

Maryland Community Schools



Toolkit

Contents

Getting Started	3
Collaborative Leadership	9
Partnerships.....	13
Secondary Community Schools.....	14
The Evaluation Process	16
Braiding Funding to Secure the Work of Community Schools.....	20

Getting Started

Community schools serve as an important strategy in the quest to provide equitable services and outcomes to students, families, and communities. Serving as the hubs that provide students, families, and communities with needed wraparound services by utilizing strategic partnerships, community schools provide the health, mental health, academic, and extracurricular support needed to thrive. Community schools promote equity, prioritizing the needs and wellbeing of students and families that are critical and urgent. Maryland is home to more than 200 community schools, serving students from more than a dozen local school systems.

This toolkit is meant to serve as a collection of resources for staff and stakeholders working in community schools. It contains information related to current legislation regarding community schools as well as resources that may be used by Community School Coordinators (CSC), administrators, staff, steering committees, and other stakeholders to enhance the work of community schools. Community schools receiving Concentration of Poverty grants are subject to the requirements of the grant identified in the 2019 legislation. These requirements are outlined in the section below. Local school systems and communities may have additional needs and requirements for their community schools.

Community Schools and Equity

Educational equity is a critical focus for all Maryland schools and school systems. Community schools serve as a means of helping schools and school systems to equitably provide a variety of services to students, families, and communities through data-based decision making that allows them to address the structural and institutional barriers to achievement. The community schools strategy provides critical wraparound services to students, families, and communities whose needs are especially urgent, including students who are living in poverty, students of color, students with disability, English learners, and others. Additionally, the community schools strategy provides support and begins to address and redress at the grassroots level some of the barriers that have traditionally marginalized these students, families, and communities.

Requirements of Community Schools Receiving Concentration of Poverty Grants

Community schools can be established by a local school system or through receiving the Concentration of Poverty grant. The Concentration of Poverty grant is a state grant outlined in the [2019 Senate Bill 1030](#), also known as The Blueprint for Maryland's Future (5-203). It awards a grant to each Maryland public school school with 80 percent or more of its students receiving free or reduced meals. This grant has several requirements that must be met according to the legislation.

Personnel

- Eligible schools receive a grant that is to be used to employ a full-time CSC.

- The CSC, in collaboration with the community school steering committee and school leadership, is responsible for guiding the development of the community school; completing the needs assessment; securing/coordinating partnerships to serve students, families, and the community; coordinating the implementation and monitoring of wraparound services; and working closely with school leadership.
- The grant will also be used to provide full-time coverage by at least one professional healthcare practitioner during school hours.
- The 2019 Blueprint for Maryland's Future (SB 1030, 5-203) defines a professional healthcare practitioner as a "licensed physician, a licensed physician's assistant, or a licensed registered nurse, practicing within the scope of the healthcare practitioner's license". Other licensed healthcare professionals may not meet the requirements of the legislation.
- The remaining funding will be used to provide students and families with wraparound services.
- Local school systems with at least 40 eligible schools may develop a plan to expend the funds on behalf of eligible schools, provided that the plan is developed in consultation with the schools and that all other requirements of the legislation are met.

Needs Assessment

- Each new community school should complete a needs assessment.
- The needs assessment should be completed in collaboration with the principal, school healthcare practitioner, and parent teacher organization or school family council.
- The needs assessment should include an assessment of the physical, behavioral, and emotional health needs of students, their families, and their communities.
- The needs assessment should be completed by July 1 of the first school year.
- The data from the needs assessment should be used to inform the planning and implementation of wraparound services at the community schools.
- Results of the needs assessment should be shared with all community school stakeholders.

Wraparound Services

Community schools provide a variety of wraparound services tailored to meet the needs of their students, families, and communities. SB 1030 states that wraparound services include:

- I. Extended learning time, including before and after school, weekends, summer school, and an extended school year;
- II. Safe transportation to school;
- III. Vision and dental services;
- IV. Establishing or expanding school-based health center services;

- V. Additional social workers, mentors, counselors, psychologists, and restorative practice coaches;
- VI. Enhancing physical wellness, including providing healthy food for in-school and out-of-school time and linkages to community providers;
- VII. Enhancing behavioral health services, including access to mental health practitioners and providing professional development to school staff to provide trauma-informed interventions;
- VIII. Providing family and community engagement and supports, including informing parents of academic course offerings, language classes, workforce development training, opportunities for children; and available social services as well as educating families on how to monitor a child's learning;
- IX. Establishing and enhancing linkages to Judy Centers and other early education programs that feed into the school;
- X. Enhancing student enrichment experiences;
- XI. Improving student attendance;
- XII. Improving the learning environment at the school; and
- XIII. Any other professional development for teachers and school staff to quickly identify students who are in need of these resources.

Wraparound services provided with Concentration of Poverty funding should meet the description of the language included in the legislation.

Community School Toolkit Resources

The following sections include information and resources for community schools to use in planning, developing, and enhancing their programming. These resources can be used by teams and community school steering committees to plan and align the efforts of community schools, partner organizations, and other stakeholders. The beginning of each section outlines best practices and is followed by a list of vetted resources. Community school steering committees or teams can select the resources that are best suited to their needs.

Mission and Vision

All community schools should be guided by a mission and vision. The mission and vision should be communicated, understood, and embraced by all community school stakeholders. In order to accomplish this, a variety of community school stakeholders should be involved in creating the mission and vision, including school staff, families, partner organizations, students, community members, etc. Teams creating mission and vision statements should also be mindful of using clear, simple language and keeping statements concise.

This section contains several resources that may be used with teams in order to facilitate in setting mission and vision statements.

[Vision and Mission Setting](#)

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment is an important component of the planning process for community schools, as the results will guide the work and services of the community school. It is important that the needs assessment include feedback from a wide range of stakeholders representative of the population of the community school. A needs assessment may include a combination of quantitative and qualitative data consisting of surveys, census data, focus groups, interviews, and other data points designed to ensure that a variety of stakeholders are able to provide feedback on the assets and opportunities for the community school. A needs assessment should be administered in collaboration with a diverse team of professionals, and the data should ultimately be gathered and shared in a report that is accessible to all community school stakeholders.

Community schools may draw on the data from Title I, Title III, Title IV, Part A, Judy Center, Head Start, and other needs assessments in order to inform the community school needs assessment. Although existing survey and assessment data can and should be incorporated into the needs assessment, it is important to survey students, families, partners, and school staff about the wraparound services, climate, culture, and programming of the community school.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in collaboration with community school stakeholders from across the state, is in the process of developing a statewide needs assessment that can be used by local school systems and community schools in Maryland. Community schools may use the Maryland needs assessment and add their own questions in order to customize the needs assessment to the needs of their community. They may also opt to use another needs assessment.

The data from the needs assessment should be used to identify priority areas for programming and focus at the community school. While the needs assessment provides a baseline, it is important to continuously collect, analyze, and evaluate the effectiveness of programming, services, and activities within the community school in order to maximize impact on students, families, and communities.

If community schools are receiving a Concentration of Poverty grant, there are some requirements associated with the needs assessment as established by the legislature. Please see the above section for more information on these requirements.

[National Center for Community Schools- Needs Assessment Toolkit](#)
[State Support Network: Needs Assessment Guidebook](#)
[Coalition for Community Schools: Needs and Capacity Assessments](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools: Indicators and Results](#)
[Coalition for Community Schools: Indicators of Capacity](#)
[Data Collection Plan for Demo Schools](#)
[Hillcrest Elementary School: Sample SWOT Analysis](#)
[Hartford Community Schools: Evaluation](#)
[Needs Assessment-Based Planning for Community Schools Template](#)
[Advancement Project- Healthy City Community Research Lab: Participatory Asset Mapping](#)
[UCLA Center for Health Policy Research: Asset Mapping](#)

Steering Committees

Community schools should be guided by steering committees. These committees can consist of stakeholders, which may include the CSC, principal, administrators, teachers, school support staff, parents, students, community partners, community members, etc. Steering committees should meet regularly, and their work should be guided by data and the needs of the community school. Steering committee leaders should have agendas that guide each meeting, and minutes or notes should be available at the meeting's conclusion. The work of the steering committee should be public and communicated to all stakeholders in the community school.

Personnel responsible for forming community school steering committees may want to make several considerations when developing the committee. Which stakeholders should be included on the committee? How many committee members are ideal? It is important to consider forming a committee large enough to encompass a variety of stakeholders, but committees that are too large may mean that representatives are not heard. Are members of the community school steering committee representative of students, parents, and community that the school serves? Does the community school steering committee have norms and protocols in place to ensure that all participants have a voice in decision making? How does the community school steering committee intersect with the work of other committees and teams at the school?

The following resources can be used to guide CSCs and school leaders as they develop, build, and enhance steering committees.

[SUN Schools: Advisory Group Models](#)

Stages of Development

Community schools will invariably be in different stages of implementation and development, and no two community schools will look the same. The following documents are meant to serve as a guide for teams to self-assess their progress in developing their community school strategy. Community schools that were established through the Concentration of Poverty grant may look different in terms of stages of development; a document that speaks specifically to their implementation process is included to assist teams in further self-assessment.

[Stages of Development in a Community School Established by a Concentration of Poverty Grant](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools- Community School Systems Benchmarks](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools- Indicators of Capacity](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools- Community Schools Standards](#)

Role of the Community School Coordinator

Community School Coordinators may also be called Community School Liaisons, Managers, site Specialists, etc. Regardless, they serve as important leaders within the community school. Community School Coordinators work hand-in-hand with school leaders to guide the work of the community school while managing and coordinating the strategic partnerships that provide wraparound services to students, families, and the wider community.

Community School Coordinators may have a range of different backgrounds and qualifications, including experience as a social worker, pupil personnel worker, school counselor, teacher, etc. Regardless of the specific roles and duties assumed by the CSC, it is essential that the CSC's primary responsibilities include leading the implementation of essential wraparound services for students, families, and the community. They also may serve a wide range of roles within the community school itself. Community schools' programming and wraparound services extend beyond the traditional academic day and year; therefore, it is recommended that this role be a 12- month position.

In this section, you will find different job descriptions for the role of CSC, as well as resources that Coordinators may use to ensure that they are meeting the needs of all stakeholders.

[Allegany County Community School Coordinator Job Description](#)

[Baltimore County Community School Coordinator Job Description](#)

[Frederick County Community School PPW Job Description](#)

[Prince George's County Community School Coordinator Job Description](#)

[Y of Central MD Community School Coordinator Job Description](#) (lead agency model)

Collaborative Leadership

Central to effective, sustainable, community school initiatives are the elements of shared decision making, leadership, and accountability. Members of the School Leadership Team (consisting of administrators, teachers, other school staff, and the CSC) work in collaboration with the Community School Steering Committee, (including the CSC, principal, school staff, parents, students, community members, partners and other stakeholders) around the planning, implementation and evaluation of the community school strategy.

The school leadership team ensures that the community school goals and objectives are aligned with, or are embedded in the School Progress Plan (or School Improvement Plan). The community school committee, with its broad membership, is responsible for the work to achieve those objectives. Ongoing input from parents, students, school staff (including non-teaching staff), community members and stakeholders informs the implementation and evaluation of each school's initiative.

Given the collaborative nature of work, offering early professional development and/or informational sessions to all team members and the larger school community promotes a shared baseline understanding of community school strategy prior to undertaking the process of becoming a community school.

Role of School Administrators

Involvement of school administrators is an important component of a community school. Administrators have an understanding of the vital role they play in driving change and supporting the mission of the community school. Working collaboratively with the CSC, the principal welcomes families and community partners to become integrated into the fabric of the school.

The principal, the coordinator, and other school leadership should convene early in development to discuss their vision of their community school, clarify the role of the CSC within the building, identify communication protocols and frequency of regular contact, and discuss formation of an initial steering committee. It is beneficial for the principal to meet regularly with the CSC and the school leadership team, sit on the Community School Committee, and be open to input from staff, students, and families. It is through this consistent communication and participation that principals can be part of the collaborative process, give administrative input, and become familiar with the community partners and programs coordinated by the CSC.

Ideally, training for principals around the community school strategy could be provided by the larger school system or lead agency in advance of the implementation of the initiative and hiring of the CSC. The principal and the CSC may work together to arrange a time to introduce the coordinator and the community school model to the entire school community. The school administration's messaging regarding community schools will set the tone within the building. The CSC may offer informational sessions as well as a variety of resources to the principal and school leadership team in order for them to deepen their understanding of community school

concepts and provide training to the rest of the school community. The following resources provide additional information for school administration and leadership. They may also be used for staff trainings, informational sessions, or professional learning:

[Coalition for Community Schools- COMMUNITY & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: Principals Concentration of Poverty Grant Notification Letter for Principals](#)

[The Federation for Community Schools- Community School Transformation: A Guide for Schools, Districts, Parents, and Community Members](#)

[NEA- Inclusive Leadership: A Pillar of the Community School](#)

[National Education Association- Community Schools: As Unique as the Children They Serve](#)
(Video)

[MEA Oakland- Community Schools \(Video\)](#)

[Partnership for the Future of Learning- Community Schools Playbook](#)

Community School Coordinator as a Leader

With support from the principal and school leadership, the CSC is the key to creating and strengthening the bridge between the school and the community. The CSC, in collaboration with the community school steering committee, is responsible for conducting the needs assessment to gather quantitative and qualitative data to identify priority needs and existing resources to inform the planning process. It is through listening and ongoing relationship building that the CSC develops a clear understanding of the school functioning, needs, and existing resources/assets. The CSC has a unique opportunity to engage a wide range of school staff and families in this work: parents, students, school secretaries, office staff, custodians, cafeteria staff, school counselors, social workers, partners that work within the building (mental health), and other related service providers such as Occupational Therapist (OT), Physical Therapist (PT), and Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP). The voice and participation of a variety of stakeholders is essential in the successful implementation of the community school model. Based on the assessments of needs and strengths, the CSC facilitates the coordination and alignment of resources within the school to support the needs of the children, families and community members in hopes to achieve the school's educational goals. Collaboration with administrators, teachers, families, students and community stakeholders is a core function of the job.

A CSC operates through pillars, or essential components, of community schools and the individual needs of the school which may include:

- Parent/Family Engagement
- Community Engagement
- Youth Development
- Partnership Development
- Expanded Learning Opportunities

Examples of Community School Pillars:

Building the Community Schools Committee (a.k.a “Team”, “Steering Committee”, “Advisory Committee”, etc.)

A community school is a combined effort between the school, families, and community. A site based community school committee is formed to include school leaders, teachers, community partners, parents, and students who help to drive the vision, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability at the school site level. These named roles should be involved in the decision-making process of the community school. The community school committee is responsible for creating a vision for the school, setting goals and identifying desired results (measurable outcomes), planning, and monitoring school progress.

[SUN Schools: Building a Leadership Team](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools- A Framework for Scale Up](#)

Understanding Community Schools Within the Larger School System

Having a clear picture of where a community school initiative is located within a school system’s structure allows CSCs to better understand and navigate the chains of authority and responsibility within the organization and to identify internal resources (either staff or services) that may potentially support the community school(s). Such information is helpful in determining which departments and personnel can provide important information, policy and protocols (ie. purchasing, MOU development, use of facilities, communications, risk management, etc.).

As individual school systems will vary in the number of community schools and size of their overall system initiatives, they will also vary in their placement of their initiatives within their organizational structure and assignment of oversight. Larger initiatives may have a central Office of Community Schools with specifically assigned community school staff while school systems with smaller initiatives may be assigned to other established departments within a system. In either case, knowledge of the system and its mechanisms related to the establishment of community schools is a helpful tool in ensuring effective planning and efficient implementation of programs and services. Below are example of organizational charts:

[PGCPS CEO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART](#)

[The-Baltimore-County-Public-Schools Organizational Chart](#)

[Allegany County Org Chart 2018-2019](#)

In addition to understanding the structure of the school system, new CSCs and other school staff may find that a wide (and sometimes overwhelming) list of acronyms and abbreviations used by administrators, leadership, teachers, and other school staff. Below is a list of frequently used acronyms and abbreviations:

[School System Acronyms](#)

Partnerships

Developing and sustaining partnerships is critical to the work of community schools. Through thoughtful and sustained partnerships, community schools can offer support and services to their students, families, and communities.

Some community schools will begin their work with established partnerships, while some will need to do more legwork to seek and establish partners. Community schools looking to establish or expand partnerships may consider collaborating with local governments (health departments, social services, etc.), nonprofits, local businesses, faith-based organizations, and other entities. Consider the needs of the school, families, and community first, and then ask how the partner may be able to collaborate to support these needs.

Several local school systems have partnership models that have sustained the work of community schools prior to the establishment of state funding. The resources below may provide additional information about partnership models and establishing partnerships within community schools:

[MCPS- Community Schools Partnership Model](#)

[Presentation- Community Schools Partnership Model](#)

Some local school systems may provide community schools with information on existing partnerships through directories, lists, contacts, and other resources. Community School Coordinators may expand upon these partnerships, revitalize partnerships, or seek to establish new ones. These resources may assist in providing information about partnerships that may exist within different local school systems.

[PGCPS- Provider Directory](#)

Secondary Community Schools

While secondary schools share many characteristics with elementary schools, they must strive to serve the unique needs of adolescent, college-and-career bound students and their families. Therefore, it is critical that secondary community schools develop programming that speaks to the unique needs of older students and their families. It is equally important that secondary community schools be strategic about working with students to foster a positive school culture, student leadership, student voice, and facilitate building strong connections between students and their communities. The following resources may assist CSCs in secondary schools with meeting the needs of their students, families, and communities.

Attendance

In order for students to thrive academically, it is critical that they attend school regularly. Students who are chronically absent- meaning that they miss 10 percent or more school days for any reason- are academically at risk. Students living in poverty are two to three times more likely to be chronically absent. In order to prevent chronic absenteeism and ensure that all students receive the quality education that they deserve, it is imperative that community schools create a warm, inclusive environment where students feel welcome, safe, and excited to be in school. It is also critical that secondary students find relevance in their educational experience through engaging, rigorous classes, coursework that connects to the real world, and quality extracurricular activities.

Many well-meaning attendance initiatives may be designed for younger students without taking the needs and realities of adolescent students into consideration. The following resources may provide guidance for community schools looking to address chronic absenteeism through intervention and multi-tiered systems of support.

[Attendance Works: Establishing School-Wide Attendance Incentives](#)

[Attendance Works: Secondary School Attendance Success Plan](#)

[Attendance Works: Resources for Talking to Teens and Parents](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools: Raising Graduation and College-Going Rates](#)

[How School Climate Relates to Chronic Absence](#)

[U of Chicago: 5 Key Findings for Middle Schools](#)

[U of Chicago: 4 Key Findings for High Schools](#)

Enhancing School Climate and Culture

In order for community schools to truly meet the needs of students, it is important for them to develop a welcoming, inviting climate and a culture that promotes inclusion, equity, relationships, and trust. Community School Coordinators may work with the school leadership team, the community school steering committee, school staff, students, and other stakeholders to work towards developing a strong, positive school climate and culture. One means of enhancing

school climate and culture is promoting social and emotional learning amongst students and staff. The following resources may assist community schools:

[CASEL](#)

Mental Health and Behavioral Supports

Community School Coordinators may work collaboratively with School Social Workers, Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs), School Psychologists, and Student Support Teams (SSTs) to ensure that schools provide programming and services that address the mental health needs of students and families. This can be especially critical for adolescent students and their families.

[MHAMD: Children's Mental Health Matters](#)

[SEL Resources for Teens](#)

[NASP: School Based Mental Health Supports](#)

College and Career

Secondary community schools may focus some of their partnerships and programming on students' transition to college and career. As students become older and gain more agency over their academic careers and choices, community schools may be strategic about how to connect students to academic and vocational experiences in the community meant to prepare them for life after school. These experiences can help students learn more about college and career pathways while also helping to foster strong connections to their local communities. They also may serve as additional ways to motivate students to become engaged in school.

The CSC may work closely with the school counselor, assistant principal, and external partners, such as local colleges or job training programs, to assist in providing students with experiences that promote college and career readiness. These resources may provide background information on college and career readiness information, which may help to inform partnership development and programming.

[MSDE: Maryland College and Career Readiness Toolkit](#)

[College Admissions Resources](#)

[Maryland College and Universities Location, School Codes](#)

[MSDE: Apprenticeship Maryland](#)

The Evaluation Process

The evaluation process for community schools is similar to that of any program evaluation. It must be designed to fit the individualized components and goals of the particular school or district. It should answer questions for funders, staff, and other stakeholders about the community school strategy's implementation and impact.

The starting point is establishing the goals of the program and each component of the program, and identifying important questions that stakeholders will have about the outcomes of the program. The evaluation process should reflect a deep understanding of the community school's design, goals, fidelity to the need's assessment, and efficacy of the services and supports found within.

Program evaluation includes the following steps:

Planning:

1. Gather information about the design of the program.
2. Identify both broad and specific evaluation questions.
3. Identify potential types of measures and sources of data to address questions.
4. Develop a plan for how and when data will be collected and by whom.

Implementation:

5. Collecting and analyzing data.
6. Share evaluation findings with stakeholders.

Adjustments:

7. Use evaluation findings to improve program design, implementation, and ultimately outcomes.
8. Continue the evaluation process and feedback cycle.

Planning Phase:

1. ***Gathering information about the design of the program***—the components, activities, participants, goals and intended results. A logic model is valuable to inform this first step. Logic models are described in more detail in the next section.
2. ***Identifying both broad and specific evaluation questions*** in collaboration with stakeholders, which will drive the design of the evaluation.
3. ***Identifying potential types and sources of data*** to answer each evaluation question.

Using the evaluation questions as a starting point, the methodology for collecting data to answer those questions is developed. For example, types of data might include: student participation records, student assessment results, student behavioral referral records, surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews. Sources of data might include: program records or documents; school records; parents, students, staff or stakeholders.

4. *Developing a plan for how and when data will be collected and by whom.* This is a detailed plan, typically using tables or charts, to specify the timeline for data collection activities. Time must also be allowed to develop data collection tools, such as survey instruments or interview questions.

Implementation Phase:

5. *Collecting and analyzing data.* Depending on the nature of the data, collection and analysis may take a few minutes or several weeks. This translates to staff time and funding. Some data may need to be re-organized or reconfigured before it is ready to analyze. Different types of expertise and software tools may be needed to analyze more complex data quantitative data (e.g., student assessment outcomes) or qualitative data (focus group or individual interview transcripts).

6. *Sharing evaluation findings with stakeholders.* Evaluation findings are sometimes shared informally with program staff and coordinators, particularly during the early implementation phase. Results may also be shared in formal ways through reports or presentations geared toward community stakeholder groups, the general public, or research community.

Adjustments:

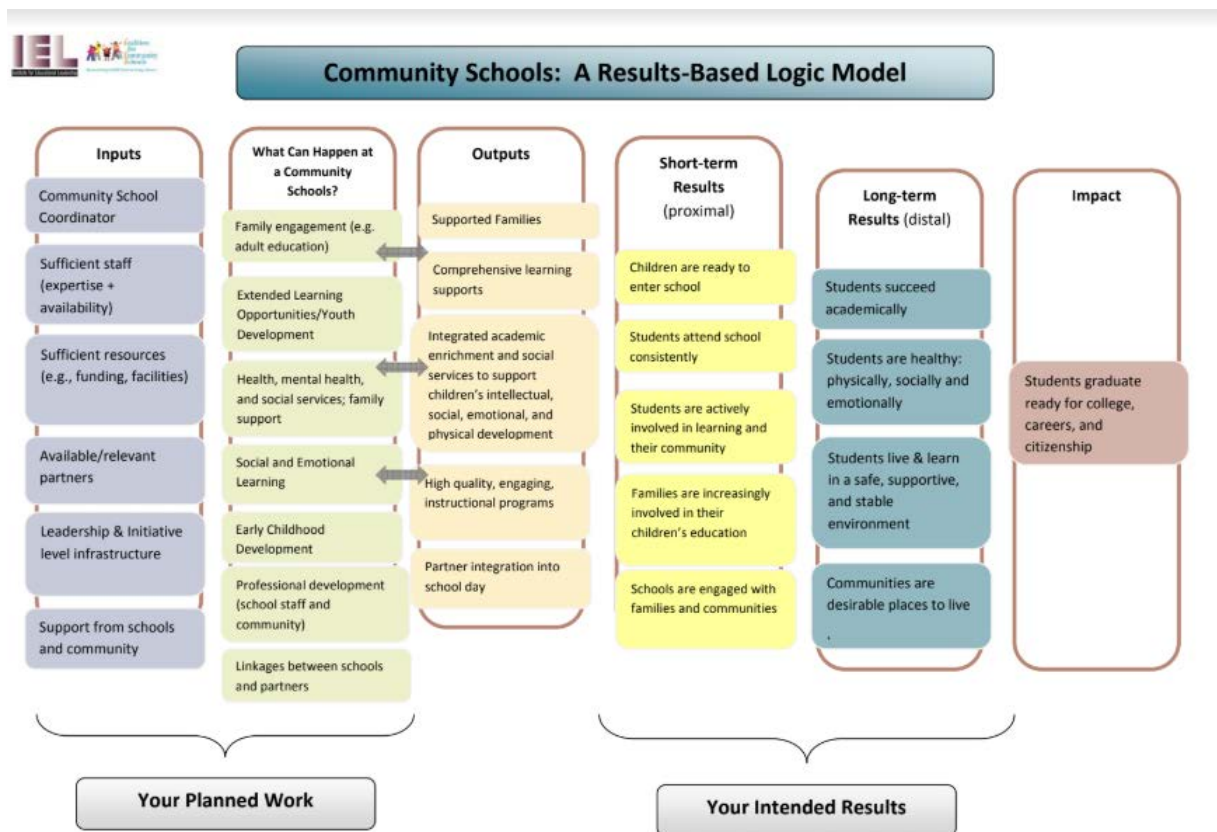
7. *Using evaluation findings to improve program design, implementation, and ultimately outcomes.* The ideal use for evaluation is to allow for a feedback loop which informs program decisions, increases effectiveness of implementation, and strengthens positive program results. Making adjustments to the program may necessitate revising the evaluation plan or data collection methods as well.

8. *Continuing the evaluation process and feedback cycle.* If programs continue indefinitely, the evaluation process would continue with the same feedback loop for continuous monitoring and improvement of the program. As programs mature, the nature of the evaluation may also shift. If programs will end, or a funding cycle will end, then a summative and comprehensive evaluation may be called for. In many cases, the

potential for renewed funding and continued support of stakeholders will strongly depend on documented evidence of program results.

Logic Model

The great strength of the Community Schools' model is that it is built and maintained to achieve the results identified by students, families, and the greater community. Creating a logic model in consultation with a school or district's community school leadership team or steering committee can help guide efforts around school improvement, learning, and development for students, families, and the greater community.



There are many additional resources available to assist school teams with conducting evaluations of their community school's programs and activities. In addition to many of the resources shared in the "Needs Assessment" section of this toolkit, the following resources may serve as examples and templates for data collection, logic models, and evaluation:

[Coalition for Community Schools- Evaluation Toolkit](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools- Data Collection of Short-Term Results](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools- Data Collection of Long-Term Results](#)

[MEPRI- Recommendations and Research for Evaluating the Community Schools Program](#)
[National Center for Community Schools- No More Random Acts of Programming](#)

Braiding Funding to Secure the Work of Community Schools

The work of community schools is absolutely critical for the students, families, and communities that they serve. It is crucial that community schools are adequately funded so that they can provide essential support and create long-lasting, trusting relationships between the school and the communities that they serve. In order to maintain continuity of funding, community schools may consider utilizing a variety of funding sources in order to ensure that their students, families, and communities receive the essential services, resources, and support that they need to thrive.

The following sections provide information on different funding sources that community schools may use in order to support their work. In Maryland, most community schools in SY 2020-2021 are primarily funded through the Concentration of Poverty grant, a state grant awarded through the *2019 Blueprint for Education bill* (see “Getting Started” for more information about the grant). Prior to the adoption of the “Blueprint” bill, most community schools in Maryland were funded through local initiatives through the mayor’s offices, health departments, etc. Future funding for community schools may include braiding federal, state, and local funding with private funding in order to diversify funding and ensure that community schools maintain services long-term.

[IEL: Financing Community Schools](#)

[IEL: Funding Data Collection Matrix](#)

[State of Maryland: Governor’s Grants Office](#)

Federal Funding

Title I Part A

Many of the activities of community schools may be further supported through Title I funding. Title I funding is awarded to local education agencies to support low-income students and families attain their educational goals. Title I funds may be awarded to schools for targeted student populations, or schools may be Title I school-wide schools, where all students qualify to benefit from Title I funding and support. Allowable expenditures for Title I funding may include activities related to professional development; increased parent engagement; supplemental instruction; guidance/ counseling; health, dental, and health care; transitional services, small group and individualized instruction; virtual instruction, extended learning opportunities, etc.

Community schools that receive Title I funding may find that there is substantial overlap between the work of community schools and the intent of Title I. They may consider working hand-in-hand to ensure that efforts and funding are maximized on behalf of students and families. Local school systems may also ensure that Offices of Title I and Community Schools work collaboratively.

[US Department of Education: Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program](#)

[Title II, Part A](#)

Community schools may utilize Title II funding in order to provide high-quality professional learning to teachers and administrators. The goal of the funding is to improve teacher and principal quality and increase the number of highly qualified teachers and administrators in community schools. Community schools may utilize the funding to provide an array of professional learning opportunities, including:

- Culturally responsive pedagogy
- Culturally responsive family and community engagement
- Equitable classroom management systems
- Use of data to improve student learning

Community schools may also use Title II, Part A funds to offer teacher mentoring and induction programs, advanced certifications, and multiple career pathways in order to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

[US Department of Education: Title II, Part A](#)

[Title IV, Part A](#)

Title IV, Part A funding may be used by local school systems and individual community schools in order to increase students' achievement through "providing access to a well-rounded education; improving school conditions for student learning; improving the use of technology in order to improve personalize and improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students." Title IV, Part A funding allocations are formula-based and awarded to local school systems, which then prioritizes the distribution of funds to schools that have the greatest need, contain the highest number of low-income families, are identified for targeted or comprehensive support through the TSI/ CSI designation, etc. Many community schools receive Title IV, Part A funding and may use this funding to support the implementation of allowable activities, including wraparound services, such as:

- College and career readiness and counseling programs
- Programs that promote community engagement
- Arts and STEM-based enrichment programs
- Drug and violence prevention programs
- Mental health services partnerships
- School-based mental health services
- Trauma-informed school-based practices
- Crisis management and conflict resolution techniques
- Bully harassment and prevention
- Technology-based training and/or infrastructure support

[MSDE: Title IV, Part A](#)

[National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments: Title IV, Part A Statute](#)

21st Century Community Learning Centers

Out-of-School Time (OST) programming is a critical pillar of community schools. Community schools may utilize this and other federal, state, and local funding sources to create, expand, and improve their OST programming. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program supports the creation of community learning centers, which provide academic enrichment opportunities for students during non-academic hours. The 21st CCLC grant primarily serves students living in economically disadvantaged communities and provides both academic and enrichment programming for participating students. Local school systems, non-profit agencies, city or county government agencies, faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, for-profit corporations, community, or faith-based organizations may collaborate with a school to apply for a grant to become a 21st CCLC. Applicants can apply to become a 21st CCLC through the MSDE.

[MSDE: 21st Century Community Learning Centers](#)

[U.S. Department of Education: 21st Century Community Learning Centers](#)

School Nutrition Programs

Community schools may also use federal funding, such as the USDA program, to underwrite costs for nutritious meals and snacks, both during and outside of school time.

[MSDE: Federal After School Meals Programs](#)

[MSDE: National School Lunch Program](#)

State Funding

Concentration of Poverty Grant

In Maryland, most community schools are funded through the Concentration of Poverty grant. This grant was awarded beginning in fiscal year 2019, and awarded schools approximately \$249,000 in order to hire a CSC and professional health worker. Additional foundational and per pupil funding was allocated for schools to conduct a needs assessment and provide wraparound services. Schools are awarded the grant and can spend funding using the guidance mentioned previously under the “Getting Started” section of the toolkit.

[FAQs for Concentration of Poverty Grant](#)

Public School Opportunities Enhancement Grant Program

The purpose of this grant is to provide extended day, enrichment programs, or summer enrichment programs for students. Additionally, nonprofit entities may also apply for the grant to support existing programming during the academic day. Proposed activities must target schools in school systems where at least 50 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced meals. Currently, those school systems include Allegany County, Baltimore City, Caroline County, Dorchester County, Kent County, Prince George's County, Somerset County, Wicomico County, and The SEED School of Maryland.

[MSDE: Public School Opportunities Enhancement Grant Program \(HB1402\)](#)

Learning in Extended Academic Programs (LEAP) Grant

The purpose of this grant is to provide high-quality extended academic programming to students who are at risk of falling behind academic requirements. Elementary and middle schools where at least 80 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced meals are eligible to apply for this grant. Schools may partner with other eligible local schools and nonprofit organizations to deliver programming, and local school systems may apply for the grant on behalf of individual schools.

[MSDE: Learning in Extended Academic Programs \(LEAP\) Grant \(HB 1415\)](#)

School-Based Health Centers

Community schools may consider utilizing school-based health centers as means of providing comprehensive primary and preventative health services to students and families. School-based health centers are staffed by a primary care provider, mental health provider, registered nurse, and medical assistant, and proactively work to screen, diagnose, treat, and refer patients for medical conditions. There are currently school-based health centers in 12 of Maryland's 24 local school systems. Many community schools have existing school-based health centers, which may seek continued funding through state grants (link below). Community schools interested in obtaining a school-based health center should work collaboratively with their central office, school nurse, community partners, health department, and MSDE to ensure that all plans and requirements are in place before submitting an application.

[MSDE: School-Based Health Centers](#)

[MSDE: Maryland SBHC Application 2020](#)

State-Aided Educational Institutions

In addition to the funding sources mentioned above, community schools may consider partnering with State-Aided Educational Institutions (SAI) to take advantage of their programs and services. There are currently 56 SAIs throughout Maryland that provide academic and

enrichment programming to students, families, and communities. Individual schools and networks of community schools may consider forming partnerships with SAIs in order to maximize programming and funding opportunities.

[MSDE: State-Aided Educational Institutions Program](#)

Local Funding

Community schools may utilize a variety of local funding sources in order to enhance their work. While local funding opportunities will vary, schools may consider pursuing opportunities with local governments, nonprofit organizations, management boards, philanthropic organizations, etc. The following resources from Linkages to Learning in Montgomery County and the community school strategy in Baltimore City Schools may offer insight as to how community schools can partner with local health departments, the mayor's office, management boards, and other entities to fund their work. Additional information about utilizing local partnerships and funding can be found in the "Partnerships" section of this toolkit.

[Linkages to Learning: Funding Models](#)

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