

# Community Schools Are the Future of Education in Arkansas.

## About Community Schools

This innovative approach to educating our students to succeed in the 21st Century economy unites families, educators, medical professionals, and community and business leaders to provide youth and their families high-quality education and enrichment, healthcare, and social services and career support leveraging schools as the hub. The result? We have the opportunity to **provide equitable educational experiences to children and their parents** that prepare them to build strong, vibrant, and prosperous communities for years to come.



## Community Schools Work



Research shows that students enrolled in Community Schools demonstrate better attendance, behavior, on-time grade progression, and academic improvement from the moment they enter their first classroom to when they **graduate prepared for college and the workplace**.

## Community Schools in Action

**Community Schools are a model for educational equity.** Each school implements service and inclusion strategies, coordinates resources, and builds relationships between diverse local groups to ensure students and families succeed. While each Community School is as unique as the area it serves, they share these characteristics:

- One or more proven approaches
  - Integrated, holistic student support
  - Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities
  - Active family and community engagement
  - Collaborative leadership and practices that foster high-quality learning environments while addressing barriers to learning outside of school
- A dedicated full-time **Community School Coordinator** to
  - Analyze needs and assets
  - Facilitate the development and implementation of the Community School plan in collaboration with other educators and community leaders
  - Build relationships between the school, families, and community partners
  - Connect students and families to services and other resources
- A Community School plan sets forth how educators, school staff, government agencies, and community partners use and leverage all available assets to meet specific student and family needs, increase access to opportunities, and improve outcomes

# Starting and Sustaining Community Schools

**ForwARd Arkansas** is dedicated to establishing partnerships to launch Community Schools statewide. In partnership with the Arkansas Coalition for Community Schools, **ForwARd** will provide advising, training materials and videos, as well as connections with one or more Arkansas districts that are currently implementing the model.

**ForwARd** will also advise on funding for a Community School Coordinator. Some education leaders have leveraged Title I and Title IV funding to hire a passionate, relationship-oriented professional to serve as the coordinator. Schools and districts may also use Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief round-two funding. Currently, **ForwARd** is advocating for the use of Every Student Achievement (ESA) funding to supplement coordinators' salaries.

**To catalyze launching Community Schools in Arkansas, ForwARd** is offering startup financial support to assist a new partner district with a portion of the first-year costs of launching a Community School. Partial funding for this Community Schools initiative has been made possible by a grant from the National Education Association Foundation.

## About ForwARd Arkansas

**ForwARd Arkansas** accelerates the innovative and equitable transformation of education in Arkansas. It is time for all students to graduate high school prepared to succeed in college and the workplace by ensuring they have:

- Proficiency in math, science, reading and writing
- 21st Century skills in communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity
- Social emotional skills, including self-awareness, personal management, socialization, relationship building, and responsible decision-making
- Exposure, pathways, and connections to diverse career opportunities

**Learn More about  
Community Schools  
in Arkansas at  
[arcommunityschools.org](http://arcommunityschools.org)**

**Ready to launch  
Community Schools where  
you live?**

**Contact Jerri Derlikowski,  
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**ForwARd Arkansas** is a partnership of parents, educators, civic leaders and policy makers committed to educational equity in Arkansas.  
**Learn more at [forwardarkansas.org](http://forwardarkansas.org).**