide more equitable opportunities, and prepare students for success in life and as citizens.

Logic Models

- [**Developing logic models for school improvement systems**](#) (2020)
  U.S. Department of Education (ED) Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
  Presentation on concepts from Introduction to Logic Model training. Includes school action logic models.

- [**Logic Models for program design, implementation, and evaluation: Workshop toolkit**](#) (2015)
  U.S. Department of Education & Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
  The Logic Model Workshop Toolkit is designed to help practitioners learn the purpose of logic models, the different elements of a logic model, and the appropriate steps for developing and using a logic model for program evaluation, uses of a logic model to develop evaluation questions and identify indicators of success, and strategies to determine the right evaluation design for your program or policy.

Additional Tools

- **Community Schools Costing Tool** (2023)
  Community Schools Forward
  This Costing Tool and its accompanying User Guide are designed to help estimate the cost of transforming a traditional school into a community school. This tool can help users think about their resources within the context of a comprehensive community schools framework and assist with planning.

- **Community Schools Progress Report Toolkit: Indicators of Engagement, Planning and Early Successes** (2018)
  Research for Action
  This toolkit provides a resource to track the indicators that research suggests can provide a strong foundation and successful launch of a community schools initiative. The toolkit can be customized to the unique elements of a wide array of community school efforts.