

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

A center of the community – open all day, every day, to everyone – that brings together academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement under one roof, leading to improved learning, stronger families, and healthier communities.

A community school brings together a set of partnerships that helps students overcome the barriers that cause them to lose focus and hope. Their emphasis on caring for and uplifting all of a child's various needs (academics, health, nutritional, psychological, etc.) is what sets these schools apart. These successful outcomes are achieved through the collaboration of several partners and volunteers, from pediatricians and dentists to mentors. By providing these comprehensive services directly on the school campus, community schools **strengthen students, support parents and build up neighborhoods.**

Community schools recognize that students cannot focus inside the classroom if their basic needs are not being met outside the classroom. Students who are hungry, sick, anxious, or troubled may be too overwhelmed to learn. At the **more than 5,000 community schools across the nation**, these challenges are acknowledged and addressed.

The community school concept has been embraced by single schools, entire school districts, cities, and counties. In one case, the entire state of Kentucky adopted the community schools model. The result has been **deeper engagement and greater overall academic success.**

Community Schools lead to:

- ▶ lower rates of absenteeism
- ▶ better work habits, grades, test scores, and behavior
- ▶ higher enrollment in college preparatory classes
- ▶ higher graduation rates

EXAMPLES OF SUPPORTS



CREATING AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Community Schools that show the most dramatic results generally employ a five-point strategy:

1. They provide a **strong and culturally-relevant curriculum.**
2. They emphasize **high-quality teaching** instead of high-stakes testing.
3. They offer **community support services** such as health care, mental-health counseling, and other support, before, during, and after school and on the weekends.
4. They focus on **positive discipline practices** as well as social and emotional learning supports, resulting in fewer suspensions and harsh punishments.
5. They feature extensive **family and community engagement**, involving the full community in planning and decision-making.

For more information visit www.nea.org/communitieschools