



## Title I Dollars Support Community Schools

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### Purpose

This brief provides State and Local Title I Directors with a deeper understanding of the allowable uses of Title I funding for community schools. Community schools are centers of the community that support student learning and healthy development, and strengthen families and communities.

### Background

Title I funds are available to districts and schools with high numbers or percentages of disadvantaged students to provide services, including academic enrichment services through Title I, Part A, so all our nation's children have an equal opportunity to education and can reach proficiency on state academic achievement standards and assessments.

According to the September 2, 2009 release of Title I, Part A ARRA guidance, Title I funds may be used to support the various components of a community school. The guidance defines a community school:

A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. It provides academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement, and brings together many partners to offer a range of support and opportunities for children, youth, families, and communities. The school is generally open for extended hours for everyone in the community. Community schools may operate in all or a subset of schools in an LEA. (p.29, <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/titlei-reform.doc>)

The Coalition for Community Schools and our partners know that community schools have great affinity with Title I because they:

1. **Align** the school, the local education agency (LEA), and community resources to increase the amount and quality of learning time, address health and social issues, and engage parents and families in order to attain specific results related to the academic, physical, social, emotional, health, nutritional, and civic development of children and youth.
2. **Coordinate** programs and services operated by school personnel and external partners, blending the resources of services or programs that receive other Title funds as well as funds from other federal and state departments.
3. **Leverage** public and private resources and the assets and expertise of volunteers from business, civic, higher education, and faith-based institutions.

## Research

Research tells us that the achievement gap can be traced to factors during the school day as well as factors outside of school time. A recent Educational Testing Service (ETS) report, “Parsing the Achievement Gap II,” cites correlations between students’ home lives and their academic performance. In early development, as well as the time before and after school, researchers listed birth weight, hunger and nutrition, parents talking and reading to children, the influence of television, student mobility, and the gap of time in summer as factors in influencing students’ school performance. The study’s findings remind us that school leaders cannot act alone if we expect all children to reach high levels of academic achievement.

Community schools deliver compounding results for students, families and the community. The following examples were gathered from community schools around the nation based on 2007-2009 data on academic achievement and nonacademic development.

### Academic Performance Plus

- ✓ **National** — [Communities in Schools \(CIS\)](#), the largest nationwide model of community schools, reported that schools that fully implement the CIS Model of integrated student services had higher percentages of students achieving math and reading proficiency than did students in other schools.
- ✓ **Chicago, IL** — The 150 schools in the [Chicago Community School \(CSI\) Initiative](#) have delivered standardized test results that show a steady closing of the achievement gap with other Chicago schools. CSI links out-of-school time to increased reading and math scores.
- ✓ **Cincinnati, OH** — During the 2007-08 school year, nine [Cincinnati Public School](#) pilot community schools showed promising trends in the benchmarks they strived to achieve, including school rating (continuous improvement), student enrollment (10% increase), behavior incidents (10% decrease), achievement tests (10% increase in proficient or better), dental health (90% fully screened and treated), AYP index (met), average daily attendance (93% daily), student stability (5% increase), physical health (95% immunized), and developmental assets (5% increase). All nine sites showed progress toward meeting benchmarks, but two schools (Winston Hills Academy and Riverview East) made significant strides, meeting 89% of the benchmarks for 2007-08. Key factors that have been attributed to the success of these schools include:
  - A full-time resource coordinator.
  - Full-time co-located community partnerships including daily after school programming.
  - A school nurse and an on-site mental health professional.
  - Ongoing, meaningful community & parent engagement.
- ✓ **California** —
  - [San Mateo County Community Schools](#) most seasoned community schools have students who regularly reach the state’s Academic Performance Index standards and achieved advanced scores on the state’s English Language Arts assessment.
  - In [Redwood City, CA](#), Taft Elementary School is one of only nine schools in the state to come out of “program improvement” status under NCLB in 2009.
  - Anna Yates Elementary School in [Alameda County](#) saw an increase in their API (California State’s Academic Performance Index, which is more rigorous than AYP) by 41 points and Emery Secondary

School, in the same county, saw their API increase by 27 points. These results in student achievement are further highlighted when compared to an average increase of 19.2 points for the 15 others districts in Alameda County. These scores are almost double the average county rate of increase.

- **New York, NY** — In a 2009 study comparing [Children’s Aid Society \(CAS\)](#) community schools to other New York City schools, CAS schools’ students scored significantly higher on math tests than students in other city schools. Furthermore,
  - CAS schools do particularly well with the lowest 1/3 of students making at least one year of academic progress in both elementary and middle schools.
  - Every CAS elementary school scored at least 70% on progress; city-wide mean is 50%. PS 8 scored 100%, meaning no schools in the city did better on progress.
  - All CAS middle schools but one (IS 166) outperformed peer and city-wide schools in making one year of progress, with MS 319 and MS 324 at 100 percent, and CAS middle schools academically outperformed peer schools in math progress for the lowest 1/3 of students.

### Graduation Rates, Attendance and Dropout Rates

- ✓ **Communities in Schools** is the only research-based dropout prevention program in the country proven to increase graduation rates, graduating students on time with a regular diploma, compared to organizations listed in the U.S. Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse.
- ✓ In **Tukwila, WA**, Community Schools Collaboration’s on-time graduation rate has increased annually since 2001; the rate of absentee and dropouts for middle and high school students also has dropped.
- ✓ In **New York City**, in a 2009 study comparing CAS community schools to other New York City schools, those with on-site health clinics tend to have higher attendance than those without. Also, CAS students who participated in after school programs for three or four years had better school attendance than students who participated in less time or no time at all.

### Improved Behavior

- ✓ In **Chicago**, CSI students have consistently demonstrated significantly lower numbers of serious disciplinary incidents compared to schools with similar demographics.
- ✓ Shaw Middle School in **Philadelphia**, a community school partnering with the University of Pennsylvania, saw suspensions decrease from 464 to 163 over a span of six years.
- ✓ CAS Community Schools found significant increases in self-esteem, career, and other aspirations for surveyed students and decreased reports of problems with communication across all three study years.
- ✓ In another New York City-based community school model, **New York City Beacons**, students reported that they were less likely to intentionally hurt someone physically, damage other people’s property, steal money, or get into a fight.

## Parent Involvement

- ✓ In the **San Mateo County** Community School study, parent skills and capacities saw statistically significant improvements. Results show that 93% of parents attended parent/teacher conferences and a high percentage of parents encouraged their child to complete homework and talked to their child about school.
- ✓ Carlin Springs Elementary School in **Arlington, VA**, a Washington, DC-suburb, serves a high population of children from non-English speaking families. To improve communications with parents, the school provides adult ESL classes. This effort has paid off as 95% of parents taking ESL classes also attended parent-teacher conferences at the school and report that they are now more likely to be engaged in their children's education.
- ✓ In Sayre High School in **Philadelphia** and Independence School District in **Independence, Missouri**, 90% of Family Fitness Night participants reported that they are eating healthier and exercising more.

## LEA-Wide Initiatives

Intentional efforts to align, leverage and develop community schools on a system-wide basis are emerging in a growing number of locations that have a strong base of community leadership and support that is essential to sustaining their work, including:

- Chicago Community Schools Initiative (150 schools)
- Cincinnati Community Learning Centers (18 schools)
- Communities in Schools—in over 200 sites in 27 states
- Sayre High School, a university-assisted model — Philadelphia
- Schools Uniting Neighborhoods Community Schools — Portland, Oregon (50 schools)
- Tulsa Area Community Schools Initiative (18 schools)
- United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley's Community Partners for Student Success Initiative (6 schools)
- Beacon Schools — New York, San Francisco, Minnesota, Savannah, GA; and Philadelphia (20 schools)
- Children's Aid Society — New York City (14 schools)

## Approved Title I Uses

The U.S. Department of Education's guidelines for Title I, Part A for community schools, specifies that the funds may be used for the following purposes related to community schools:

- A **coordinator** to facilitate the delivery of health, nutrition, and social services to the school's students in partnership with local service providers. [Dollar for dollar, the site coordinator is a pivotal component because the role serves as the fulcrum of the community school approach, coordinating community resources and according to community schools interviewed by the Coalition, leverages a ratio of up to 6:1 dollars invested. Coordinators also take the burden off the shoulders of principals regarding the recruiting and coordinating of community partners and, in many cases, parents, allowing them to focus on improving instruction and creating a positive climate and culture for students and faculty.]
- **Professional development** necessary to assist teachers, pupil services personnel, other staff, and parents in identifying and meeting the comprehensive needs of students,
- As a last resort, and when funds are not reasonably available from other public or private sources, the provision of basic **medical equipment**, i.e., eyeglasses, hearing aids.

- A **family literacy program for parents** who need to improve their literacy skills in order to support their children's learning if the LEA has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for those activities
- **Activities related to instruction such as paying a classroom teacher to be available in the evenings** as part of a homework-support program. The school might also work with community partners to sponsor evening recreational and other activities such as youth sports leagues, family counseling, housing fairs, or financial service fairs designed to meet student and community needs, but for which Title I, Part A ARRA funds may not be used.

## Integration of Related Title I Activities in Community Schools

Title I, Part A funds may be used in accordance with ARRA's reform goals for other activities that are aligned with a broad community schools vision, including:

- **Strengthening the quality or complement the effectiveness of early learning programs** (e.g. Head Start, pre-K program).
- **Extending learning time** for students (before and after school programs, Saturday school and summer school, extending the school day, week, or year).
- **Strengthening parent involvement** including activities that build ties between parents and the school through use of parent liaisons; home visits; expanding a parent resource room with materials; operating a parent leadership academy; and conducting a series of forums for parents of Title I students who will be transitioning, for example, from middle to high school.
- **Supporting services for homeless students.**
- **Adding time for teachers** to plan collaboratively, including more instructional time and opportunities for service-learning, internships, and apprenticeships, the arts, and other activities that enrich curriculum and promote student achievement.

## How Title I is Used in Community Schools Today

With the emergence of the community schools approach, Title I leaders have a unique opportunity to encourage LEA's to link together elements supported by Title I into a robust strategy to improve student achievement.

### Evansville, Indiana

In Evansville, Ind., school district leaders at the [Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation](#) view the concept of community schools as an overarching framework, one that inspires the blending of Title I, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Early Head Start, Head Start, and other resources with district and state funding to level the playing field for disadvantaged students. Combined with a Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant, Title I provides for parent education, parent involvement, a program coordinator, parent coordinators, and family events. Title I funding is used by the school district for academic enrichment, including after school and summer programming, and also to provide social workers, in coordination with Head Start, for early childhood programming, including supplies and operations.

### Lincoln, Nebraska

Community school principals in Lincoln, Neb., have designated Title I funds annually to support a coordinator position, as well as a Behavioral Health Therapist in partnership with the city's family services

division. Some have designated Title I funds to support summer activities and staff development opportunities for coordinators and after-school program staff. The school district uses Title I funds to support a portion of their [Lincoln Community Learning Centers'](#) director position.

### **Indianapolis, Indiana**

Indianapolis Public Schools and the United Way of Central Indiana have jointly funded parent liaison/community coordinator positions in four elementary schools in urban Indianapolis neighborhoods. The district provides 40 percent of the salary and benefits through Title I, and the United Way covers the remaining cost for each position. Indianapolis plans to expand this arrangement to more schools across the district.

### **Multnomah County, Oregon**

[SUN Community Schools](#) (Schools Uniting Neighborhoods) in Multnomah County, Ore, use Title I funding to support after school tutoring, academic after school programs, academically focused summer programs, family-engagement activities and family-engagement coordinators, daytime staff training and extended-day learning opportunities. The County provides support for the site coordinators or what they call SUN School managers.

## **Key Questions for Title I Directors to Ask**

As Title I state directors think about the potential uses of Title I funds from a community schools' perspective, the challenge is in how to support LEAs and school-wide programs to develop comprehensive school improvement plans that employ a coherent strategy to improve student success. The following questions may be useful to ask in developing such a plan:

1. Does the needs assessment for the school address a range of indicators related to the academic, health and social well-being of students and their families? What about:
  - Attendance rates. (Including early chronic absenteeism, truancy, tardiness)?
  - Health indices (asthma rates, vision, hearing and dental needs, obesity)?
  - Student mobility rates?
  - Dropout and graduation rates?
  - Family involvement, such as:
    - Families support students' education at home?
    - Family attendance at school-wide events and parent-teacher conferences?
    - Family experiences with school-wide events and classes?
    - Family participation in school decision-making?
    - Percentage of students demonstrating social competencies?
2. Does the school plan demonstrate how these needs will be addressed?
3. Does the school-wide plan demonstrate how various complements of the Title I program will be coordinated to achieve specific results, and align with other education funding streams?
4. Is there staff in place to ensure coordination of health, social and nutrition services and related activities supported by Title I and other grants?
5. Does the plan identify how external partners will help meet specific needs?
6. Is there a mechanism described in the school-wide plan where staff funded by the school, its community partners plan, and parents monitor and oversee joint activities such as a community-parent advisory board?

## For Further Information

For a copy of the ETS report mentioned in this brief, go to <http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICPARSINGII.pdf>.

### **Coalition for Community Schools**

The Coalition for Community Schools is an alliance of national, state and local organizations in education K-16, youth development, community planning and development, family support, health and human services, government and philanthropy as well as national, state and local community school networks. Our mission is to advance opportunities for the success of children, families and communities by promoting the development of more, and more effective, community schools. The Coalition for Community Schools believes that strong communities require strong schools and strong schools require strong communities. We envision a future in which schools are centers of thriving communities where everyone belongs, works together, and succeeds. The Coalition is housed at the **Institute for Educational Leadership** in Washington, DC.

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# PUBLICATIONS

The following Coalition for Community Schools documents are available online at [www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org) under the Resources section.

## ARTICLES AND BRIEFS

"Surrounded by Support," *American Federation of Teachers Magazine—American Educator* [Summer 2009]  
Marty Blank, Reuben Jacobson, and Sarah S. Pearson

This special issue brings together researchers, historians, educators, and service providers to describe the need for, and effective development of, school-community partnerships.

Community Schools Across the Nation: A Sampling of Local Initiatives and National Models [2009]

Martin J. Blank and Sarah S. Pearson

Community schools are alive and growing, serving millions of students across the nation. Today, there are a number of national models and local initiatives that create their own flavor of community school. This brief provides an overview of leading initiatives.

Community Schools: The United Way [2009]

Sarah S. Pearson

The United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley, a Coalition for Community School partner, has been perfecting their matchmaking skills. This report provides details of their work with schools and communities.

The Community Agenda for America's Public Schools [September 2008]

The Community Agenda is an action plan to ensure that all children enter school healthy, ready to learn and succeed in school, as well as to prepare students to pursue post-secondary education and become productive family and community members. It focuses on the vital need to improve the lives of struggling youth, families, and communities through school/community partnerships that support student outcomes.

"Special Focus on Community Schools: How Schools Engage Their Communities to Strengthen Learning," *The National Parents Teachers Association Magazine—Our Children* [February/March 2007]

The Coalition for Community Schools and other contributors prepared several articles and case studies to illustrate the work of community schools. These articles help visualize how PTA can play a role in developing closer relationships between schools, families and communities.

"Community Schools: Engaging Parents and Families," *The National Parents Teachers Association Magazine—Our Children* [January/February 2004]

Olga Heifets and Martin J. Blank

This article includes ideas for PTAs and local community groups on how community schools help engage families.

"System Change Through Community Schools," *American Association of School Administrators Magazine—The School Administrator* [January 2004]

Martin J. Blank and Dan Cady

The article describes how superintendents in four, small to mid-size districts used community schools to braid state and community services to solve problems of family mobility, insufficient health care, and unsafe neighborhoods.

## RESEARCH AND REPORTS

Community Schools – Producing Results That Turn Around Failing Schools [2010]

Sarah S. Pearson

An update on community school results on test scores, attendance, graduation, and college-going rates.

Community Schools Research Brief [2009]

Sarah S. Pearson and Reuben Jacobson

A growing body of research suggests that fidelity to the community school strategy yields compounding benefits for students, families, and community. Community school students show significant gains in academic achievement and in essential areas of nonacademic development.

"Community Schools: Promoting Student Success, A Rationale and Results Framework" [2006]

This report outlines a rationale for community schools as a primary vehicle for increasing student and strengthening families and communities, as well as defining the results that community schools seek.

"Community and Family Engagement: Principals Share What Works" [October 2006]

Amy C. Berg, Atelia Melaville, and Martin J. Blank

Principals are turning increasingly to the community to help them engage families, share resources, and meet standards. Informed by the work of principals, this paper finds six keys to community engagement that help school leaders engage families, staff, partners, and the larger community in the life of the school.

All Together Now: Sharing Responsibility for the Whole Child [July 2006]

Martin J. Blank and Amy Berg

This paper was commissioned by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the largest national professional development organization in education, as part of their work around the concept of supporting the Whole Child.

"Growing Community Schools: The Role of Cross-Boundary Leadership" [April 2006]

Martin J. Blank, Amy Berg, and Atelia Melaville

Leaders from schools, cities, and counties across the nation are working together in new ways to "grow" community schools. This report profiles 11 communities where this work is taking place. These leaders are installing and increasing the numbers of community schools as quickly as possible, using a powerful vision with a clear focus on results and an effort to make the best possible use of all the assets their communities can offer.

"Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship" [January 2006]

Martin J. Blank, Amy Berg and Atelia Melaville

This report makes the case that community-based learning addresses the problems of boredom and disengagement by involving students in real-world problem solving that is relevant and meaningful.