



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WORK

Demonstrating Impact:

- The \$4.1 billion California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP), launched in 2021, is the nation's largest community schools initiative, now serving more than 2,500 schools. This study released in 2025 assesses how effectively the CCSPP grants reached high-need schools and the early impacts of CCSPP implementation grants on student attendance, suspensions, and academic achievement. After the first full year of implementation for CCSPP grantees, impacts were apparent in multiple student outcomes. Compared to matched comparison schools, CCSPP community schools' chronic absence rates dropped by 30%, suspension rates fell by 15%, and academic achievement rose—particularly for historically underserved students. Black students and English learners saw gains equivalent to at least 50 additional days of learning in both math and English language arts. The strongest academic improvements occurred in schools with the greatest progress in attendance. These early results suggest that community schools' holistic approach can reduce educational inequities and improve multiple student outcomes. (Swain, W., Leung-Gagné, M., Maier, A., & Rubinstein, C. (2025). Community schools impact on student outcomes: Evidence from California [Brief]. Learning Policy Institute.
<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/ca-community-schools-impact-student-outcomes-brief>)
- A 2019 comparative analysis of the impact of a Full-Service Community School (FSCS) on student achievement showed students who attended Key Elementary FSCS scored higher on most of the New York State (NYS) Regents examinations, were more likely to graduate with NYS Advanced Designation high school diplomas, and had higher average cumulative GPAs and SAT I scores than students who attended the comparison school. Students who attended the elementary FSCS also took more AP exams, and were more likely to indicate their intention to enroll in a four-year college. (Stephen J. Caldas, Diane W. Gómez & JoAnne Ferrara (2019): A Comparative Analysis of the Impact of a Full-Service Community School on Student Achievement, Journal of Education for

Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR), DOI: 10.1080/10824669.2019.1615921. Link: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2019.1615921>)

- Research and evaluation show that community schools are a smart investment in the coordination of resources at both the school and system levels, which translates to a return on investment (ROI) of over \$7 for every \$1 invested in a coordinator's salary ([Return on Investment of a Community Schools Coordinator](#)). Local school districts and partners report an even higher ROI- Connected Community Schools (Rome, Waterville, Dolgeville) found the average ROI for a Community School coordinator is \$14 for every \$1 invested ([Fact Sheet 21-16: Community Schools in New York State](#)).
- Results from [this study](#) paint a promising picture, suggesting that the NYC-CS - one of the largest Community Schools regions in the U.S. with 317 Community Schools -had positive effects on several student academic and discipline outcomes, including attendance, and improvements in school climate and culture in elementary and middle schools. NYC-CS had a positive impact on student attendance in all types of schools (elementary, middle, and high schools) and across all three years (increases). Their research also found positive and significant effects on on-time grade progression in the two years for which they have data for elementary/middle students and on high school students' graduation rates in two of the three years. The analysis also suggests that the NYC-CS led to a reduction in disciplinary incidents for elementary and middle school students.
- In a 2022 [follow-up study](#) to the one above, RAND and Vanderbilt analyzed 5 years of NYC-CS data and found higher daily attendance rates, lower chronic absence rates, higher scores on ELA and math statewide assessments, and that the effects of community schools are greatest in the third year of implementation.
- Two rural districts in Broome County, NY that received a federal Full-Service Community Schools grant were able to support several grandparents who are raising their grandchildren to navigate remote learning. Community School Coordinators conducted home visits and held grandparent cafes to build their knowledge and understanding of the technology needed to support their grandchildren's learning needs. This service was critical since many grandparents had little to no experience with technology needed to support their students' educational success ([Community Schools: Supporting One Another as a Blueprint for the Future](#)).
- The report [Community Schools: Transforming Struggling Schools into Thriving Schools](#) spotlights several different regions of the country where Community Schools have

helped create improved academic and social outcomes in their communities. Some of the highlights include:

- **Austin, TX -**
 - After 5 years of utilizing the Community School strategy, Webb Middle School became the highest performing Title I Middle School in Austin.
 - 5 years after adopting the Community School strategy, the high school profiled was graduating 85 percent of their students, enrollment had more than doubled, and a new Early College High School program allowed many of its students to earn two years of college credits (their Associate's Degree) from a nearby community college during their time there.
- **Orlando, FL -**
 - In only 3 years as a Community School, the high school profiled had dramatically increased their enrollment from 1,975 to 2,495, while at the same time halving their disciplinary incidents, more than doubling their industry certifications, tripling their International Baccalaureate diplomas, and raising their graduation rate by 15 percent.
- **Baltimore, MD -**
 - After 8 years as a Community School, the profiled Elementary school ranked an astonishing 2nd in the city academically, its mobility rate had gone down to 8.8 percent, 95 percent of 5th grade students were proficient in reading, and its average daily attendance rate was 95 percent. They have a library with a book club and a volunteer retired librarian. At the time, an incredible 40 parents were attending a "Morning Meeting" every morning before school while the students ate breakfast.
- **Los Angeles, CA -**
 - In 1 year, the profiled high school had raised its graduation rate from 83 to 93.9 percent and its suspension rate remained at only .2 percent of students in the last two years. This was thanks to its model practices around restorative justice, interdisciplinary teaching, relevant curriculum, and relationship building. Students there are supported by Individualized Pupil Education Plans (IPEP) that determine how teachers and partners involved in the Community School can best help struggling students and reflect the close relationships between students and teachers. By graduation day, 99 percent of the Class of 2014 had enrolled in college.
- **Cincinnati, OH -**

- Over five years, the city's Community Schools reversed their decline in school enrollment, as well as stabilized it by bringing large numbers of families back into the public school system.
- At Gibsonton Elementary School, just south of Tampa, Florida, an unusually large number of children arrived late to school every day, and no one knew why. "We were asking families, 'What's one reason why your child is late or may not be coming to school,'" Catherine Gilmore, says of the conversations she had during the 2019-20 school year, the first year Gibsonton operated as a community school and hired her as its community school coordinator. "Our walkers said, 'Well, it's too dark, I wait until the sun comes up.' Well why is it too dark? They said, 'Well there are no streetlights and my kid walks on the road because there are no sidewalks.'" "I got in my car and drove down the road and you realize that not only are there no street lights but there are also no sidewalks. Kids were walking to school in the pitch black." Fifty-one street lights were installed last school year, along with a sidewalk that runs the length of the four-lane Gibsonton Drive and two additional streets that border the school. Students are hardly ever late. "If we didn't listen to the voices of the parents and asked the questions that needed to be asked, we wouldn't know," says Gilmore. "We would continue to wonder why these students keep coming to school so late." ([*Community Schools' See Revival in Time of Heightened Need*](#))
- In 2001, the city of Cincinnati committed to turn all of its schools into community schools. From 2006 to 2015, the achievement gap between Black and white students was reduced from 14.5% to 4.5%. In the 2017-18 school year, 98% of third-graders passed the third grade reading assessment – a 20 percentage point jump in literacy over the previous three years. By 2018, enrollment had jumped by 20% and graduation rates had increased to nearly 80%. Researchers often point to Cincinnati as one of the best examples of the impact community schools can make.
- In the 1990s, Kentucky embarked on a statewide mission to turn its entire public school system into community schools. Today, more than 90% of schools there are community schools, and, according to an analysis that combines multiple education achievement factors, Kentucky improved its national ranking from 48th in 1990 to 33rd in 2011. Similar statewide efforts are underway in a growing number of states, including California, Maryland and New Mexico, with dozens more beginning to prioritize funding for community schools in their budgets, including in Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Minnesota, Mississippi and Texas." ([*Community Schools' See Revival in Time of Heightened Need*](#))

- Through partnership with Tennessee Governor Bill Lee and Communities in Schools, over 11,000 students attending rural school had access to Community School resources. As a result, 82% improved their attendance, 94% matriculated to their next grade, and 97% of seniors graduated (Community Schools: Effectiveness of Addressing Barriers to Education in Suburban Communities, University of Tennessee, 2022).
- The Community Learning Center in Cincinnati, OH reduced the Black achievement gap by 10 percentage points and improved third grade literacy rates by 20% over a nine year period (Addressing Educational Inequality with a Next Generation of Community Schools, Brookings, 2021).
- Oakland Unified School District's "citywide Community Schools initiative, which focused on cultivating supportive learning environments for all students, generated a wide-scale culture shift that led to increases in high school graduation rates, participation in student services, and meaningful family engagement and decreases in disciplinary action, in-class disruptions, and lower chronic absence" (Addressing Educational Inequality with a Next Generation of Community Schools, Brookings, 2021).
- The [Greater Salt Lake City Area](#), now home to approximately 30 Community Schools, has been able to mobilize strategic partnerships to improve academic outcomes while also addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on families. According to the [Promise Partnerships Regional Council](#) (PPRC), academic performance has improved on five out of eight baseline measures, with its 2020 report showing: **Kindergarten readiness** increased by 3 percent in numeracy; **eighth grade math proficiency** increased by 8 percent; and **high school graduation** increased by 5 percent for all students. **Postsecondary readiness** (a composite ACT score of 18+) increased by 4 percent and **postsecondary completion measures** increased by 5 percent in the Utah higher education institutions in the region.

Resources:

- [Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools](#) (RAND Report, 2020)
- [Impact of community schools on attendance and achievement | The Thomas B. Fordham Institute](#) (2023)
- [A Comparative Analysis of the Impact of a Full-Service Community School on Student Achievement](#), Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (2019)
- [Return on Investment of a Community Schools Coordinator](#) (2019)
- [Moving Community Schools Forward with foundational resources](#) (2023) - Brookings Institute
- [Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement](#) (Learning Policy Institute, 2017)

- [Fact Sheet 21-16: Community Schools in New York State](#) (NYSUT)
- [Community Schools: An evidence-based, effective strategy for reopening New York schools](#) (State Network Brief from 2020)
- [Children's Aid's National Center for Community Schools Resources](#)
- [VIDEO: NYC Community Schools In Action](#)
- [Community Schools](#); Attendance Works
- [Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement](#); Learning Policy Institute
- [Community Schools: Supporting One Another as a Blueprint for the Future](#); Coalition for Community Schools
- [Teaching in Community Schools: Creating Conditions for Deeper Learning](#); Review of Research in Education, Vol. 43 (Julia Daniel, Karen Hunter Quartz, Jeannie Oaks)
- [Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators](#); Learning Policy Institute
- [Community Schools: Transforming Struggling Schools into Thriving Schools](#)
- [Addressing education inequality with a next generation of community schools: A blueprint for mayors, states, and the federal government](#) - Brookings
- [FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Announces Efforts to Support Community Schools](#) - The White House (2023)

Articles:

- [“Community schools can help superintendents transform education”](#) - Brookings; Reuben Jacobson
- [“Community schools in Utah’s Salt Lake City region thrive on place-based partnerships and family engagement”](#) - Brookings; Jennifer Kotting and Hayin Kimner
- [Community Schools’ See Revival in Time of Heightened Need](#) - U.S News, Lauren Camera
- [“Community schools support students and families during the COVID-19 pandemic”](#) - Degrees; Kari Kraus and Jasmin Sowell
- [“Covid-19 changed education in America — permanently”](#) - Politico; MARCELLA BOMBARDIERI
- [“Food Insecurity for Households With Children Rose in 2020, Disrupting Decade-long Decline”](#) - USDA; Laura Hales and Alisha Coleman-Jensen
- [“How Community Schools Were Better Prepared for COVID-19 Crisis”](#) - NEA; Cindy Long
- FACT SHEET: How The American Rescue Plan Is Keeping America’s Schools Open Safely, [“Combating Learning Loss. And Addressing Student Mental Health”](#) - The White House

- [*"Full-Service Community Schools Are Critical Investments for Children and Families in Poverty"*](#) - Child Trends, Mavis Sanders
- [*"How this school went from the brink of closure to a 95% graduation rate"*](#) - Freethink
- [*Implementing Full-Service Community Schools in a Rural Setting: Early Lessons from Leslie County, Kentucky*](#) - EdReDesign, Ryan Herman and Lynne Sacks
- [*"To meet the changing needs of small school districts, superintendents harness community school strategies"*](#) - Brookings; Reuben Jacobson
- [*"Triaging trauma: Community schools tap partners to address needs made worse by COVID-19"*](#) - K-12 Dive; Kathryn Baron
- [*"United Way, Erie School District to bring community school model to 5 more buildings"*](#) - Erie Times-News; Matthew Rink
- [*U.S. Department of Education Releases "Frequently Asked Questions: Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Support Full-Service Community Schools & Related Strategies"*](#) - U.S. Department of Education
- [*"Youth Homelessness Overview"*](#) - National Conference of State Legislatures
- [*Beyond reopening schools: How education can emerge stronger than before COVID-19*](#) - Brookings Institute
- [*REPORT: Addressing education inequality with a next generation of community schools*](#) - Brookings Institute
- [*Restarting and Reinventing School: Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond*](#) - Learning Policy Institute