



ALL IN: CREATING A CULTURE OF SUPPORT

The Promise and Potential of Community Schools in New York City

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Community Schools

noun | /kəmyōnədə skōōls/

Publicly funded schools that simultaneously serve as neighborhood hubs.

Community Schools aim to improve student achievement through strong partnerships between principals, parents, teachers and community-based organizations (CBOs). At the crux of this integrated approach is the idea that by bringing together multiple community partners, Community Schools can more fully support the whole child's development, both inside and outside the classroom, to close the opportunity gap and allow all students to succeed. Although there is a great deal of research behind the concept of Community Schools, the path to implementing these ideas is not always clear. We offer the following recommendations to the New York City Department of Education and the Office of Community Schools, grounded in our professional experience, which will enable state and city leaders to maximize the reach of their investment and ensure that the Community Schools approach is successful.

Deepen Community School-CBO Collaboration

As coleaders, the principal and Community School Director should work together to:

- Establish a shared vision for the school.
- Set, communicate and execute that vision, engaging the entire school community.
- Facilitate joint professional development between community-based organizations and school staff.

The Community School Director should serve as a voting member of the school leadership team.

Improve Community School Guidance and Resources

The Office of Community Schools should:

- Create a clear point of contact to share tools and templates with the CBOs for regular data-driven meetings.
- Provide tools and templates for CBOs to conduct standardized needs assessments that can be used to inform the goals of the partnership between the school and the CBO.

Better Identify, Target and Track Progress toward Meeting Student and Community Needs

The Office of Community Schools should:

- Require CBOs to implement a thorough needs assessment for each school at the onset of the partnership and before the beginning of each school year.
- Require Community School Directors to set reasonable annual growth goals based on the needs assessment, the progress toward which should be revisited monthly.

At the start of each year, the CBO should measure and communicate progress toward goals, identify priorities and strategies, and create action plans to address underserved students.

Read the full recommendations at E4E.org/NYcommschools