Oakland Unified School District
Community Schools:
Understanding Implementation Efforts to Support
Students, Teachers, and Families

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December 2015

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INTRODUCTION

Oakland Unified School District's Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) are designed to provide a safe, healthy, supportive school site, high quality and effective instruction, and opportunities for college and career readiness for every Oakland public school student. The FSCS design devotes special attention to providing integrated supports to students and fostering a school climate conducive to academic, social, and emotional learning. FSCS interventions span in-school and out-of-school time, and include students' families, to ensure that all students have the supports needed to be ready to learn and to develop the skills, habits, and mindsets that provide a foundation for academic and social success. These supports are delivered in strategic partnerships with community-based organizations, and coordinated through various structures including a Community School Manager at each school.

As Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) continues to scale FSCS implementation across the district, leaders aim to document and assess their current efforts with an eye to improving policies and practices that will help all schools reach the community schools initiative's goals. To this end, OUSD and the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities at Stanford University (Gardner Center) are partnering to support OUSD's district-wide FSCS implementation effort. This research is a collaborative endeavor with the goal of generating actionable knowledge that bridges the gap between research, practice, and policy.[1]

The initial phase of this collaboration focused on articulating the FSCS theory of change and developing a related system strategy map (see Figure 1) that lays out the community school activities and strategies intended to foster positive change at the student, school, and district levels. At the student level, these activities aim to improve, for example, student access to services, and student behavior and attendance, as well as increase family engagement in students' learning. At the school level, we expect to see improved school culture and climate, improved conditions for teaching and learning, and better alignment of resources, including adults working in the school to meet students' needs. This work is supported at the district level through centralized resources and systems.

This report presents findings from the first year of a planned three-year collaboration between OUSD and the Gardner Center to study the district's community schools. This report draws on qualitative interviews with key stakeholders in five OUSD community schools as well as analysis of district administrative data to shed light on early implementation of the FSCS model. This research, guided by OUSD's community school design, aims to shed light on three over-arching research questions:

1. How is the FSCS model being implemented across OUSD community school sites? What are key elements of the model in schools where implementation appears to be working well?

2. In what ways, if at all, does the FSCS model support teaching and learning? To what extent are desired student and school outcomes being reached?

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[1] This partnership is informed by the principles of Design-based Implementation Research (DBIR) which aims to bring both the researcher and practitioner into collaborative and iterative cycles of inquiry about policy development and implementation.

3. What promising practices can we identify from early-adopting sites? What lessons can we draw to inform practice and scale-up?

KEY FINDINGS

- OUSD community schools in this study have implemented the essential structures and strategies of the OUSD community school design, including an array of services and supports to students, their families, and the community.

- The organizational structures of the community school model appear to facilitate greater alignment and integration of student/family support services to the school's academic goals.

- School principals helped create a school culture that views partner organizations, the Community School Manager, and families as integral to schools' functioning and success in fostering student achievement.

- The Community School Manager served a critical role in integrating community school services with the school's academic core to support student and school needs.

- Partner organizations at these schools were viewed as being at the core, not the periphery, of the school's academic mission and goals. Strong partnerships often took years to develop.

- Teachers and principals reported that community school supports and services addressed student barriers to learning, improved school climate, and enabled teachers to focus more directly on teaching.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS POLICY CONTEXT

The community school model, while not new, is increasingly gaining attention nationwide. The effects of poverty and other factors beyond instruction on student performance are well documented.[2] Further, there has been growing recognition that improving student achievement requires addressing the needs of the whole child, beyond academic instruction alone. Community schools present a model for improving student outcomes by transforming schools into hubs of supports and services for students, families, and the community.[3] Some prior research provides evidence of positive correlations between community schools, or other models including school-based services, and student outcomes,[4] and still other research lays out the theory of change underlying the community school model.[5] However, less is known about the mechanisms and challenges of community school implementation itself. This research collaboration aims to increase understanding of community school implementation experiences to inform both district decision making as well as the community schools field more broadly.

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[2] Rothstein, R. (2004). Class and schools: Using social, economic, and educational reform to close the Black–White achievement gap. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

[3] Dryfoos, J. Quinn, J., & Barkin, C. (Eds.). (2005). Community schools in action: Lessons from a decade of practice. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

[4] Anderson-Moore, Kristin & Carol Emig. (2014). "Integrated Student Supports: A Summary of the Evidence Base for Policymakers." Child Trends White Paper. 2014-05. Blank et al., 2003; Castrechini, 2011.

[5] Dryfoos, 1994; Blank, Melavillle, & Shah, 2003.

As of winter 2015, 27 OUSD schools were identified as full-service community schools.[6] OUSD's commitment to community schools, now in its fourth year, emerged out of an extensive strategic planning process with schools, families, and other community stakeholders, and builds on existing, ongoing efforts to support more equitable life and academic outcomes for Oakland's youth. Oakland community schools provide an array of integrated services intended to remove students' barriers to learning by, for instance, addressing health issues, expanding the amount of time for learning, implementing alternative disciplinary practices, and engaging families in student learning and school improvement. Importantly, the community school model also includes organizational strategies for leveraging community resources and partnerships, coordinating services, and integrating services and partners into the operation and mission of the school. Ultimately, community schools aim to address students' needs and promote a positive school climate in which students are engaged learners and teachers are supported to provide quality instruction, contributing to the goal that all students are college, career, and community ready when they graduate. To achieve these goals, the OUSD community school model includes three design features: 1) *integrated services and supports* that offer students and families resources and opportunities including, for instance, health services and afterschool activities and learning opportunities; 2) *organizational structures and systems* such as partnerships with community based organizations (CBOs) and a dedicated Community School Manager to ensure services are seamlessly coordinated and integrated to align with school learning goals; and 3) a focus on community schools as a framework for supporting *teaching and student learning outcomes* through high quality instruction, increased student engagement, and positive school climate.

STUDY APPROACH

In the first year of this research collaboration, OUSD and the Gardner Center aimed to gain a better understanding of how the FSCS model is being implemented in practice in early adopting schools, as well as initial patterns related to support for teaching and learning in these schools. Together, OUSD and the Gardner Center selected a sample of five schools for intensive study based on several criteria, and informed by initial analyses of OUSD administrative data. Overall, we set out to include a set of schools that had been implementing the FSCS model for a number of years, and for which anecdotal evidence suggested that implementation was relatively developed as well as supported by school leadership. Further, in these schools, analysis of chronic absence and suspensions indicated downward school-level trends. Thus, the schools in this study are not intended to be a random sample of OUSD community schools, but rather represent relatively mature instantiations of the model where we hypothesized lessons may be learned to inform future implementation and scale-up. Further, school selection aimed to capture a range of elementary, middle, and high schools, encompassing large and small schools, and diverse student populations.

In winter/spring 2015, Gardner Center staff completed interviews at five community schools with a total of 37 respondents including principals, teachers, Community School Managers, and

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[6] Most of the district's FSCS's are secondary schools, and scale-up efforts continue to expand implementation to elementary schools as well.

partners.[7] Interview transcripts were then coded and analyzed, with key lessons integrated into this report.   Further, the Gardner Center has begun the process of creating an integrated longitudinal data set, which currently includes student-level educational data and expanded learning participation data, as well as school-level health service participation data from 2009-10 through 2013-14. Analysis of school-level trends informed site selection and is discussed briefly in Section 3. These data also lay the groundwork for future statistical analyses.

This report is structured around the three major OUSD community school design elements. First we discuss the community school organizational structures and systems, such as partnerships with community-based organizations and a dedicated Community School Manager, intended to ensure services are seamlessly coordinated and integrated to align with school learning goals.   Next, we explore integrated services and supports that offer students and families' resources and opportunities including health services and afterschool activities and learning opportunities, followed by a discussion of our findings regarding how community schools can serve as a framework for supporting teaching and student learning outcomes. Finally, we discuss implications of our research findings and next steps.

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[7] Gardner Center staff conducted interviews using semi-structured interview protocols intended to garner study participant perspectives on elements of community school implementation.

Oakland Full Service Community Schools System Strategy Map

PROBLEM STATEMENT: We must build a FSCS district to support equitable academic and life outcomes for all Oakland students.

GOALS: To ensure that every student in Oakland: (1) comes to school ready to learn, (2) attends a school with a healthy and supportive environment, (3) receives effective instruction, and (4) graduates college, career, and community-ready.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES & STRATEGIES

STUDENT SERVICES & SUPPORTS: The school site (via school, partners, and district) offers all students access to integrated supports and services to help them learn and thrive, including health and wellness, behavioral health, expanded learning, and family engagement and support.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: Schools develop strategic partnerships that leverage resources to provide site-level supports and services to address student and school needs. Central office provides tools and resources (e.g., central training, TA, partnership rubrics) to help partners align with school goals at each site.

COORDINATION: CS Managers, Coordination of Services Teams (COST), and other school and partner staff coordinate to ensure integrated supports and services for all students. Central office provides support (e.g., PLC) for CS Managers.

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: School leadership and staff, partners, the district, students and families are engaged to support student outcomes and school improvement.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: School staff, partners, and the district use data to track student outcomes, inform planning and school goals, drive improvement, and ensure accountability. Central office provides frequent, relevant data and supports for results-oriented decisions.

CENTRAL FACTORS/CONDITIONS

New Superintendent, CORE and Common Core implementation, Community School Leadership Council, LCFF and LCAP

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

DISTRCT LEVEL
- Schools supported by district via centralized resources and systems (e.g., central onboarding for partners, PLC for CS Managers, data system).

SCHOOL LEVEL
- Improved school culture and climate.
- Resources are aligned to meet comprehensive student needs.
- Improved conditions for teaching and learning, including common core.
- Adults at the school working together.

YOUTH & FAMILY LEVEL
- Students access services and supports to help them learn.
- Students' behavior, attendance, and reading improves.
- Parents are engaged in their students' learning and the school community.
- Families access needed services.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

DISTRCT LEVEL
- District resources are aligned to provide students with what they need in order to learn and thrive.

SCHOOL LEVEL
- Schools are supportive and welcoming hubs where students thrive (culture and climate for learning).
- Comprehensive student needs are met.
- Teachers are supported to provide high-quality instruction and learning opportunities.
- Adults (families, partners and school staff) lead development of safe and healthy schools.

YOUTH & FAMILY LEVEL
- All students access the support they need to thrive and come to school every day ready to learn.
- Continued behavior, attendance, and reading improvements, along with other academic and social-emotional indicators.
- Families and schools are partners in students' learning and success.

LONG TERM OUTCOMES
- Every student graduates college, career, and community ready.
- Communities are healthy, safe, hopeful, and supportive.

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1: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT OAKLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

This section highlights findings related to essential structures and systems to support OUSD community schools, specifically examining the areas of *collaborative leadership, strategic partnerships, and coordination.*[8] While community schools frameworks vary across the country, scholars and practitioners agree that these key structures and practices are necessary to successfully achieve desired school and student outcomes.[9] Research also suggests that the ability of student services and supports to effect student outcomes often depends on the quality of their integration as fundamental components of the life and academic mission of the school.[10] The organizational features discussed below are designed to facilitate deeper integration of community school services and supports, ultimately supporting improved student outcomes.

This section draws from examples in our five sample sites to illuminate how these elements function in practice to support community school implementation in Oakland.[11]

Collaborative Leadership

Leadership at community schools often looks different from that of traditional schools. While the principal remains the guiding force, non-school site entities—such as partner agencies, community school coordinators, and sometimes families—may play an integral role in school vision, planning, coordination, and even management. Although cross-sector collaboration between school and community-based entities can entail challenges, the ultimate aim is a school culture in which adults work together to support students' learning needs.[12]

All five of our sample sites demonstrated a collaborative leadership model in which the principal, Community School Manager, key partners, and select teachers cooperated in leadership, planning, and coordination. School staff identified that having both teachers and partners at the table was an important feature of the leadership approach at their community school, as each offered valuable perspectives. Principals played a significant role in facilitating collaboration between instructional and support staff. Principals also played a key role in prioritizing parents and parent voice, and keeping the academic mission of the school at the center of the community school work.

Key Implementation Strategies

Establishing inclusive leadership teams. At many traditional schools, student support services are held separately from the school's academic instructional core. At each of the community schools we visited, while staff described distinct administrative and instructional

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[8] While there are other structures and systems to support community school implementation, these four were spoken about by participants across all schools as key structures implemented at their site.

[9] Richardson 2009; Dryfoos 2005.

[10] Moore and Emig. 2014.

[11] Please note that this data is based on sample sites strategically selected for positive trends in their administrative data and the suggestion of potentially positive implementation trends; the patterns described here are not necessarily representative of all 27 community schools across the district.

[12] http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/combuild_IEL.pdf

leadership teams, in practice these teams were often composed of diverse and varied school personnel. At some sites, teachers played a significant role in administrative decisions (for example, department chairs often participated in school administrative leadership teams) and, in others, support staff (for example, afterschool partners who worked closely with teachers) were involved with the instructional teams. Community School Managers were often involved in both aspects of the school. One school principal described the following:

> *The community schools manager also sits on our School Leadership Team….because there's an afterschool component that the community schools manager is tied to. So, just to make sure the day program and the afterschool program are aligned,…I ask them to sit on the Instructional Leadership Team."*

School staff identified that having both teachers and partners at the table was an important and unique feature of the leadership approach at their community school.

Setting the tone to include partners. At our sample sites, principals played a significant role in conceptualizing and communicating coherence between the school's academic mission and the role of support services, programs, and staff. At times, this meant setting the tone around partners and partnerships, especially among school staff who may be reluctant to share space with non-traditional colleagues. One staff member described the following:

> *When I first came here, people would actually say… in a staff meeting, 'Why is [this partner] in this meeting? We don't want them here. We're a faculty. We're professionals. And we should be able to have our own meeting and talk about things as teachers, as professionals, without having non-teachers here.' I heard…I was in a staff meeting when somebody stood up and said that. You know? And that was like four years ago… [The principal] just shut her down immediately…He's just like, 'That's not an option… [this organization] is our partner and they do belong in this meeting.'*

For partners, this positive tone around their involvement was crucial. In the words of one partner: "*Partners need to feel like they're wanted, included, and, I mean, I think that's a team job, but I think because [our principal] has that attitude, it makes the team know that they're allowed to have that attitude, too. So, she's a tone-setter."*

Leveraging the Community School Manager as a key resource and leader. One of the most important relationships at the schools appeared to be that of the Community School Manager (CSM) and the principal. These relationships often took time to develop, but facilitated strong alignment between the academic and community work of the school. One CSM talked about her relationship with her school's principal in the following terms:

> *…So, at this point, I feel like it's really a true partnership where both of us trust each other and it's not like I need to hide anything from him or he's hiding anything from me; it's to the point where I've heard other people tell me how principals aren't sharing budgets with them. This is the year where… he's sharing his school's budget with me. I know exactly how the money is being spent. And same for him, he understands how [my agency] is spending afterschool funds.*

The type of transparency between school and partner staff may not be typical in most schools across the country. However, most principals and CSMs in our sample sites described positive relationships of deep trust and respect. Most had been working together for several years, and found ways to make their roles complementary and clear. For example, in several sites the principal was described as the one who set the vision, and the CSM helps make it happen. Another principal referred to their school's CSM as "*one of the highest level administrators.*" Integrating the CSM, partner organizations, and community with the school's instructional core can be one of the most challenging aspects of the community school model. The evidence from our sample sites suggests that a positive relationship between the principal and CSM, and leveraging the CSM as a school leader, is critical to integration and implementation of the community school model.

Strategic Partnerships

Community-based partners are critical ingredients to community schools by providing and aligning resources to supporting school goals.[13] In practice, school-community partnerships are often complex and at times challenging, involving distinct organizational cultures, accountability systems, communication styles, and perspectives.[14] Our research showed that all sample schools are leveraging and integrating partnerships strategically. School staff view partner organizations to be at the core—rather than the periphery—of the school's academic mission and goals; at times, partner- and school-employed staff were practically indistinguishable. Partners provided key resources, from academic supports (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, afterschool programming), to health and mental health services, to field trips and sports camps. In addition to fulfilling their primary role of service providers at the school, partners often played roles in the sites' family engagement work, coordination of services team (COST) or spent extra time communicating and coordinating with teachers. In many cases, core partner staff were deeply integrated into the school and often indistinguishable from district-employed staff.

We also learned that strategic use of partnerships required time for coordination, and occasionally, tough conversations to ensure partner resources were best leveraged to support student and school needs. Each site appeared to have one or more primary partners— organizations and personnel who played a more significant role at the school site.[15] Though they represented different agencies, the core partners had all held long-term, institutional relationships with their sites.[16] However, strong partnerships often took years to develop and, in many cases, required strong leadership from school principals and others to set the tone that partners belonged at the school.

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[13] Coalition for Community Schools (2015)

[14] http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/combuild_IEL.pdf

[15] At the schools in our sample, these core partners were often primarily afterschool program providers or health/mental health providers.

[16] Additionally, many of these partnerships pre-dated the official district community school initiative, and many of the on-site staff employed by key partners had been at the school for a number of years.

Developing relationships with core partner agencies. While each school held partnerships with multiple agencies—often upwards of 20 or 30—each school appeared to have one or two core partnerships with an agency that played a more significant role on campus.[17] Though they represented different agencies, these core partners had all held long-term institutional relationships with their sites. Additionally, many of these partnerships pre-dated the official district community school initiative, and many of the on-site staff employed by key partners had been at the school for a number of years.

Core partners, in addition to fulfilling their primary role of service providers at the school (e.g., directing and coordinating afterschool and health programming), often played roles in the sites' family engagement work, COST, or spent extra time communicating and coordinating with teachers. We found in our interviews that partner-employed staff were seldom distinguished from district-employed staff; rather, they were thought of as school staff. In the words of one principal:

> *[Our partners] are behind every single initiative that we do that I would say falls under community schools. … It's not there's [partner organization] and [name of school], it's [partner organization] at [school]. We're just one team. So, I never think of [so and so], any of that team as an outside agency coming in. They're the core of our school.*

Linking partnerships to the school's academic goals. Community-based organizations were often perceived as key partners in supporting the school's academic goals. One of the most common ways this occurred was with partners offering afterschool and expanded-learning programming which, in some cases, manifested as partners engaging in school day classes and teachers engaging in afterschool programming.[18] In addition, aligning partner agencies' activities to the school's mission was described as an important aspect of partnership work. In most cases, this happened over time through conversations between agency staff and school leadership. One Community School Manager described this process of negotiation with one organization to improve their partnership:

> *I just said, "Look, here's what's happening on our side. Here's my experience. This isn't working for us. I think you're a great program. I think we're really aligned. Can we do this?" And then, finally, they said, "Yes… Let's try it." And so then, we tried it, and I think it was mutually agreed-upon that it worked really well.*

While most of the partnership relationships discussed were dynamic and able to change to align partners' activities with the school's mission, staff at most schools shared that some relationships with partners dissolved when the partner's activities were no longer aligned with the vision or serving the needs of the school most effectively.[19]

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[17] At the schools in our sample, these core partners were often primarily afterschool program providers or health/mental health providers.

[18] See section 2 for more information.

[19] While the literature and the OUSD district office have identified several institutional mechanisms to support strategic partnerships at the site level, we found these were not discussed very much by staff.

Integrating partners and partner services into the school's fabric. Most schools had designed strategies that integrated partners, and the student and family support services they offered, into the school's fabric. This includes practices such as utilizing health center partners to lead health education classes, leveraging after-school providers as assistant teachers during the school day, and training and expecting all partner staff to engage with school parents. For more information, see section 2.

Coordination

Integrating the additional support services of community schools into the fabric of the school requires extensive coordination. Our research highlights two essential structures to support coordination in community schools: the Community School Manager and the Coordination of Services Team (COST).

The Community School Manager

The Community School Manager (CSM) is a key component of the community school model. Our research suggests that, in these early-adopting community schools, the CSM plays a critical role in: 1) aligning the community supports to the academic core of the school; 2) building a strong relationship with the principal; 3) coordinating with partners and integrating their work with the instructional mission of the school; and, 4) engaging with families. By integrating the community and instructional capacity at community schools, the CSM may be particularly important to ensuring that the model fosters a school culture that supports teaching, learning, and ultimately, positive student outcomes.

CSM's in Oakland are funded from a variety of sources—some are staff members of local community-based organizations, some are district employees. All CSMs participate in monthly/bi-monthly professional development trainings organized by the OUSD to build capacity. Additionally, most, if not all, of the CSMs in the five study schools had held positions with the school before their titles changed to Community School Manager. Many noted that their roles had expanded and deepened since become CSMs, although in some cases duties were similar to before the change. The Community School Managers we spoke with had been at their respective schools for periods ranging from four to nine years. While the CSM role varied somewhat by site—largely based on school need and CSM background—we highlight common areas of their work, identified as implementation strategies below.[20]

Key Implementation Strategies

Managing partnerships. Nearly all CSMs had some responsibility in recruiting, managing, and coordinating with partner agencies on campus. Some organized regular (monthly or quarterly) meetings of partners to provide updates and information regarding school goals, a practice encouraged by district staff. Most operated as the formal or informal point person or on-site

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[20] CSMs came from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from social work to education to youth development**.**

supervisor for partners. Given that schools often held partnerships with several dozen agencies, this CSM function was perceived as critical to ensuring coordination, integration, and alignment of these partner activities within the school. In the words of one CSM: "*my core role is to paint the big picture for people and help people see where they're connected to each other and how we all play a role in the same goal.*"

Participating in leadership and strategic planning. CSMs at all five sample sites had developed strong relationships with the school principal and played a role in school leadership and planning. Many principals leveraged CSMs as high-level administrators (described above), participating in school administrative and instructional leadership teams. The CSMs helped interpret school data, participated in meetings with school and district staff, discussed school priorities and vision, and helped understand and represent school and student needs across a variety of stakeholder groups.

Engaging families. Most CSMs played a role in their school's family engagement efforts. This sometimes included supervising family resource center staff (e.g., family liaisons), running parent leadership programs, and identifying resources that respond to family needs. However, a significant component of CSM's work with families entailed engaging the school community to ensure that families are an integral part of school life. One teacher said of her school's CSM: "*She's always the voice of including parents. She'll come to division meetings [teacher grade level meetings] every once in a while. If teachers aren't considering parents in this way, she brings that parent voice in, which is nice.*" CSMs also often work with partners (e.g., health clinic or afterschool program staff) and teachers to troubleshoot issues, develop inclusive practices, and ensure positive parent-school relationships.

Addressing comprehensive student needs. While sometimes the CSM's role entails coordinating services and supports to address individual students' and families' needs (e.g., housing, legal aid services, behavioral health issues), a final component of the CSM's work is to help the school identify and respond to *comprehensive* student needs. This often entails understanding the complex student and family needs present at the school, and developing systems, relationships, and supports that help address those needs. CSMs often lead or participate in their school's COST, a referral system which connects students to resources. CSMs also often undertake assessments to determine school-wide needs (e.g., housing, food assistance, medical services) that then inform service provision. One principal described how he meets regularly with the CSM to discuss "*the data and also the priorities of the school. And then, the community schools manager goes out and finds partners, community-based organizations that can help fill those needs.*"

Coordination of Services Team (COST)

Integrating additional support services into the fabric of a community school requires extensive coordination. Our research showed that, at our sample sites, the Coordination of Services Team (COST) was a primary mechanism for facilitating such coordination at an individual student level. While COST existed prior to the implementation of the district's official community schools initiative, staff in many schools noted that the role of COST has grown and developed considerably in the last several years. COST appears to be a crucial mechanism for identifying

and responding to student needs. Teachers and partners play an integral part in COST, presenting an additional structure through which the instructional and community facets of the school work in tandem. Ensuring that COST continues to work effectively to identify student needs and remove student barriers to learning could further support the teaching and learning goals of the school.

Key Implementation Strategies

Structuring meetings to engage multiple stakeholders. COST meetings are a central structure in bringing together many of the players within the community school framework. Although there is some variation in the composition of the COST across schools, teams typically include the Community School Manager, health and mental health partners, school administrators, and teachers. COST meetings focus largely on health and behavioral health, although some address academic and other student issues as well. In some cases, a teacher's primary role in COST is identifying and referring students to the team. Our research suggests that COST provides one of the most frequently utilized structures in which the academic core of the school intersects with the student support services. This happens primarily through the interface of teachers and support staff facilitated through the COST structureAs one CSM described the composition and operation of the team,

> *So, myself, the family advocates, the school psychologist, the speech therapist, the full inclusion teacher, resource specialist [all participate]. And then, we have our counselors from our partner organizations… So, all these folks get together once a week to review referrals that teachers have submitted; and then, we'll invite the teacher to come, be a part of that discussion, present the referral; and within 15 minutes, we go through a whole kind of protocol to get us through talking through challenges, root causes, and then action planning.*

Ensuring engagement and follow-up with teachers. While teachers in general are not present at all COST meetings, most student referrals begin with teachers. This system of teacher referrals appeared to be fairly consistent across all sites, with variation in the amount of feedback or follow-up that teachers received after making a referral.

Teachers across the sample sites indicated they frequently used COST for student behavior, discipline, and other issues. As one teacher described:

[If a student says], 'My head hurts' [I say] go to the clinic… [Now, if it's] 'My head hurts' every single day, whenever it is I'm about to give a test,' [that] goes to COST; maybe there's an underlying issue.

Across all school sites, teachers play a critical role in identifying students in need of supports; conversely, the behavioral health staff offer teachers support in assisting with their students' expanded needs.

Considering data-driven approaches to identify student needs and assess COST effectiveness. While this has not yet been implemented in sample sites, some school staff expressed interest in more systemic, data-driven approaches to identifying students who may need additional supports; for instance, making referrals based on students' academic data, in addition to teacher referrals based on classroom experiences and interactions. While staff at multiple sites indicated their appreciation for COST's role in identifying student needs, staff at some schools noted room for improvement around using data to guide COST referrals. In the words of one staff-person: *"Right now, we're only trusting that teachers are able to identify the students most in need, but we don't know for sure if they're getting all of them or if they're even getting the right ones… according to what data might tell us."* Additionally, some staff thought that COST could be more data-driven in assessing how effectively they serve students. As one staff-person said, "*[Y]ou know, not just having anecdotal stories but actual indicators that shows whether or not we've been able as a COST team to move students to better places*."

2: INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

School-based services are a critical component of the community school model, accompanied by a set of structures and strategies intended to integrate these services and ultimately transform the nature of the school and its relationship to the community. This section highlights findings related to integrated service delivery in OUSD community schools, specifically examining services related to health and wellness, expanded learning, and family engagement.[21] Each of these community school elements is intended to increase students' readiness to learn by removing barriers (e.g., health), providing more time for learning, and increasing parental involvement. Previous research has demonstrated that student and family participation in such support services is often associated with improved student outcomes.[22] While student services take many forms, research shows that integration is key to successful implementation. Integration entails both combining and coordinating a range of student supports with each other to facilitate seamless service provision, as well as incorporating these supports as fundamental components of the life and academic mission of a school.[23]

First, we briefly describe implementation of these programs and services across schools in our study. In examining health and wellness and expanded learning, we highlight strategies aimed at facilitating: 1) coordination between the school staff and the multiple CBO partners; 2) integration with the school day and mission; and 3) engagement with families and communities. We also describe school and partner staff perspectives regarding the importance of these efforts for students, teachers, and families, as well as challenges that they experience in this work. Additionally, we discuss sites' family engagement efforts separately and at length to illuminate patterns and trends in the mechanisms through which sites are expanding the school community to include families.

Health and Wellness

Community schools adopted multiple strategies to integrate health and wellness into the school fabric and normalize participation in services. Teachers noted that health and wellness services increase the amount of time students are in class, improve students' readiness to learn, and allow teachers to focus more on teaching. Additionally, community schools implemented multiple strategies to address family health care needs. Given widespread student experiences with trauma, behavioral health services were noted as both a key contribution of the community school model, and one of the greatest remaining needs.

Implementation Overview

Community schools in this study offered a wide range of school–based health and wellness services. Four of the five schools were affiliated with a specific health clinic on-site or nearby, administered by a partner agency. Medical services included routine immunizations and physicals, as well as emergency services and reproductive health services, and some schools

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[21] We note that while there are other important programs and strategies, these three were spoken about as core elements of the community school model, and were implemented at all schools in this study.
[22] Biag & Castrechini, 2014; Castrechini, 2011; Moore, 2014.
[23] Moore and Emig. 2014.

also provided on-site preventive dental services and vision and hearing assessments. All schools provided behavioral health services, including mental health counselors for individual or group therapy. Screenings often focused on both medical and behavioral health. Most schools also provided health education; for example, focusing on mental health education, general and community health, parenting, core or elective health education classes for students, and healthy eating.[24]

Across all schools we repeatedly heard about students' experiences with trauma. Trauma and stress were often discussed in relation to high levels of poverty and violence in surrounding communities. Many staff related stories of specific incidents in students' lives and families related to, for example, violence, incarceration, or deportation. Trauma was also attributed to the students' neighborhood contexts more broadly.

Key Implementation Strategies

Identifying student needs. Multiple staff noted that the importance of screening for both physical and behavioral health issues. Staff shared that they were able to identify and address student physical health issues that were initially misattributed as behavioral health or other issues. They implied that if there had not been available medical services, student health issues may have missed. At one school, COST now refers all students receiving behavioral health referrals to the health clinic as well, and has found that almost all also had medical needs (e.g., vision, dental, other health problems). At another school, a partner described a student who was very bright but who never turned in her homework. Through COST, the school nurse and the student's parents identified that the student had a problem in one of her eyes that prevented her from seeing clearly and that required surgery.

> *…Everybody was thinking that it was a behavior issue or thinking that it was something else, and we just identified that it was so much bigger, it was just a basic 'She just can't see.' …She's articulate. She's smart. But… she couldn't see.*

These both present compelling examples of how COST can serve to remove students' barriers to learning.

Accurately identifying students' health and mental health needs requires systems and structures that span key personnel across the school site. All school sites had systems in place whereby students in need of health and wellness supports are flagged for intervention. At each school, COST plays a key role in this system, addressing some student needs but not others. The principal at one school explained that through a tiered system, school staff usually address less severe tier 1 issues, whereas, she reported:

> *The COST team takes over at tier 2 and tier 3, where it's much more individualized to students. Where they will put their heads together to figure out for this small group of students what*

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[24] In addition to these behavioral health services, most community schools were actively implementing alternative discipline practices, such as restorative justice circles or positive behavioral intervention supports (PBIS) to support student well-being, though these are not the explicit focus of this study… Mention other studies on restorative justice in Oakland/"for more about RJ in Oakland, see…"

exactly …are the supports that they need, and then who is the right person to provide those supports.

Leveraging partnerships to facilitate access and meet student needs. Across the sample sites, schools had identified partnerships that responded to the range of student needs. In some cases, this was one primary provider of health and mental health services. In many cases, multiple providers filled student needs. For instance, at one site, the principal described the role of a health clinic counselor who addresses students' less severe behavioral health needs, saying:

> *She sees kids maybe twice a month. She also has that family component, so if it's a counseling situation where we feel like the parents are gonna be brought in because there's so many unhealthy dynamics going on, she's the one that I usually refer to because she has that expertise to bring it together.*

This clinic also contracted with another partner to work with students with greater clinical needs, often providing interns that meet with students on a one-on-one basis. Still another partner organization at this school recently began providing drug counseling.

Most, but not all, schools in the sample had on-site health clinics. One school with a nearby, offsite health clinic had a number of strategies for leveraging that partnership to facilitate access. The school identified adult chaperones to bring students to appointments, and the CSM took responsibility for making sure that students attended. Also, the clinic—which serves two schools and the surrounding community—has reserved certain days on which only the students from this particular school can be served.

Integrating wellness into school culture. Staff at multiple sites described the positive effect of integrating wellness into the school culture. Most described how health and wellness providers offered education classes on campus; some described how the ongoing presence of these services helped to reduce stigma, thereby increasing their utilization.

In several of the sample schools, staff saw health education classes as a strategy to integrate health services into the school. In one school, the health educator teaches health education and every student rotates through the class for at least six weeks. The course covers healthy food choices, drugs, and safe sex. As part of the course, students receive a tour of the health clinic and meet one-on-one with clinic staff that conduct a very basic health assessment (e.g., concerns, reproductive questions, sexual activity). If the student needs medical services they can schedule a follow-up appointment with the clinic, and if there is a red flag for behavioral health the clinic can connect them with services.

At another site, staff told us that health and wellness services have become part of the fabric of the school, and getting services has become seen as normal and not something to be ashamed of. In the words of one teacher:

> *I think that it's really great for students to know that they can get services, and it's very— it's been incredibly normalizing to students that if you have something going on, that you*

should go and talk about it. 'Cause I'll have students who just in the middle of class, they've got their little confidential pass, but they'll just stand up and be like oh, I gotta go to therapy.

Engaging families and communities in health and wellness. Although OUSD's community school model is focused largely on leveraging community resources to support students, these schools, broadly speaking, play a role in serving the community as well as the whole child. At multiple schools, school staff and partner agencies implemented strategies to address family health care needs and to support health insurance enrollment. Clinicians at two different schools described taking part in school registration to engage with families about their healthcare needs and to connect them with services. One school health partner hired two on-site Covered California enrollment staff to assist families with Medi-Cal enrollment. Another health partner described organizing health fairs and campaigns, and another mentioned parenting classes in collaboration with the school's family resource center on topics such as adolescent development and trauma.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

At most schools the resources available for behavioral health services were discussed as both one of the greatest benefits of the community school model, and one of the greatest remaining needs. Many voiced a need for more services, and some suggested a need for additional support from the district in accessing services for the relatively small number of students in a school with very severe issues. As one principal explained, *"The remaining challenges are the kids who really emerge with really high needs that sort of just blow our tiers out of the water. We don't have anything."*

Multiple respondents also spoke of the need for more services for teachers to help them cope with the trauma in their students' lives.

Expanded Learning

Expanded learning opportunities in OUSD community schools, in partnership with community based organizations, aim to increase both the amount of learning time for students as well as the range of learning activities available. In study schools, these activities expanded learning after school, before school, and during the summer. Community schools demonstrated varying levels of integration between traditional school day and afterschool program activities, with some schools no longer make a distinction between them. Although community schools implemented a range of strategies to facilitate communication between teachers and partner staff, finding opportunities to discuss their students and align lessons and goals remained a challenge. The role of the CSM in expanded learning varied, with some involved in ensuring alignment between the afterschool program and the school day, and others connecting students to activities outside of school. Additionally, partnerships with CBOs expanded learning opportunities for students, and enabled schools to offer programming to targeted groups of students.

Our research found that, consistent with the community school design, CBO partners played a critical role in providing expanded learning activities across school sites. Partner agencies provided afterschool programs on-site, and most schools had developed a range of partnerships with CBOs to provide off-site expanded learning opportunities such as summer internships, dance classes, and intensive college prep programs. Further, at some sites, CBO staff worked with students and teachers during the school day. At several of our sample schools, the CBO running the after-school program also provided multiple other types of programming/services (e.g., counseling), which may have facilitated its integration into the school more broadly.

Expanded learning activities varied considerably by grade level. At the elementary and middle schools, expanded learning activities included a mix of academic and enrichment activities implemented by both CBO and school staff before and after school. At the high school level, some expanded learning focused more on connecting students to other opportunities either within or outside the school, namely the school's Linked Learning pathways or external internships.

Key Implementation Strategies

Fostering integration between the school day and afterschool programming. Community schools in our sample demonstrated varying levels of integration between traditional school day and after-school program activities. In some cases, this involved afterschool programming (ASP) and CBO staff working with students during the school day. Although CBO staff traditionally administer afterschool programming, at one school, the CBO partner hired ten academic mentors (typically college students or recent graduates) to support school day instruction. This includes "push-ins" whereby mentors provide extra assistance to teachers in the class, and "pull-outs" in which mentors work with a small group of students outside the class. One teacher noted, "*So, our programs are intertwined in that they're helping me during the day, and a lot of times I'm helping them after they get out of school.*"

At another school, where afterschool activities include an academic period as well as activities like canoeing, biking, or soccer, ASP staff take part in many school activities. The ASP director noted, *"So, you'll see us in the classroom, you'll see us on field trips, in the cafeteria doing lunch duties as well as seeing the day time staff in the classroom with us."*

The principal at a school that no longer makes a distinction between the school day and afterschool programming explained, *"We don't call anything afterschool; there's no such thing as afterschool; everything is part of what you do."* In this school, where almost all 6th and 7th graders stay after the traditional school day for activities such as STEM, coding class, and Folklorico (dance), the afterschool program is called 8th and 9th period, and activities provided by CBOs are included on students' daily school schedules. The CSM noted, *"I'm working in this system that's working together… I don't think the kids even know that they're in afterschool, because it's so seamlessly integrated."*

Connecting students to expanded opportunities. At the high school level, expanded learning consisted largely of connecting students to opportunities both on and off the school site, with varying levels of coordination or integration with the school day. At one large high school, the ASP coordinator noted that coordination has largely been a matter of connecting the ASP with the school's Linked Learning pathways.   This implementation may be described as *complementary and coordinated* (as opposed to integrated), with teachers leading the academic and technical learning aspects and the Community School Manager and partners focusing on extended learning opportunities and supports. The ASP coordinator noted:

Our goal with the afterschool program is to link every single afterschool program and do some collaborations with the pathway, with Linked Learning. So, we're going to have our culinary arts maybe connect with our fashion design program and do some cross collaborations. We're going to have our… music production program do some stuff with the computer academy and do some cross collaborations.

At a smaller high school, implementation can be described as more *integrated* with Linked Learning insofar as the instructional and extended learning supports are not separately conceived and led. Community school elements, including family engagement, school culture development, and planning of the school day and expanded learning opportunities are all adapted to the central task of promoting college and career readiness in a holistic way. Expanded learning for 11th and 12th graders at this school consists of internships after noon, which allows this small school to greatly expand its offerings to meet students' interests.   A teacher explained, *"What this allows us to do is give our students, like, literally unlimited elective opportunities where they're, like, really pursuing what they're interested in."*

Encouraging coordination and communication among key staff. CSMs, partner staff, and teachers were key personnel in coordinating and communicating to facilitate afterschool opportunities for students.

At multiple schools, staff noted that the CSM plays an important role in connecting students to other activities outside of the school day, including the summer. At one high school with two community school coordinators, one focuses on student internships and employer partnerships, while the other coordinates college and summer programs. The CSM spends considerable time coordinating summer programming for students, which includes connecting students and families to services, such as sport activities. She noted that families want their children involved in activities and benefit from some help with the process, to follow through on all the steps of signing up for various activities. Multiple schools host summer programs run by partner agencies, sometimes with some school teachers on staff, and aim to have all students involved in some structured activity during the summer whether it is at the school site or elsewhere.

Community schools implemented a range of strategies to facilitate communication between teachers and partner staff. At one school the principal blends in-school and expanded time efforts by having a common faculty meeting time for all teaching and partner staff to meet together each month. At another school, afterschool program staff have one day off where *"they don't teach a class but it's all about going in and checking with those teachers for what the curriculum is, what they're learning, what unit is going on."* And then, they have that time to talk

to teachers. Also, at multiple schools staff reported using Google docs as a way to share information about students because of limited opportunities to speak face-to-face. Each of these practices represents shifting norms of communication from the traditional ways of relating between school day teachers and afterschool staff.

Engaging families and the community in providing expanded learning engagement. At both participating high schools, the community school efforts at family engagement activities focused on goals of college and career readiness. One school counselor explained that although advancing a college-going culture at a school is often the domain of teachers and counselors, among first-to-college students, family engagement is critical so that students have support for their higher education aspirations at home. She noted that the work of creating a college-going culture at her school is now considerably easier because the community school model provides a vehicle for parent outreach, and that Linked Learning provides the specific logic and content for reaching out to parents. So in this case, both the community school and Linked Learning models reinforce universal college and career readiness goals. At one school, for example, the family resource center has a focus on providing parents with information about colleges and careers. At another, the parent liaison reported that much of her time is devoted to counseling parents on how to support their children's college and career aspirations.

Across most of the schools, CBO staff played a role in communicating with parents and families. In one school we heard that afterschool staff help teachers, for instance, by making phone calls to parents to schedule conferences. One teacher noted: *"I believe it has been a major impact on helping the teachers. It's just having an extra hand and focusing on those targeted students."* At another school, afterschool staff have one day off per week which is intended to allow them to communicate with teachers, and also to visit students' homes. The program director reported that staff visit each student in the program at least once per month, and sometimes more depending on student needs.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

The primary challenge voiced at multiple schools was finding time and opportunities for teachers and CBO staff to discuss their students, and align lessons and goals. Despite the efforts to facilitate communication between teachers and CBO partners, the level of communication varied both across and within schools. One teacher, speaking of the challenge and potential in collaborating with CBO partners, said, "*It's like there's no system that supports accountability because there is no structured time for us to meet or talk. So, I feel like it's underused; it could be something pretty big, pretty amazing.*"

Family Engagement

Nearly all school staff interviewed discussed the critical role that family engagement efforts play in their community school implementation. Family engagement is increasingly being utilized as a strategy to support student learning in schools across the country. Indeed, a growing body of research highlights a positive association between parent involvement and their children's social

and emotional development and academic achievement.[25] In practice, family engagement often encompasses a wide range of activities and initiatives, from parental participation in school governance to at-home learning activities to classroom volunteering.

Community schools in Oakland engage families by offering services and supports, engaging parents in their children's learning, and involving parents as leaders and advocates for school improvement.[26]   Key practices include hiring dedicated staff (e.g., family advocates), maintaining a family-centered space (e.g., Family Resource Center), and creating opportunities for parent involvement and leadership (e.g., Academic Parent Teacher Teams, Parent Advisory Council).   Finally, many schools described an important shift in their work with families from offering services to engaging parents as partners. School leadership played a critical role in prioritizing family engagement and creating openings for new ways to relate to families in the school community.

Implementation Overview

Across the study sample, we observed three main types of family engagement activities in the schools: family supports, family engagement around learning, and family involvement in advocacy. All three types of family engagement activities were present to varying degrees at each of the schools and each is discussed under key strategies, below. Most of the community schools in this study have teams dedicated to engaging and supporting families. These teams often include the Community School Manager and at least one family advocate.[27]   Family advocates are sometimes parents or alumni parents themselves who are often employed by partner agencies on a part-time to full-time basis. Family advocates frequently provide a direct line to students' families, calling or texting parents about a student, often at a teacher or staff person's request. Family advocates also often participate in COST meetings or back-to-school nights, conduct home visits, and keep tabs on the needs of students' families and community.

Most community schools in the study also had a Family Resource Center (FRC). Although the role of the FRC varied from site to site and among grade levels, it always provided a physical space where parents could come to engage with the school. It often provided parent support services—ranging from ESL classes to tax assistance and legal aid. At some sites, the FRC was also closely linked to the academic mission of the school; for example, one site (a high school) had a "Family Resource and College Center."

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[25] (Biag & Castrechini, 2014; Epstein, 1990; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Harvard Family Research Project, 2010; Henderson & Mapp,2002)

[26] Throughout this brief we sometimes use the word "parent" to denote the primary caregiver of a child, which at times may be a guardian, friend/neighbor, grandparent, or other relative.

[27] We heard that this role was sometimes called "family advocate" and sometimes "family liaison." As "family advocate" was the name mentioned most, we use that terminology here.

Supporting families with basic needs. All of the schools in this study offer substantial programs, services, and supports for families, such as food/grocery giveaways, legal aid, tax clinics, holiday toy drives, and parenting classes. These services were often framed as a response to the acute needs found in high-poverty communities. Teachers and family advocates in particular shared stories of students and families facing challenging circumstances, ranging from violence, trauma, family separations, parental incarceration and deportation, and other instabilities. Further, in many schools there is considerable student mobility. In one school, we heard that *"We have about 5 students either enrolling in the school or leaving the school in any given week. That's a lot of transitions."*

Family advocates also mentioned that having strong relationships with families helped them better understand students' circumstances and support their needs. In the words of one family advocate:

> *It's all about family engagement. So we really want to have all our families close and get to know the families and for them to feel comfortable enough to be around us. 'We care for your child. We are all family.' It's just family-oriented.*

The family advocates are often part of parent-teacher conferences, informal meetings with teachers, and other conversations to triangulate and mediate important information about students' needs and circumstances. For the most part, family advocates also participate in COST meetings where they share relevant information with the extensive student support team at the school. While staff primarily talked about the partnerships with families, some also mentioned the important role that partner agencies play at their community school as part of what makes them different from traditional school sites. One staff member said:

> *I think a full service community school means knowing that kids and families and communities have a lot of needs and partnering with people to be able to meet those needs, so that there's a really symbiotic communication and relationship with them and that the school is not taking that all on their own.*

Engaging families in their children's learning. At most of the community schools, family engagement activities were closely connected to learning. This includes engaging parents around students' learning (in school and at home), expanded learning/enrichment opportunities, college/future plans, attendance, and discipline issues. At one school, the family advocate described how supporting parents in applying for summer learning opportunities for their children can mediate obstacles that often keep children from successful enrollment. For example, seemingly minor issues such as misunderstanding about the application process or due date can present real barriers to opportunity for low-income students. The family advocate remarked:

> *From the outside, you might be like, 'oh, the kids don't care, the families don't care, they don't have any follow-through.' But then from the inside, you see, all these little things*

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that can become big things… that can make the difference between student accessing something amazing or not.

At several of the sites, school leadership developed systems to foster greater parent-teacher communication and collaboration. One site in particular has adopted Academic Parent Teacher Teams, a school-wide, evidence-based practice to restructure parent-teacher conferences, actively engaging parents in supporting students' learning goals at home. For many teachers who often do not know how to talk to parents from different cultural backgrounds about their children's in-class learning, this has been an important practice. Additionally, most schools had taken efforts to increase communication between parents and school staff. For example, one site developed an attendance initiative that involves immediate follow-up with families when a student is absent. Teachers at multiple schools mentioned that they regularly text with parents, for example about whether or not their child completed homework, or attended class. One staff person described how, after one student was having major behavioral issues, the family liaison staff called his mother, and the principal and his mother followed him around in class all day, for a day, sitting next to him, to keep an eye on him and show that they cared.

Bolstering parents as advocates. Staff at several of the schools described the important role that parents play as advocates, both for their child and for all children at the school. This includes advocacy to support policies and measures that bring new resources into the school. At one site, the principal credits parents for advocating at the district and state levels for the passing of district Measure N (2014) and state Proposition 30 (2012), both of which brought significant new funding streams to the school. [28] At another school, staff credit parents' tenacity in demanding district attention to the poorly equipped science labs on campus.

At several of the community schools in this study, parent involvement was built into the fabric of the school; some had been started as part of the small schools movement in Oakland, with heavy parent involvement. However, even those sites scaffolded parent involvement as advocates through intentional strategies and practices. At one site, staff described the school leadership's effort to create real partnerships and treat parents as critical stakeholders; for example, attending meetings with parents at which the principal explained the school budget including where Title 1 money comes from, how it is structured, as well as other sources of funding for the school.

Another site developed several parent-advocacy groups organized around a "cycle of action" for school improvement. The groups were facilitated, in part, by a part-time consultant (who happened to be a parent), hired specifically for that purpose. In the cycles of action, parents looked at data regarding issues at the school (e.g., student achievement gap). They then formed a plan to learn more, for example by visiting other schools that have developed best practices in response to a similar issue, and proposed action in response. Several staff underscored the critical role that data play in this type of engagement. Parents are constantly

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[28] Measure N authorized the district to impose for ten years an annual parcel tax of $120 per unit of property. Measure N earmarked the tax revenue for adding school programs designed to prepare students for colleges and real-world jobs and reduced dropout rates
http://ballotpedia.org/Oakland_Unified_School_District_Parcel_Tax,_Measure_N_(November_2014)

seeing and reflecting on data, and it appears that the school facilitates structured opportunities to "do something about it." As one staff reflected:

> *We'd talk to parents and ask them what they thought about the school, and they thought that it was great, that the teachers were great, the students were doing great. But then we showed them the data that showed how their school ranked against other schools in Oakland, and other schools in the state, and they realized it wasn't like they thought.*

Several principals strongly endorsed the importance of family engagement for fostering school improvement. According to one principal, parents can hold the highest vision for their children, and harnessing that vision can unleash tremendous potential. The principal continued:

> *You're always going to need that voice that pushes the school to be the best possible version of itself and not make excuses, and parents need a seat at that table… And you find yourself not making excusing and trying to be more solutions-oriented.*

Challenges and Areas of Improvement

By far the greatest challenge articulated by staff regarding family engagement was the depth of need that so many school families face. For family advocates in particular, the daily demands of accompanying parents through the many challenges of high-poverty living were emotionally difficult and, at times, even dangerous. One family advocate described conducting a home visit to a parent whose house she knew had been the target of gang violence several weeks earlier. Upon climbing the entryway stairs, she observed bullet holes in the side of the house and said, for the first time, she felt afraid in the neighborhood.

While the role of the family advocate in some ways hinges on always being available to families, the lack of boundaries was sometimes a source of stress. Family advocates described fatigue and exhaustion of being constantly on call; this was especially challenging for advocates with families of their own. Advocates also sometimes offer families resources out of their own pocket, such as lunch money or school supplies. Despite being coached by their CSM that this was not the expectation, advocates found it difficult *not* to share with families and students in great distress.

Additionally, while school staff spoke at length about how as a school community they are doing a much better job engaging parents and families, they also discussed the ongoing challenge of reframing traditional, often uni-directional parent-staff relationships. As one staff person mentioned at their school they try to *"engage the families so that they are equal partners. So, kind of moving away from 'We have these things and we're just going to give them to you.' But, rather, really developing a mutual partnership."*

3: COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING

Community schools reflect a model intended to provide essential organizational supports for effective teaching, student engagement, and learning, including efforts to support a positive school learning climate, improve student health and wellness, and promote productive parent, school, and community ties. This section highlights findings related to student and learning outcomes associated with community school implementation at district schools. Community schools aim to address students' needs and promote a positive school climate in which students are ready to learn and teachers are supported to provide quality instruction; in turn improving student attendance, behavior, and achievement. Previous research has demonstrated that student and family participation in such support services—a key feature of community schools—is often associated with improved student outcomes. Additionally, the key structures and systems of community schools—leadership, partnerships, and coordination—may enhance the integration of these services as fundamental components of the life and academic mission of the school, ultimately bolstering their ability to affect student outcomes. In this section we focus on site staff's perceptions and experiences of how the community school model supports student, teacher, and school outcomes. In addition, we incorporate analysis of school-level outcomes using OUSD administrative data for these schools and the district as a whole to identify shifts in leading indicators of student academic engagement and performance, as well as school climate. During our site visits, we asked study participants to make observations about the relationship between community school activities, interventions, and organizational supports as implemented at their schools, as well as the overall environment for teaching and learning. In the discussion that follows, we assess respondents' observations in light of OUSD's strategic goals regarding the anticipated effect of community schools activities and strategies on teaching and learning. These include improving student readiness to learn; promoting student academic, social, and emotional learning; supporting teachers; and improving the overall climate for learning at schools.

Initial reports from respondents indicate that participating schools are in different developmental stages in implementing their community school models. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of respondents at all schools report that community school interventions have positively affected student readiness to learn, support for teachers, and the school climate. Some respondents also noted observable links between elements of community school implementation and student learning. We discuss each of these below. Additionally, we draw on OUSD administrative data to examine school-level trends in leading indicators of academic engagement and performance, including chronic absence, suspension rates, and student responses on school climate surveys. We note that the examined school-level, year-to-year student trends are largely consistent with teacher and staff reports obtained during our first phase of interviews. Further statistical analysis may lead to a deeper understanding of these trends and how they relate to community school implementation.

Facilitating Learning

Decreased Barriers to Learning. Most school staff indicated that the availability of health and wellness services were a primary means for removing barriers to student learning through addressing medical and behavioral issues, as well as minimizing the amount of class time students miss. In the words of one teacher:

> *In order for students to learn, I think that they have to be healthy. [Too often an assumption is made that a student's] …medical, behavioral health, basic needs are being met. And if that's not happening, then I don't think there's a way for them to succeed.… I just think healthy students learn better.*

Staff also cited numerous examples where academic or behavioral concerns with a student turned out to be health issues that the school's health center then addressed. For example, a student who wasn't doing homework was finally discovered to need glasses. Most schools offered primary health care, dental care, vision testing, mental health counseling, restorative justice practices, and other services to students and families. Glasses, primary care, and reproductive health were among the most frequently mentioned services offered by health clinics as supporting student learning. These health services play important functions such as keeping students from missing class, helping students see/learn better, and allowing students to take care of their reproductive health in a sensitive and confidential manner. In addition to student health needs, staff also mentioned food, mental health, and family support services as critical to supporting student learning. According to respondents, through better access to services and improved systems to identify students' needs, community school implementation has helped remove barriers to student learning.

Increased Access to Academic Services and Supports. Community school supports for students' social and emotional learning include academic and expanded learning opportunities, Linked Learning, alternative disciplinary practices, and better and earlier identification of students with support needs, among others. According to respondents, students have access to substantially more social-emotional supports within the community school model, as well as there being better systems in place to identify students that need support and connect them to the right services. Staff across the schools discussed seeing significant improvements in students' academic learning that they traced, at least in part, to increased expanded learning opportunities and the continuum of community school supports. All community schools offered expanded learning opportunities for students, ranging from afterschool programs and summer enrichment opportunities to internships and Linked Learning pathways. At some schools, the majority of the student body participates in afterschool programs. School-day teachers and afterschool staff often collaborate and coordinate curriculum, further enhancing the integration of school day and afterschool learning.

In many cases, teachers noticed a difference between students who participated in these enhanced learning opportunities and those who did not. For example, a teacher at one high school reported: "*At the end of [the students'] freshman year one of our most rigorous teachers could see a drastic difference in just our students that were in the [Linked Learning] pathway and our students that weren't.*" Staff often attributed positive changes in student's academic

performance to students having access to extensive and intensive supports available through strategic partnerships or better systems, structures, and practices.

Improved Attendance. Respondents also noted school- and district-level shifts in disciplinary practices and efforts to improve attendance—for example, Coordination Of Services Teams and attendance teams—had a direct impact on increasing students' time available for learning. At several of the sites, school leadership developed systems to increase attendance that involve immediate follow-up with families when a student is absent. Staff at most schools mentioned improved student engagement, which some linked to restorative justice practices, better academic supports, and/or clear communication around student expectations and safety. In the words of one teacher:

> *[Now students] really want to be on-campus. We don't have students that are, like, 'Get me off this campus!' One or two. But the majority of them, this is where they want to spend their time. So, we … cultivated that culture, which then [allows staff to] hold kids accountable because it's something they want to be a part of.*

Decreased Disciplinary Issues. Staff in all sample schools described an observable improvement in over-all student discipline, including significant declines in disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and the disruptive incidence of adult-to-student and peer-to-peer conflict among students. Many teachers and school staff trace this decline to using restorative justice practices, as well as increased family engagement, student engagement, and a more positive school climate. In the words of one teacher: *"I feel like we actually just have a lot fewer disciplinary issues because students just have a sense of purpose in what we're doing and are more focused on academics."* Many staff attributed this to the community school services, supports, and structures that help engage students and families and foster a more positive school climate. Most staff interviewed indicated a positive shift in school culture, related to decreased disciplinary issues concurrent with the implementation of the community school approach at their site.

Supporting Teaching

More Time for Instruction. Teachers overwhelmingly reported that the services and supports integrated into the school through community school implementation allowed them to focus more time on developing and engaging students in academic content. One teacher explained that these services reduce the number of "hats that a teacher needs to wear." Having these additional supports available provide teachers with a way to focus on their teaching and to have other staff or partners at the school site handle problems that would otherwise fall on them. While community school teachers often play an important role in screening students for services, they do not have to take it upon themselves to identify service providers for students, given the supports within the community school model. Partners, Community School Managers, and sometimes family liaisons all become resources for addressing student needs. This, ultimately, serves to *"take some of the weight off you as a teacher."* In the words of one teacher, *"[You] don't have to be social workers or coaches. You don't have to worry that you don't have those resources because we have partners."*

Robust and well-integrated afterschool programs, a key feature of many community schools, also appeared to support teachers. In some schools teachers noted that the afterschool programming provides an opportunity for homework help, additional instruction, and activities aligned with school day instruction. One teacher noted, *"The fact that a lot of my students go to afterschool program, I know a lot of them will get help with their homework. [And that makes my job easier]."* In schools where afterschool partner staff worked alongside teachers in the classroom, teachers noted how the extra help makes teachers' classroom time more effective. In the words of one teacher:

> *So, there's an extra adult to support me while I'm teaching during the day; also, getting a sense for what's happening in the classes and what the needs are of some of the kids who they'll be seeing later on in the afternoon. So, our programs are intertwined in that they're helping me during the day, and a lot of times I'm helping them after they get out of school.*

Improving School Climate

More Collaboration Between Staff, the Community, and Families. Most staff interviewed indicated a positive shift in school culture and climate among students, adult staff, and often families. In some cases, staff narrated a shift from a "toxic" school environment to one of adult collaboration, teamwork, and engagement. At all schools, we saw evidence of a community school culture in which the adults from the school work together to support students' needs. We also observed a collaborative school leadership approach that extended beyond the principal and teachers to encompass the Community School Manager, a range of partner agencies at the school, and to some extent families as well. Most schools had teams dedicated to engaging and supporting families, often including the Community School Manager, at least one family advocates or liaison, and sometimes partners and teachers. Teachers especially highlighted the value of improved communication and collaboration with families to students' learning.

School-Level Trends

In addition to interviews with key staff, we analyzed OUSD administrative data as an additional source of information regarding the relationship between community school implementation and student outcomes anticipated to be influenced by community school activities. We examined school-level trends in leading indicators of academic engagement and performance related to student behavior and attendance, as well as school climate. Specifically, administrative data allowed us to examine trends in chronic absence, suspension rates, and student responses on school climate surveys. Below we provide two figures displaying school-level trends for the three schools in our study sample that serve middle school students along with district-wide averages.[29]

Figure 1 reports four-year trends in chronic absenteeism and student suspension rates for the three schools in our study sample that serve middle school students along with middle school

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[29] Coliseum College Prep Academy (CCPA), Urban Promise Academy, and Roosevelt Middle School. The other schools in our sample are Garfield Elementary and Oakland Tech High School.

district-wide averages.   Consistent with district-wide trends, all three of these schools demonstrate reductions in the percentage of students suspended.   Further, in these schools, chronic absence either decreased or remained below the district average. In Figure 2, we present data from the California Healthy Kids Survey administered to 7th grade students from 2006 to 2013.   We examined the following four school climate variables: (1) the percentage of students giving the school high marks for over-all school environment, (2) the percentage of students giving the school high marks for caring relationships from adults at the school, (3) the percentage of students giving the school high marks for high expectations from adults in the school, and (4) the percentage of students who give the school high marks for promoting meaningful participation by students. With the exception of the measure of meaningful participation, long-term trends are either high or steadily improving, consistent with respondent reports from the same schools. Overall, these figures do suggest trends in the desired direction. Future statistical analysis may further explore these trends and relationships.

Figure 1.
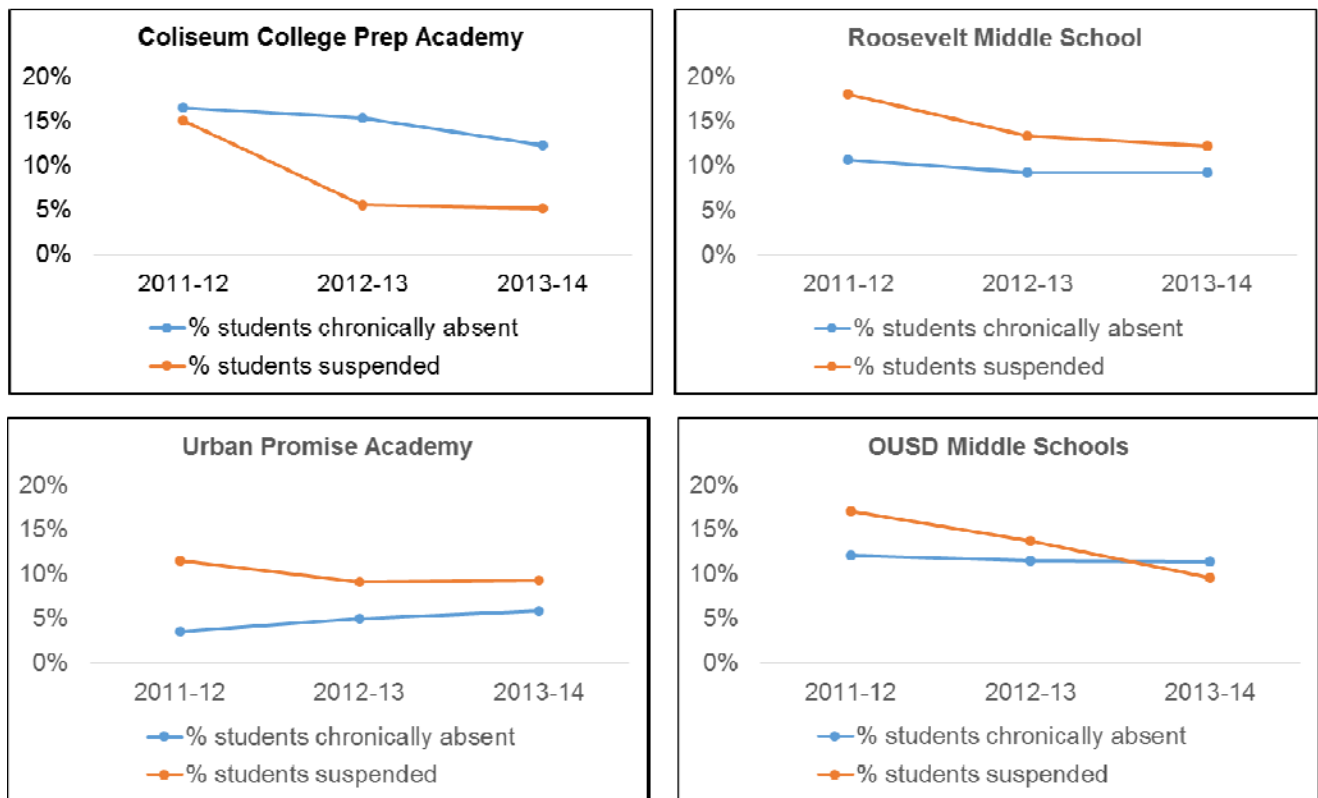
Figure 2.
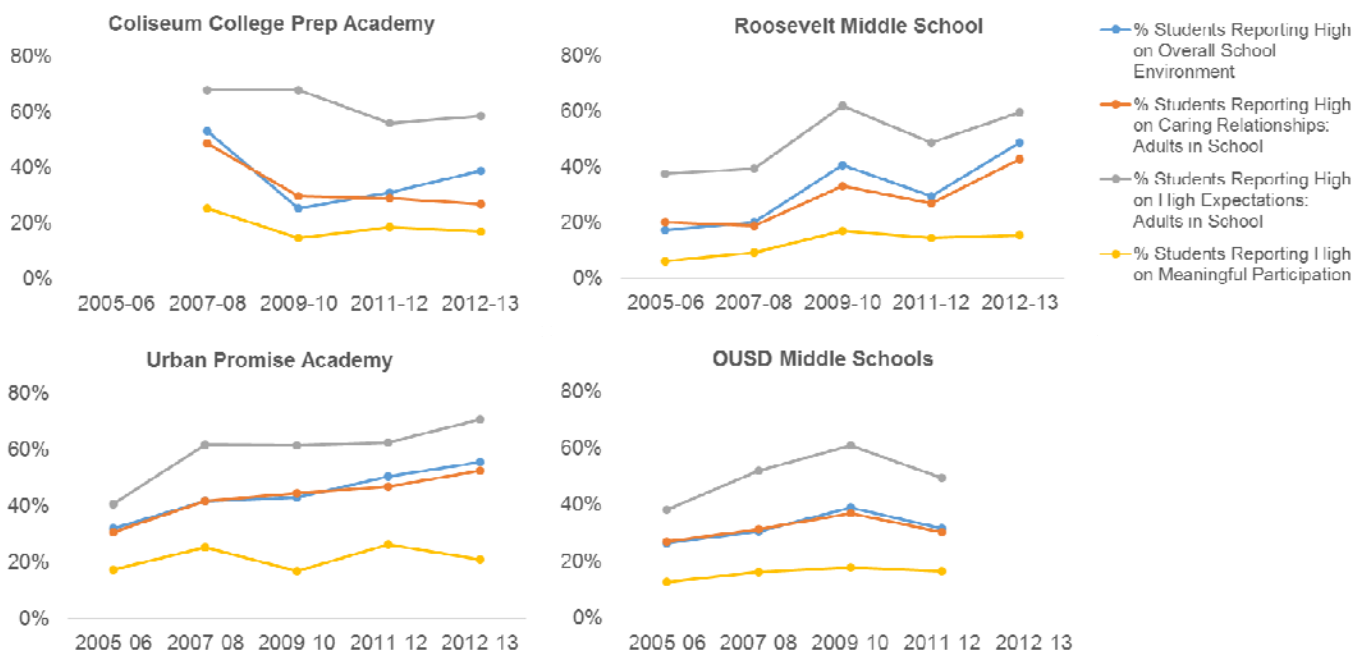
4. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

This report documents findings regarding community school implementation in a sample of five OUSD schools, based on research conducted during the first year of a multi-year collaboration between OUSD and the Gardner Center. OUSD's community schools initiative aims to implement a set of activities and strategies intended to foster changes at the student, school, and district levels to support teaching and learning.

The OUSD community school model appears to be working as designed. Our research indicates that, overall, the OUSD community schools in the study sample have implemented the major structures of the community school model, providing a range of services and supports in strategic partnership with CBOs. As OUSD continues its scale-up efforts to expand the community school model to more sites, the role of school leadership, community partners, Community School Managers, and Coordination Of Services Teams (COST) are essential. Our research indicates that, consistent with OUSD's community school design, these represent key foundational elements for community schools as they implement an expansive vision of what a school is and how it can and should serve its students. School principals and Community School Managers in particular are critical to developing strong relationships with partner organizations and with families, and adopting a collaborative leadership approach that encompasses and acknowledges the role of multiple stakeholders.

The community school model offers an integrated, strategic approach to addressing student outcomes and needs. This research offers guiding lessons and examples illustrating how community schools can be more than a collection of services based at school but, rather, include a set of supports and partnerships integrated into the mission and practice of the school. Sites that have implemented the community school model for a number of years appear to be on a continuum of integration between school and partner staff, and this research points both to considerable progress as well as some areas for ongoing improvement.

Implementing the community school model appears to be positively related to student readiness to learn, support for teachers, and school climate. By and large, principals, teachers, and community partners report that community school interventions have positively affected student readiness to learn, support for teachers, and the school climate. Further, school-level, year-to-year student statistical trends are largely consistent with teacher and staff reports obtained during our first phase of interviews. In the schools that had been implementing the community school model for multiple years, we observed evidence of a culture in which the adults in the school work together to support students' needs, and students and families are more deeply engaged in students' success and learning. Indeed, community school implementation was often considered by school-site staff to be part of broader improvement efforts to transform school culture and re-align resources to best support more equitable student outcomes.

There remains a need for increased resources—especially around behavioral health and trauma—and more robust student-level data on community school program participation. This research also highlighted a number of challenges as well as areas for further possible

inquiry.   For instance, at multiple schools we heard about ongoing challenges to find opportunities for various school and partner staff working with students to communicate and plan together in order to maximize the effectiveness of these partnerships.   Staff at all study schools discussed students' experiences of trauma and that despite an increase in resources for behavioral health services, trauma-related and trauma-informed services remain an important need. Further, although schools have increased efforts to engage families, additional data collection regarding the nature and frequency of these activities as well as the characteristics of participating families could inform school and district efforts. Finally, preliminary research using administrative data to examine a host of school-level outcomes suggests positive trends, although further analysis is necessary to further understand and unpack the relationship between community school implementation and student and school outcomes.   In light of the findings reported here, areas of further inquiry will be determined in consultation with district staff based on current interests and priorities.

APPENDIX

Table 1: OUSD Study Schools: School Profile, 2013-14

School	Level	Grade	Student Enrollment	Neighborhood	Latino	Asian [30]	African American/ Black	White	English Learners	Free/ Reduced Price Lunch
Coliseum College Prep Academy	Span	6-12	473	East Oakland	88%	1%	11%	--	38%	99%
Garfield Elementary	Elementary	TK-5	604	San Antonio	45%	35%	17%	2%	54%	93%
Oakland Technical High School	High	9-12	2,092	Temescal	19%	19%	36%	22%	8%	54%
Roosevelt Middle School	Middle	6-8	574	San Antonio	34%	45%	17%	2%	35%	96%
Urban Promise Academy	Middle	6-8	324	Fruitvale	86%	7%	3%	2%	43%	98%

Source: Ed-data School Reports, 2013-14, https://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/Pages/Home.aspx; OUSD Community Schools Implementation Study, 2015; OUSD School Websites; Google Maps.

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[30] Includes students identifying as Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Filipino.

Table 2: School Health Center and Expanded Learning Participation Rates

School	Student Clients	Student Visits	% Students Registered Clients	Visits					% Students Participating in Expanded Learning	Expanded Learning Attendance Rates
				Mental Health	Medical	Health Education	First Aid	Dental		
	2012-13								2013-14	
Coliseum College Prep Academy	334	1,783	74%	---	46%	14%	9%	31%	99%	87%
Garfield Elementary	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	48%	96%
Oakland Technical High School	531	1,675	27%	26%	46%	12%	16%	---	19%	80%
Roosevelt Middle School	556	4,426	88%	11%	19%	8%	46%	17%	70%	93%
Urban Promise Academy	146	524	46%	62%	36%	2%	---	---	99%	39%

Source: Alameda County Health Care Services Agency and UCSF 2012-13 School Health Center Report; California Department of Education School Enrollment 2012-13; OUSD After School Data Prepared by Public Profit 2013-14.

Notes: School health center data is missing for Garfield Elementary because it does not have a school-based health center. Otherwise "---"refers to a sample size of less than 15 clients *and* less than 15 visits.