Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) Grantees Demonstrate the Essentials for Community School Transformation

Researchers and practitioners identified **six key practices** that characterize high-quality community school implementation and compose the Community Schools Forward framework.



Six Key Practices of Community Schools

- **Integrated systems of support**
- **Expanded, enriched learning opportunities**
- **Powerful student and family engagement**
- **Culture of belonging, safety, and care**
- **Collaborative leadership, shared power and voice**
- **Rigorous community-connected classroom instruction**

Legend

- Why we do this work
- Who drives this work
- Enabling conditions
- Key practices
- Supportive infrastructure

The six key practices are one part of the Community Schools Forward framework. Other essential components include supportive infrastructure, enabling conditions, key stakeholders, and shared goals.



Full-Service Community Schools grantees demonstrate these key practices and serve as strong examples for the field. Examples from our current grantees are presented below.

Integrated systems of support

Avoyelles Parish Lifting Up Students (APLUS; Louisiana)

APLUS creates a structure for coordinating services across schools, families, and community partners. School coordinators, district leadership, and community partners work through formal structures such as a Partnership Outcomes Committee and monthly partner meetings to coordinate attendance, counseling, literacy, STEM, family engagement, and early childhood services. The initiative also addresses barriers to attendance through outreach to families, transportation support and recognition for consistent attendance, creating a comprehensive, coordinated support system that connects students and families to services based on identified needs.

Powerful student and family engagement

Engaging a Network of Locally Accessible Community Establishments and Schools (ENLACES), National University (California)

ENLACES hosted 114 family workshops attended by 2,967 parents and caregivers. Site coordinators served as engagement brokers and organizers, helping connect students and families to workshops, services, schools, and community resources, while coordinating with school staff and partner organizations to deliver the engagement activities. ENLACES also hired a Promotora (i.e., a trained health liaison) to support site coordinators. These efforts created meaningful opportunities for families to engage with schools and access resources that support student success.

Collaborative leadership, shared power and voice

Lewis University Community Schools Consortium (LUCSC; Illinois)

LUCSC has developed student and parent leadership teams, along with advisory councils, to facilitate collaborative leadership. Leadership teams bring together students, families, educators, and community partners to participate in needs assessments, planning, and continuous improvement to elevate youth voice and make school-level decisions. Advisory councils convene university, school, and community leaders for consortium-focused decisionmaking and sustainability planning. Advisory councils focus on LUCSC-related strategizing, while leadership teams focus on school community coordination and implementation. The consortium's governance model reflects shared ownership outcomes and demonstrates how students and families can function as decisionmakers.

Expanded, enriched learning opportunities

Breathitt and Knott Full-Service Community Schools (Kentucky)

Breathitt and Knott FSCS provides a comprehensive package of expanded learning opportunities focused on early childhood readiness, academic support, attendance improvement, and career development. Students participated in kindergarten transition camps, the Bright Start Explorers early learning initiative, and K-12 tutoring delivered by retired educators. The initiative also provided career exploration, career and technical learning experiences, and paid internships for high school juniors and seniors. These internships helped students develop workplace skills, professionalism, financial literacy, and connections to local employers. The combination of tutoring, work-based learning, and college and career exploration reflects a strong example of how expanded learning can support both academic growth and postsecondary readiness.

Culture of belonging, safety, and care

Batavia Community Schools, Batavia City School District (New York)

Batavia Community Schools has developed a multitiered system of supports focused on students' social and emotional needs. As part of this effort, students have taken active leadership roles by facilitating restorative circles and peer mediation sessions, creating opportunities for relationship-building, conflict resolution, and student voice. The initiative also expanded its Family and Community Engagement Center and Heart of Kindness Centers, which connect families to resources, referrals, and direct support. Approximately 20 families each week receive assistance through these services. Together, these efforts create an environment where students are supported socially and emotionally, families feel connected to the school community, and students are empowered to contribute positively to school culture.

Rigorous community-connected classroom instruction

Manchester Community Schools, Manchester School District (New Hampshire)

Manchester Community Schools developed and implemented 12 hands-on STEM units in each participating school. These units focused on topics such as engineering, chemistry, electricity, and mathematics and were delivered during the regular school day as part of students' learning experiences, rather than as a standalone afterschool activity. Approximately 75% of enrolled students participated in STEM instruction through these curriculum-based units. The STEM units were designed and implemented in partnership with community organizations, including the University of New Hampshire Extension 4-H and the SEE Science Center, bringing additional expertise and resources into classrooms. Through these partnerships, students engaged in applied, career-connected learning experiences that linked academic content to real-world STEM fields.

Sources:

1. Grantee ad hoc Annual Performance Report (APR) and correspondence from grantees
2. Community Schools Forward. (2023). *Framework: Essentials for Community School Transformation*. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/media/3935/download

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