

Community Schools Results

Community schools are making a difference in the lives of children, youth, and families across the country. Community schools are partnerships between educators and community partners – including community-based organizations, local government, school districts, institutions of higher education, United Ways, unions, and others. They organize community resources to achieve a mutually agreed-upon set of results focused on student’s learning and development.

The findings below represent some of the evidence about how a diverse set of community school initiatives (each with their own name) are preparing students to learn, helping them succeed, and preparing them for future success. Together with their partners, community schools are helping more students be ready to learn when they start school, improving the skills and attitudes students need to learn, improving student academic outcomes, and helping students graduate ready for college and careers – and they are cost effective.

Community School Students Enter School Fully Prepared To Learn

- In Maryland’s Hoyer Early Child Care and Education Enhancement Program (Judy Centers), a greater proportion of children who had more than one year of participation in their early childhood education were rated fully ready for school at the beginning and end of their kindergarten year than were children who had no prior experience.
- Similar findings were seen in the Highland Elementary School Bridges Program in Palm Beach County, FL. Nearly 80% of students who participated in an early learning program before kindergarten were rated fully ready on a state school readiness assessment as compared to only one-third of students who did not attend.
- In Portland, OR’s Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) community schools initiative, nearly 600 families participated in SUN services designed to help their children prepare for school, and 98% reported acquiring new skills.

Community School Students Develop Improved Work Habits, Efforts and Attitudes toward Learning

- At five community schools in the Redwood City, CA School District, students who participated in family engagement programs in elementary school entered middle school more likely to say that their school provided a supportive environment than students who did not participate. In middle school frequent participation in extended learning programs were linked to increases in students’ perceptions of school as a supportive place.
- An evaluation of Elev8 community schools revealed that 8th grade students who consistently attended a Elev8 out of school time activities (OST) were significantly more likely to participate in high school planning activities (such as spending the day shadowing at a high school of interest, attending a test preparation class, attending a mock high school interview, etc.) than students with lower OST participation. This supports Elev8 community schools’ goal of preparing students for high school.

- An analysis of report cards in 11 K-5 City Connects (CCNX) schools in Boston MA, showed that CCNX students significantly outperformed students in comparative schools in academic work effort across grades 3-5 and had significantly better work habits by grade 5.
- In a national evaluation of Communities in Schools (CIS), teachers indicated that CIS has a positive effect on their performance in the classroom by contributing to students' classroom preparation and fostering positive attitudes toward learning.
- In South King County, WA, 60% of students identified as needing help increased their class participation, attention and motivation; three quarters improved their academic performance over the course of the year. Student and teacher feedback indicated that programs help students feel safe and supported, foster a sense of belonging; and provide middle and high school students with opportunities to lead and mentor. Increased confidence in their ability to be successful in schools and decreased disciplinary actions were two themes that repeatedly emerged in middle and high school students' comments about the impact of community school participation.

Community School Students Improve Grades and Test Scores

- In Cincinnati, Community Learning Center students receiving any opportunity or support service including tutoring, mentoring, college access, or after-school activities saw, on average, a 5.6 point increase in their reading scores from 2009-2010 to the 2010-2011 school year and a 4.6 point advance in math. This was in marked contrast to the 2.0 gain in reading and the 1.8 point gain in math among students who did not receive services. Cincinnati was also the first urban school district in Ohio to receive an effective rating and is the highest rated urban school district in the state.
- In an evaluation of Tulsa Area, OK Community Schools Initiative (TACSI), TACSI students significantly outperformed comparison students in math by 32 points and in reading by 19 points in schools where the community school model was implemented most successfully. Poor students in high implementing TACSI schools performed on par with non-free/reduced lunch students and significantly higher than free/reduced lunch students in the comparison schools.
- In Hartford, CT, five community school sites entering their third year of implementation showed positive changes in all students' behavior and academics. Schools showed gains in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 test scores, and 2010-2011 scores remained steady. Afterschool participants demonstrated steady or greater increase in proficiency levels from 2009 through 2011, compared to non-participants. Overall, afterschool participants attained proficiency on state assessments in 2011 at least as often as in 2010, while non-participants' scores declined in both math and reading during that same period.
- In 602 Communities in Schools elementary, middle and high schools, CIS students experienced small but consistent improvements in performance on state assessments. Math performance was generally stronger than reading/English language arts assessment. However, among schools that fully implemented the CIS model, substantive positive effects greater than .25 were seen in math and reading at the middle school levels.
- In Portland, OR's Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) community schools initiative, an analysis of data from 64 SUN community schools showed that average academic grade point gains among

students who participated 30 days or more, were equal to or higher than expected on Oregon benchmarks for 4th, 6th and 7th grades in reading and 4th through 7th grades in math. Math gains were particularly high for 4th and 7th graders.

- In Boston's City Connects (CCNX) initiative, students in eleven K-5 CCNX schools achieved higher report card scores than comparative students for grades 3, 4, and 5 in reading and math, and grade 4 in writing. Longitudinal analysis showed that the beneficial effects of CCNX change students' growth trajectories soon after they enter a CCNX school, leading their academic achievement to surpass that of their counterparts in comparison schools.
- CCNX also shows a long-term, positive impact on state-wide test scores. Students who attended a CCNX school during their elementary years had significantly higher Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores in both English language arts and math in grades 6, 7, and 8. The number of years students attended CCNX had an additional positive effect on math scores in seventh grade.
- In the Redwood City, CA School District, increased motivation and academic confidence of students in community schools were associated with gains in achievement in math for all students and English language development scores for English learners. The positive attitudes of students participating in extended learning opportunities were strong predictors of math achievement for all students and had particularly strong effects for English language learners. Middle school students who reported confidence in their academic abilities gained, on average, approximately 7 points in math and 6 points in English.
- San Francisco Beacons students with high rates of participation in Beacon activities were significantly more likely to experience academic gains in 2011-12 from 2010-11 than youth with lower participation rates.

Community School Students Earn More Credits and Stay In School

- In Portland, OR's Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) community schools initiative, students at the seven SUN high schools made significant progress in earning credits, averaging 6.8 credits during the school year, up from 5.1 credits in the prior school year. Since students need 24 credits to graduate, this puts SUN students on track to graduate.
 - Students had an average daily attendance rate of 94.5 %, exceeding district averages and the Oregon benchmark of 92%. Only 17% of SUN Community School students were chronically absent (missing at least 10% of school days), compared to the district average of 32%.
 - Although SUN students as a group are at considerable risk of dropping out, 94 % of 9th to 11th grade students returned to school and over half of the 12th grade students who didn't earn enough credits to graduate returned for a 5th year of high school during the 2010-11 school year.
- Analysis of 82 Communities in Schools (CIS) high schools and matched comparative schools from seven states showed that in the three years following implementation of the CIS program, CIS high schools demonstrated positive improvements in promoting power. The effect of CIS increased

linearly over time in contrast to comparison schools which did not report notable progress toward keeping students in school.

- At Boston's 11 CCNX schools, students have lower probabilities of retention in any given grade level than do comparison school students. This effect persists after students have left the intervention and moved into middle school and beyond. It is especially large for students determined by CCNX to be at severe risk of school difficulties in grade 9.

Community School Students Graduate High School and Continue Learning

- In Cincinnati, since the implementation of Community Learning Centers in 2000, high school graduation rates have increased from 51% to over 80%, and the achievement gap between white and African-American students has narrowed from 14.5% in 2003 to around 4%.
- Among the 90 CIS schools and 90 matched non-CIS high schools with complete data on graduation, rates among high implementers increased by 8.6% across the 3 years of CIS implementation with a net difference of +4.8% above comparison sites. Partial implementers also reported greater growth in graduation rates than comparison schools with a +2.5% net difference in favor of CIS schools. The average high school-serving affiliate produces 42 additional on-time graduates each year.

Community Schools Are Cost Effective and Provide a Strong Return on Investment

- Community schools blend and leverage funding. A study of community school initiatives and individual schools found that district dollars leverage community resources at a minimum rate of 1:3. A bulk of their resources directly assist schools in meeting their core instructional mission, while also strengthening the health and well-being of students, families and neighborhoods.
- A social return on investment study of Children's Aid Society Community Schools found that every dollar spent returns between \$10.30 and \$14.80 of social value.
- A cost-benefit analysis conducted by Communities in Schools found that every dollar spent returns \$11.60 of social value.

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