



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FUNDAMENTALS

Capacity-Building Strategies

A Developmental Rubric

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
STATE TRANSFORMATIONAL ASSISTANCE CENTER



This document was authored by the State Transformational Assistance Center (S-TAC) for Community Schools.

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**This is a working document. The S-TAC will continue to update and revise this document to reflect the evolving needs of CCSPG grantees*

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About the Capacity-Building Strategies

The Capacity-Building Strategies: A Developmental Rubric, developed by the State Transformational Assistance Center (S-TAC) for the California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP), is intended to serve as a road map for both Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and school sites as they work towards transforming their schools into community schools. The Capacity-Building Strategies align with the [California Community Schools Framework](#) (CA CS Framework), its [Overarching Values](#), and CCSPP statutory requirements. They are intended to both guide and gauge progress.

To enhance the adoption, implementation, and sustainability of community schooling, the Capacity-Building Strategies are informed by Implementation Science. Implementation Science focuses on the strategies used to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based practices. While the research makes clear that community schooling can improve a range of student outcomes, promote equity, and strengthen communities, these results can only be achieved when the approach is effectively put into practice. Implementation Science bridges the gap between research and practice, elevating the most effective ways to turn good ideas, like community schooling, into meaningful change.

The Capacity-Building Strategies also benefited from a review of existing developmental rubrics that aim to guide community schools implementation and other improvement efforts, and research focused on systems change. Iterations of the Capacity-Building Strategies were shared with S-TAC Advisory Board members, grantees, community partners, and researchers for feedback and suggested revisions. Version 2.0, which includes their generous feedback and suggested revisions, aims to ensure strategies are comprehensive, mutually exclusive, interconnected, and succinct. To accomplish this, we have gone from nine strategies to five. In the spirit of community schools, we view the Capacity-Building Strategies as a collaborative endeavor, and as a living document that will undergo continuous improvement and updates.

The Capacity-Building Strategies consist of an integrated set of goals and related individual and collective actions that develop the clarity and related knowledge, skills and commitment to make major improvements in a particular domain—in this case, California Community Schools. The included strategies are crucial for enhancing the readiness and capability of interest-holders and empowering them with the knowledge, skills, resources and support to successfully translate the promise of community schools into practice. The Capacity-Building Strategies integrate the pillars, key conditions of learning, cornerstone commitments, and the proven practices that comprise the CA CS Framework. They provide the roadmap or the “how” to bring the CA CS Framework to life.

California Community Schools Framework:

Pillars

1. Expanded learning time and opportunities
2. Integrated student supports
3. Collaborative leadership and practices
4. Active family and community engagement

Key Conditions of Learning

1. Supportive environmental conditions that foster strong relationships and community
2. Productive instructional strategies that support motivation, competence, and self-directed learning
3. Social and emotional learning (SEL) that fosters skills, habits, and mindsets that enable academic progress, efficacy, and productive behavior
4. System of supports that enable healthy development, respond to student needs, and address learning barriers



Cornerstone Commitments

1. A commitment to assets-driven and strength-based practice
2. A commitment to racially just and restorative school climates
3. A commitment to powerful, culturally proficient and relevant instruction
4. A commitment to shared decision-making and participatory practices

Proven Practices

1. Community Asset Mapping and Gap Analysis
2. A Community School Coordinator
3. Site-Based and LEA-Based Advisory Councils
4. Integrating and Aligning with Other Relevant Programs

The Phases of Growth & Development

The Capacity-Building Strategies are structured by three sequential phases of growth and development, each consisting of a set of activities designed to put into practice community schooling. Phase-specific strategies and activities aim to assist LEAs and schools in gauging their growth and progress as they engage in the work of transformation.

The phases of growth and development are as follows:

Visioning

This phase is focused on the initial stages of raising consciousness around the strategy. Community school leaders, students, families, educators, and partners envision and explore how the strategy can respond to the strengths and needs of the community and begin to organize people, data, and resources.

Engaging

This phase is focused on deepening skills, capacities, and relationships as well as building the organizational infrastructure essential for implementing the strategy.

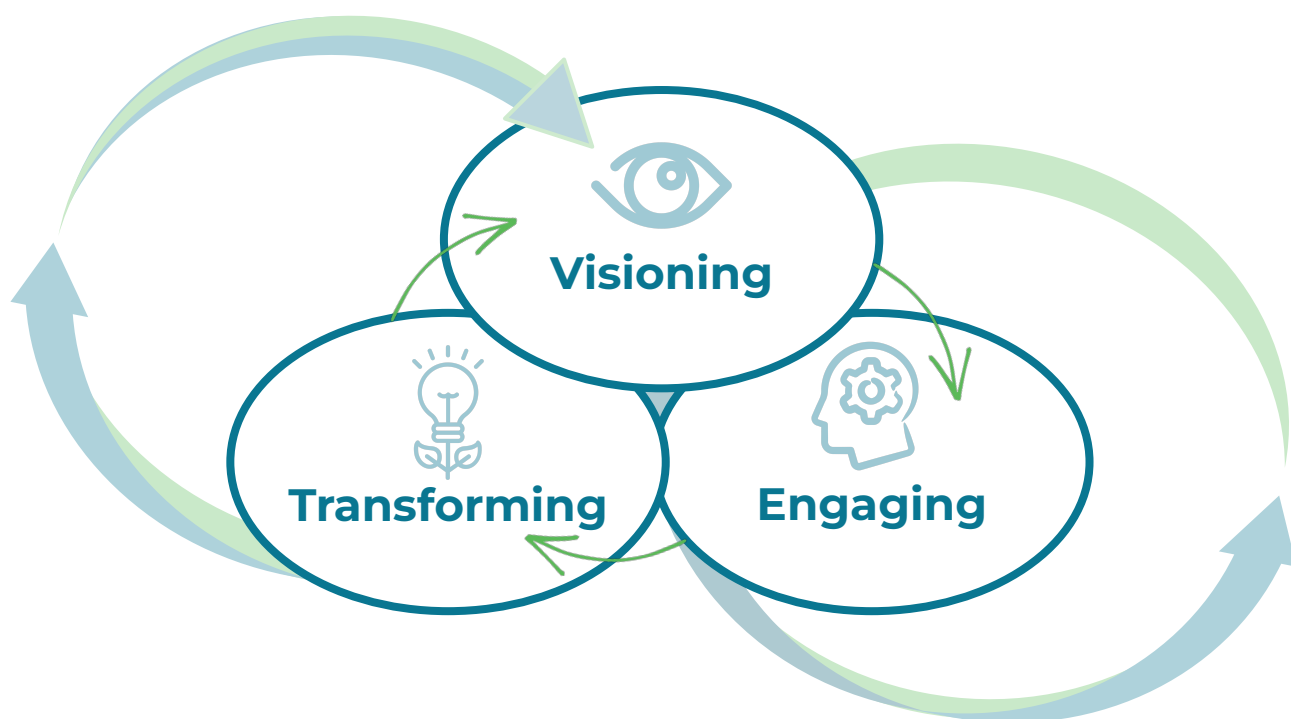
Transforming

This phase is focused on action. Schools fully implement the strategy, in partnership with students, families, educators, and partners, and use established structures and sustainable practices to reflect on data and work collaboratively towards continuous improvement.

Activities occur over time, in stages that overlap and that are revisited as needed. CCSPP Planning Grantees will likely start in the visioning phase and move into the engaging phase during the course of their grant. CCSPP Implementation Grantees will need to assess their starting point—they may be “transforming” in some areas, while simultaneously identifying a need to return to “visioning” or “engaging” to strengthen implementation in other areas. Furthermore, there are no set timelines for moving from one phase of growth and development to another—some grantees may spend months in a phase while others may spend years. It is critical to note that phases of growth and development are not linear. Based on progress and/or weaknesses or gaps in the system, there may be a need to move from “transforming” to do additional “visioning” or “engaging” work.

Because community schools are dynamic and seek to continuously evolve and grow, perpetual reflection informs each phase of growth and development. Importantly, the Capacity-Building Strategies highlight that implementation is an ongoing process, not an event.

Phases of Growth & Development:



Perpetual reflection informs each phase of growth and development and accelerates progress.

Adapted from the National Implementation Research Network, The Active Implementation Hub (2015)

The Why, How, and What of Community Schools Transformation

The Capacity-Building Strategies: A Developmental Rubric outlines the developmental progression that supports transformation. It focuses on a set of strategies and associated activities that are interrelated, synchronized, and build the structural and organizational capacity for collective efficacy and action in meeting shared goals. The strategies are “how” schools transform to community schools. They are as follows:



Shared Commitment, Understanding, and Priorities



Centering Community-based Learning



Collaborative Leadership



Sustaining Staff and Resources



Strategic Community Partnerships

Each strategy and associated activities address and further all four [Overarching Values](#)—“why” we engage in this work. For example, all Capacity-Building Strategies and activities further Shared Power by ensuring students, families, community partners, and educators participate in all activities. In a new feature, meaningful measures and data collection strategies are connected to each Capacity-Building Strategy. This feature aims to assist grantees in continuously shaping, and reshaping, the work through ongoing progress monitoring and possibility thinking. The strategies and activities are all in service of developing and maintaining thriving community schools where students, families, and the community flourish through racially-just, relationship-centered spaces and opportunities for deep learning, removing the walls between classroom and community.

Recognizing that the pace of progress can be highly variable, the self-assessment tools, available as hyperlinks at the end of this document, should be used by LEA and school-level implementation teams (e.g., shared decision-making teams, councils, advisories, steering committees) on a regular basis (at least bi-annually) to gauge progress towards building the capacity of the community schools strategy to deeply engage students, families, educators, community members, and partners in the processes that lead to transformation. Conducting self-assessments at the beginning of the school year and midway, for example, can inform implementation plan updates, course corrections, and assist with end-of-the-year reporting requirements. Frequent self-assessments can also capture small wins that add up to bigger wins and enhance the efforts. The tools are designed to facilitate reflective practices and help a team solidify learning, ground the work in the values embraced by the community, and plan collective next steps. The self-assessment tools also provide guidance for teams, in terms of their progress, including readiness to move from one phase of growth and development to another as well as when they need to revisit a particular capacity-building strategy.

Look for additional hyperlinks that will provide deeper dive resources, including examples and stories, that support CCSPP grantees in tracking their progress towards achieving transformation. As we continue to work to improve and build on the current version of the Capacity-Building Strategies, feel free to email the S-TAC (stac@aco.org) with suggestions and/or feedback.



The Capacity-Building Strategies



Shared
Commitment,
Understanding,
and Priorities



Centering
Community -
Based Learning



Collaborative
Leadership



Sustaining Staff
and Resources



Strategic
Community
Partnerships



Shared Commitment, Understanding, and Priorities

When interest-holders unite in a shared understanding of and commitment to the community school strategy, it drives democratic collaboration and transparency. Deep listening and authentic relationship-building (via a robust Needs and Assets Assessment process) are critical to identifying collective priorities and for monitoring progress towards meeting shared goals.

Visioning

- Develop clear and consistent messaging and talking points in languages that reflect your school population. Answer the question, “why become a community school?”
- Engage interest-holders through one-on-one interviews, listening and learning tours, focus groups, community forums, etc. to begin learning about the hopes and dreams of the community and to create a shared understanding of the community school strategy. Use democratic efforts such as petitions, staff voting, surveys, and other consensus building techniques to gauge interest and commitment to the community school process.
- Co-develop (via a collaborative leadership structure) a plan for conducting a Needs and Assets Assessment that deeply engages interest-holders. Develop specific strategies to reach historically and presently marginalized/excluded students and families.

Engaging

- Create ongoing opportunities to listen to community feedback, questions, ideas, and concerns and collaboratively shape/refine messaging. Formalize shared commitment to the community school strategy.
- Conduct the Needs and Assets Assessment by employing a range of listening methods—including surveys, focus groups, and empathy interviews—to successfully engage 75 to 100% of students, educators (inclusive of all school staff members), families (parents as well as other caregivers, guardians, and chosen family members that extend beyond traditional and legal definitions), and community members in identifying a shared vision and top community school priorities. Produce a findings report and publicly share results.
- As part of the Needs and Assets Assessment, analyze baseline data and map resources using the Whole Child and Family Supports Inventory to explore critical access to a range of supports and services spanning the full scope of the CA CS Framework.
- Via a shared leadership structure, collaboratively set goals and develop an initial community school implementation plan that aligns with collective priorities identified through the Needs and Assets Assessment, and statewide CCSP reporting requirements. Implementation plan should integrate various school-wide efforts and initiatives (e.g., Expanded Learning Opportunities, Golden State Pathways, Universal Transitional Kindergarten) to support alignment and streamline efforts.
- Review school’s data collection strategy specific to the identified collective priorities. Actively engage with data, and use data analysis protocols during goal setting sessions. Engage in possibility thinking to find opportunity in complex issues emerging from data analysis.
- Assess emerging needs to determine which—when addressed—could create the greatest impact with the least effort. Engage interest-holders to take action on these needs and create small successes to further fuel interest and investment in the community school strategy while working towards long-term goals.

Transforming

- Continuously re-ground the community in a shared vision of success and systematically orient and onboard newcomers, such as new hires, to maintain a shared commitment to and understanding of the strategy.
- Form or expand priority teams/working groups that are diverse and representative of your school’s interest-holders to take action on identified priority topics that emerge from the Needs and Assets Assessment process. Together, explore root causes, identify indicators of success, continuously monitor progress, and develop and test strategies to achieve collective priority goals.
- Priority teams/working groups implement and take ownership of harnessing diverse perspectives in order to generate new ideas and innovative solutions.
- Deliver public presentations and annual reports detailing engagement efforts along with the resulting community school plan/updates, including goals, data, and outcomes. Presentations are made by the school’s decision-making team/council which includes students, families, and community partners.
- Keep dreaming!

Visioning

- Collaborate with schools to raise awareness of the community school strategy across the broader community, creating shared understanding. Support schools through modeling, listening, coaching, highlighting examples, and developing tools so that sites implement democratic processes that gauge and formalize commitment to the community school strategy.
- Engage LEA leaders, school board members, union leaders, community partners, and others to garner support and commitment. Answer the question, “why community schools for our LEA?”
- Leverage existing system-wide structures (e.g. vertical articulation teams, Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Parent Advisory Committees, student leadership groups, and other LEA-wide teams and groups) for peer-to-peer learning about the community schools strategy.
- Disaggregate LEA-wide data by school, and share it with individual community school site teams to inform baseline understanding and needs and assets assessments.

Engaging

- Collect and use initiative-wide data to assess and inform progress, including performance measures (e.g., implementation plan updates), school-level outcomes (e.g., attendance rates), and program outcomes as defined by CCSPP reporting requirements. Disaggregate data by site and by student subgroups to identify and address potential disparities in outcomes.
- Co-construct, through the LEA-level steering committee, a LEA-wide strategic plan for rolling out the community school strategy that includes how community schools will be selected, monitored, and supported. Ensure this plan is aligned to and integrated with the LCAP.
- Provide ongoing and differentiated support (via coaching on engagement strategies, tools, templates, modeling, and listening) that empowers schools to meaningfully collaborate with interest-holders in conducting a robust Needs and Assets Assessment.

Transforming

- Share accountability and responsibility for community school success between board members, superintendents, principals, educators, families, students, and community members. Collectively advocate and work towards continued system-level changes that aim to disrupt systemic inequities.
- Refine habits of listening to accelerate collective learning and improvements. Routinely convene school-level working groups focused on similar priority goals to celebrate successes, exchange best practices, and distill lessons learned to inform LEA goals, systems, and processes and vice versa.
- Regularly update the public on progress of the system-wide community schools initiative through annual reports and public presentations.

Progress Monitoring Measures

Needs and Assets Assessment engagement rates; community school implementation plans and/or School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) that is focused on community school implementation; school climate surveys; analysis of system-level data including access and utilization rates related to [Whole Child and Family Supports Inventory](#) (e.g., health and wellness services; mental health services; afterschool and summer programming; nutrition services, etc.); and school-level outcome measures as defined by CCSPP reporting requirements that include school attendance rates, chronic absenteeism rates, dropout rates, proficiency scores, high school graduation rates, and suspension/expulsion rates.

RESOURCES

- [Needs and Assets Assessment Guide](#)
- [Whole Child and Family Supports Inventory](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)



Centering Community-Based Learning

Community-Based Learning (CBL) builds on the rich, diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students, families, and educators. Delivered in learning environments that are relationship-centered and ensure a sense of belonging, CBL builds on community assets, cultural wealth, funds of knowledge, and indigenous ways of knowing. Community-Based Learning is powerful instruction that increases student engagement by connecting classroom learning to real-life experiences and to issues that are relevant to students' lives and communities, improving their sense of ownership and agency.

Visioning

- Invest in educators' learning about and appreciation for students, families, the community, and their wealth of knowledge to inform instructional goals and curriculum. Utilize practices such as community learning tours, relationship-building home visits, and family/student interviews to strengthen educators' knowledge, shift mindsets, and build capacity for collective action.
- Explore the question, "how is teaching and learning different in a community school?" Provide educators opportunities to learn the theoretical roots and applied elements of CBL to integrate classroom learning with real-world experiences in the local community. In teams, identify existing practices and opportunities as well as possibilities for CBL in classrooms, such as project-based learning, youth participatory action research, work-based learning, internships, and service learning.
- Ensure that educators have the resources needed to create supportive, student-centered learning environments that serve the whole child, including training and support in restorative justice and positive behavior practices, social emotional learning, and culturally-sustaining pedagogy and classroom practices.
- Support educators to engage in reflective "mirror work" in order to become more conscious of implicit bias and how their positionality and identity influence their work with students, families, and colleagues.

Engaging

- Create dedicated time for professional learning focused on strengthening all educators' implementation of learning strategies that create a clear bridge between the classroom, school, and the community.
- Allocate time and supportive resources for educators to collectively plan curriculum and integrate learning experiences that strengthen classroom-community connections. Include time for interdisciplinary teams of educators to learn and plan together, and to explore school and classroom policy changes needed to create restorative, safe, relationship-centered learning environments.
- Explore flexibilities in curriculum and assessment to support innovations, powerful instruction, and alternative ways of demonstrating knowledge that can best respond to the assets and needs of students.
- Make space for educators to address problems of practice, and ensure the curriculum addresses the learning needs of vulnerable students, English learners, and those with learning differences.
- Continue engaging families through home visits and/or other high-impact family engagement practices to deepen trust and build effective home-school partnerships.

Transforming

- Root school-level policy and procedures related to curriculum and pedagogy in a community-based learning framework, including continuous professional learning opportunities, educator evaluations, selection and purchasing of instructional materials, and assessment practices.
- Bring together teams of educators to develop assessments that provide evidence of the impact/value of community-based pedagogy (e.g., performance assessments like capstone projects, portfolios) as well as to evaluate and adapt their teaching strategies to ensure they remain relevant and effective, using feedback from students, families, and community assessments.
- Foster an environment where students can see the impact of their learning on their communities, thereby improving their agency and commitment to societal contribution.
- Uplift and honor ways that families teach cultural customs, traditions, and history to their children as well as promote pride in their racial or ethnic heritage.
- Support educators to identify and leverage their strengths so they can do the same thing for their students.
- The foundational tenets of a restorative and healing-centered approach to school-wide discipline are embedded in the school and classroom culture and climate.

Visioning

Engaging

Transforming

LEA-LEVEL

➤ Invest in learning about students, the community, and their wealth of knowledge to inform instructional goals and curriculum. Empathy interviews with students and families, relationship-building home visits, community tours, and other engagement activities are used by LEA-level administrators and leaders to better understand the community.

➤ Seek to answer the question, “how is teaching and learning different in a community school?” Explore CBL with LEA instructional leaders, including superintendents and school principals, and envision how it aligns with and supports LEA instructional priorities.

➤ Create time, space, and flexibility for educators and schools to co-create a shared understanding of CBL, curriculum, and the importance of creating the conditions that support students’ learning such as a positive and restorative school climate.

➤ Support school-level decision-making that enables educators to explore curriculum and assessment innovations that best respond to the assets and needs of their local community.

➤ Modify instructional resources, curriculum, and LEA-wide professional learning to reflect and support a CBL approach in community schools, emphasizing locally designed community-based curriculum and pedagogy.

➤ Engage a diverse and representative interest-holder group to vet all new and existing curricular resources and supports to ensure they advance equity and address the learning needs of vulnerable students.

➤ Develop and administer an LEA-wide school climate survey to students, families, and educators to ensure the learning environment provides a welcoming, nurturing, identity-safe, culturally- and linguistically-affirming, and relationship-centered space.

➤ Empower community schools with the autonomy to innovate on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in order to curate an instructional framework that best responds to the assets and vision of the local community.

➤ Adopt and support a vision of teaching and learning that is at the center of the community school initiative. Continuously strive for LEA-wide teaching and learning that is collaborative, rigorous, relationship-centered, culturally- and linguistically-affirming, relevant, asset-based, democratic, and community-based.

➤ Actively engage families and community members in classroom instruction. Deeply integrate these important co-educators into the LEA’s teaching and learning approach.

➤ Make learning and learning outcomes visible to all, sharing in success with families, communities, and partners.

Progress Monitoring Measures

School climate surveys; shared learning of students and educators via a range of performance assessments (e.g., capstone projects, learning portfolios, learning showcases, community teach-ins, inter-grade and inter-classroom teach-ins, action research presentations, student self-assessment and reflections); and increased learning tasks that build on prior knowledge, are rigorous, and are community-connected. Locally-determined measures such as completion of seal of civic engagement and seal of biliteracy. School-level outcome measures, as defined by CCSPP reporting requirements, including school attendance rates, chronic absenteeism rates, dropout rates, proficiency scores, high school graduation rates, and suspension/expulsion rates.

RESOURCES

- [Community-Based Learning Guide](#)



Collaborative Leadership

Shared decision-making ensures that all interest-holders have a voice in the transformation process. Collaborative leadership helps to flip the traditional hierarchical structure of schools and fosters supportive relationships between interest-holders, resulting in decisions that are widely accepted and implemented, improved coordination and alignment of programs and strategies, out-of-the box thinking to address complex problems, and increased sustainability of the effort.

Visioning

- Map and assess current teams and decision-making spaces with the goal of establishing a coherent and aligned democratic governance structure. With interest-holders, reflect on and re-tool existing structures to identify areas where shared power and alignment can be strengthened.
- Build relationships to identify current and potential student, staff, family and community leaders who could serve on emerging or evolving community school leadership teams. Ensure diverse representation reflective of the school community when identifying and recruiting leaders.
- Utilize an asset-based lens towards families, students, and the community, and take steps to deepen relational trust between those interest-holders and staff. Shift away from one-directional engagement of families towards a model where families feel like they have a voice in the direction of the school.
- Establish regular, transparent, and open communication between site administrators, educators, family and student leaders, key community partners, and the community schools coordinator to nurture collaborative leadership. Build an equal community school coordinator-principal partnership, through trust and dedicated check-ins, that maximizes respective roles and strengths to act on and operationalize the changes that interest-holders wish to see.
- Increase the knowledge and capacity of principals and assistant principals to build a culture of shared leadership through high-quality learning opportunities (for example, those provided by 21CSLA).

Engaging

- Launch or revise site-level shared leadership structure(s) to facilitate democratic participation and decision-making among students, staff, families, community members, leaders of community organizations, local government agencies, and higher education partners. Create a new site-level steering committee/advisory council, or revamp an existing team, such as the School Site Council or governance councils. If a shared leadership structure spans multiple teams, create a coordination and communication structure to frame how communication and decisions are made across teams.
- Provide continuous leadership development opportunities for students, educators, families, and community members that are asset-based and inclusive of multiple languages so that they grow their skills to thrive in leadership positions.
- Provide interpretation, translation, childcare, and other accommodations (e.g., for deaf/blind students, parents, community) to ensure participation from diverse interest-holders and to create an environment where team members feel valued and respected. Democratically decide upon the time and location of meetings to accommodate schedules of various interest-holders.
- Create opportunities in shared leadership spaces to vision and uplift locally-determined measures-data that matters to the community. Ensure that data being collected aligns with its community-based vision emerging from interest-holder engagement.

Transforming

- Make major decisions at the school, including curricular, operational, personnel, budgetary, and strategic decisions, through democratic engagement with representative systems, such as a site-level steering committee/advisory council. Ensure that students, staff, families, and community members have a voice in shaping decisions impacting the school and community.
- Actively seek to foster democratic decision-making whenever possible, and constantly strive towards a culture where all interest-holder voices are valued. Clearly and routinely communicate how and why decisions are made and by whom.
- Expand and operationalize shared leadership spaces beyond steering committees and site governance councils. Regularly engage students, families, educators, and community partners in conversations about how to improve decision-making and implementation processes to strengthen the impact of the community school strategy. Deepening a sense of connection in this way leads to a more relationship-centered, racially-just school climate.
- Encourage innovation and possibility thinking by continuously harnessing diverse perspectives and expertise to address complex issues.

Visioning

- Establish an LEA-level steering committee/advisory council to enact shared decision-making at the systems-level; engage in shared visioning and learning about the community school strategy; and map and assess current areas of shared decision-making policies across the LEA and identify areas to strengthen.
- Provide coaching, peer-to-peer dialogue, and other learning opportunities for site and LEA administrators related to collaborative leadership. Model collaborative leadership and provide guidance and support to schools in analyzing their current collaborative leadership structures.
- Foster collaborative leadership practices by providing all community school sites with professional learning opportunities that focus on adopting asset-based mindsets and acknowledging families and community members as essential decision-making partners.

Engaging

- Provide crucial guidance to school-level implementers as well as create opportunities for them to share their expertise and input with the LEA-level steering committee/advisory council as co-creators of the LEA-level strategy and supportive structures.
- Collaborate with LEA leaders who represent allied programs and initiatives to integrate and align efforts to support a strong foundation for the community schools strategy including a focus on teaching and learning, active family and community engagement, professional learning, interagency collaboration and shared decision-making.

Transforming

- Establish areas of flexibility (such as with scheduling, curriculum and assessments, hiring) and site-based decision-making to support site goals that lead to transformational outcomes for students, families, and educators.
- Adapt and evolve alongside the steering committee/advisory council in ways that are continuously shaped by educators, students, families, and community members who are engaged as equal, authentic and respected partners.
- Elevate the steering committee as a key decision-making partner to the superintendent and school board.

Progress Monitoring Measures

Results of school climate surveys and interviews/focus groups that document students', families', and educators' sense of voice and agency in decision-making, feelings of connection, and engagement; shared decision-making team self-assessments; surveys that document increased reports of educator efficacy; teacher and staff retention rates.

RESOURCES

- [Collaborative Leadership Guide](#)
- [Collaborative Leadership Module](#)



Sustaining Staff and Resources

A focus on sustainability ensures that the necessary human and financial resources are available to maintain the community school vision and strategy over time, used effectively to ensure coherence and alignment across policies and initiatives, and to sustain continuous progress and improvement.

Visioning

- Reimagine the roles of all educators and staff, including the critical role of the principal and teachers, to consider the requisite mindsets and expertise needed to fully embrace the community schools approach. Listening to and engaging students, families, and the community becomes the responsibility of everyone on campus.
- With support from the LEA, envision the role of and develop a job description for a community school coordinator/director who can support facilitation, engagement, and leadership development so that interest-holders can drive the community school transformation process.
- Map existing assets (e.g., staffing, policies, initiatives, programs) at the school and LEA-level that can support and connect to the community school strategy. Reimagine existing implementation efforts to create better alignment, strengthen relationships, and boost interest-holder engagement.
- Conduct an inventory of current professional learning systems, resources, and offerings and collaborate with educators to develop a plan to align professional learning, practices, and programs to the community school strategy.
- From the very beginning of the community schools process, outline an initial long-term sustainability plan to ensure that everything the site is developing is sustainable.

Engaging

- Recruit a multilingual, multi-racial, community school staff who reflect the diversity of the communities they serve, and work to retain them.
- The community school principal drives support for community school priorities by integrating the community school process in the SPSA, interpreting and implementing LEA policies and initiatives in a manner that works towards coherency, ensuring collaboration, and supporting staffing transformation.
- Recognize the agency and collective expertise of teachers, school counselors, social-workers, health providers, paraprofessionals, instructional aides, after school program providers, office staff, nutritional service staff, custodians, and additional support staff as foundational for school improvement. Invest in developing and maintaining a supportive working environment where all educators want to stay and grow.
- Provide role-specific training and ongoing support to help all educators embrace community school values and fundamentals within their respective roles.
- Identify and pursue grant opportunities, fundraising initiatives, and other sources of external funding to support the long-term sustainability plan.

Transforming

- Continuously monitor culture/climate data, working conditions, and satisfaction rates to support teachers and staff to stay and grow in the school community, acknowledging that a “whole child” approach requires a “whole teacher” approach. Reflect on these data and develop responsive strategies.
- In coordination with the LEA, develop and routinely update a long term sustainability funding plan to ensure core staff positions and community and inter-agency partnerships are sustained over time. Ensure the funding plan is comprehensive and considers every aspect of the initiative, including how to fund programs, practices, and facilities and maintain contracts and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and county-level service providers.
- Fully and continuously integrate the community school implementation plan into the SPSA and other improvement plans so that the school is operating from one cohesive improvement plan.

Visioning

- The Superintendent advocates for and champions the community school approach. The Superintendent's cabinet sees community schools as a core LEA priority. The Superintendent models collaborative leadership and authentic relationship building.
- LEA Human Resources staff support school teams in developing job descriptions and screening processes for key community school staff, including community school principals, teachers and site-level coordinators/directors. LEA considers the requisite mindsets and expertise needed to fully embrace the community schools strategy.
- Envision the role and job description for a LEA-level Community Schools Director/Coordinator who works with the implementation team in deepening the understanding of the strategy across sites and identifies/provides scaffolded support.
- Identify policies that can provide support, including financial, resourcing, and/or implementation, and that align with and reinforce the shared vision for community schooling. Map LEA policies (e.g., expanded learning, college and career pathways, Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), dual enrollment), but also local city and county policies, as well as state and federal policy such as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- Map potential city and county allies, such as the mayor, city council, county leadership, and relevant government departments, to build relationships and advocate for support of the community schools strategy.

Engaging

- Hire a LEA-level Community Schools Director/Coordinator, and also consider additional staffing support (e.g., administrative support, communication specialists, budget analysts, data analysts, grantwriters) to strengthen the LEA-wide community school strategy.
- Develop a system of professional learning supports that includes communities of transformative practice for school-level teams to share learnings and challenges as well as role-specific learning and leadership development opportunities. Strategically group communities of transformative practice by grade level span, feeder patterns, and/or areas of focus (e.g., creating and supporting a restorative culture, literacy, supporting specific demographic groups of students).
- Develop and administer a LEA-wide survey to monitor working conditions, employee satisfaction rates, and racially-just and restorative school climate and culture to support teachers and staff to stay and grow in their school communities.
- Integrate the community schools strategy into the three-year LCAP plan to create coherence, establish sustainable funding streams, and implement local policies and practices that prioritize and respond to the assets and needs of the community.
- Work with supportive city officials to seek a formal endorsement or resolution in support of the community schools strategy.

Transforming

- Provide continuous professional learning to assist schools in creating the working conditions and learning environment that fosters retention and a commitment to school communities.
- Cultivate comprehensive, long-term funding streams to ensure sustainability of community school staffing and operations including community-based and inter-agency partnerships. Blend and braid existing resources, as well as continuously pursue new funding sources (e.g., grants, partnerships with externally funded organizations) that align with and support the community schools approach.
- Continuously promote a culture that allows community schooling to become the "way" of doing school. Program and initiatives are integrated and interdependent in design and implementation.
- Pursue a policy agenda that supports community school growth and sustainability. Align policies horizontally (LEA, city) and vertically (local, state, national), such that every level of government is engaged and coordinated, and supports sustainability efforts.

Progress Monitoring Measures

Analysis of workforce and professional learning data such as: extent to which staff reflect the linguistic, ethnic, and racial diversity of the broader school community; teacher and staff retention rates; climate surveys to assess educators' sense of well-being, agency, and efficacy; vacancy and staff attendance rates; percentage of high-quality teachers in the building (e.g., national board certifications, advanced degrees and specialized credentials); job descriptions; and budget projections.

RESOURCES

- [Job Descriptions and Staffing Guide](#)
- [Sustainability Plan Template](#)
- [Funding Sources](#)



Strategic Community Partnerships

Developing strategic community partnerships allows schools and LEAs to expand their capacity to achieve the vision of interest-holders. Partners can strengthen and support a broad continuum of priorities, from expanded learning to integrated student and family supports. Partnerships centered on trusting relationships leads to greater support and investment in the strategy.

Visioning

- Using resource mapping results, create and disseminate a comprehensive resource directory for students, staff, families, and community members to use that includes both existing and potential partners within the school and surrounding community.
- Connect with potential partners through one-on-one conversations to explore how both parties could contribute to and benefit from the community school process.

Engaging

- Recruit CBOs to participate on school-level shared decision-making councils/teams, when appropriate. Ensure that power is balanced and that decisions are made in the best interest of students, families, educators, and the community served.
- Create a vision for strategic community partnerships along with a process for vetting and ensuring alignment of site-based partnerships to collective priorities. Prioritize quality and alignment of partners' programs and supports rather than focusing solely on quantity.
- Collaborate with partners to streamline referral, coordination, and delivery of student support services so that students receive what they need in a timely and efficient manner.
- Develop data-sharing agreements with partners to understand the impact of partnerships in relation to community school collective priorities.

Transforming

- Strengthen existing partnerships and continuously develop new partnerships to provide a range of in- and out-of-school resources, supports, and opportunities that are aligned with strategies developed by priority teams/working groups and that meet the evolving strengths and needs of the local community.
- Evaluate partnerships, and change or end partnership agreements that are not aligned to the vision, collective priorities, and overall needs of the school community.
- Formalize systems and processes that embed integrated student supports into the existing MTSS (e.g., Coordination of Services Team). Meet regularly with partners to collaborate, share data, and think creatively to further improve service access and coordination aligned to individual needs.
- Engage partners in shared learning, progress monitoring, possibility thinking, and continuous improvement using clear and agreed upon measures of success. Collectively celebrate and publicize shared successes.

Visioning

- Map current and potential LEA-wide strategic partners to create a central repository that is continuously referred to and updated throughout planning and implementation. Include information about school-level partnerships.
- Assess the extent to which potential partners align with the goals, values, and principles of the community schools strategy. Evaluate their level of commitment to collaboration, willingness to share resources and expertise, and capacity for sustained engagement.
- Use data to understand how various resources are allocated to and across school sites. Collaborate with existing partners to redistribute resources to align with needs. Create a process to ensure equitable allocation of resources as additional partnerships are developed.

Engaging

- Develop a system-level working group, such as a collective impact partnership, that invites diverse groups of community-based partner and service-providers to help pursue system-level opportunities and overcome systemic barriers.
- Support schools to differentiate between episodic partnerships and ongoing partnerships, and outline the types of support that ongoing partnerships might require. Create guidance and tools for schools to use to operationalize partner commitments.
- Work to remove barriers to partnership and collaboration. Streamline procedures for formalizing ongoing partnerships, including Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), Data Sharing Agreements, and Joint Use Agreements, at the LEA-level. Support schools by entering into and maintaining partnership agreements.
- Leverage relationships with County Offices of Education and County Governments to identify and develop partnerships with county-level service providers.

Transforming

- Leverage the system-level working group to open doors and break down barriers to address issues that emerge from multiple site-level community school priority teams/working groups.
- Engage partners in school and LEA-level spaces where learning and decision-making occurs. Share lessons learned and best practices around building authentic relationships, shared power and decision-making, and collaborative leadership models.
- Move from measuring outputs to measuring partnership outcomes. Evaluate partnership effectiveness and monitor progress towards shared goals outlined in the LEA's Strategic Plan for Community Schools. Celebrate and publicize shared successes.

Progress Monitoring Measures

Increased service utilization rates; school climate surveys; partner attendance; increased number of in-school and out-of-school time learning opportunities (after school, end-of-year programming, internships, real-world learning experiences, etc.).

RESOURCES

- [Sample Memorandums of Understanding, Data Sharing Agreements, and Joint Use Agreements](#)

Site-Level Summaries



Site-Level Self-Assessment Tool

Capacity-Building Strategy	Visioning	Engaging	Transforming
<p>Shared Commitment, Understanding, and Priorities</p>	<p>To ensure interest-holders understand and support the community school strategy, sites launch a comprehensive communications campaign, and utilize tools like surveys and staff votes to gauge commitment to the strategy. The site creates a plan for a deep needs and asset assessment and a robust baseline data portfolio.</p>	<p>To ensure the voices of all interest-holders are a part of the community school process, a needs and assets assessment engages 75-100% of interest-holders in identifying a shared vision and top priorities. Results are shared through a findings report, leading to an implementation plan that includes indicators of success.</p>	<p>So that all interest-holders are engaging in collective action, teams are formed for each identified priority from the needs and assets assessment. Teams foster innovation and possibility thinking. Teams regularly review data and celebrate growth and success.</p>
<p>Centering Community - Based Learning</p>	<p>Sites create shared understanding around the core principles of community-based learning and work to provide the supportive environmental conditions that enable students to better engage in learning and cognitive processes (e.g., relationship-centered practices, social-emotional skill development, restorative practices.)</p>	<p>Educators' skill and self-efficacy to implement community-based learning, and to provide supportive learning environments is increased through robust, teacher-led professional learning and collaborative planning as well as curated learning resources and new structures. Addressing the interests, strengths, and learning needs of vulnerable students is prioritized.</p>	<p>Community-based learning in restorative, relationship-centered climates forms the basis of the site's academic program with multiple, non-traditional measures of student growth and wellbeing used to monitor progress and growth. Learning is visible to all with families, communities, and partners sharing in success.</p>
<p>Collaborative Leadership</p>	<p>In order to cultivate a shared vision of increased power and voice, the community school implementation team maps existing spaces of shared decision-making and identifies potential leaders and opportunities for increased voice.</p>	<p>In order to build the capacity to share power and voice, schools launch or revamp school site leadership structures or governance councils that are diverse in composition and democratically-built.</p>	<p>Student, educator, family, and community voice is increased and operationalized across various spaces of shared decision-making. Major decisions are made through democratic engagement processes that are clear and transparent.</p>
<p>Sustaining Staff and Resources</p>	<p>Schools recognize the important role that all site educators play in successful implementation. Teams acknowledge requisite mindsets and identify staffing resources needed for successful community school implementation.</p>	<p>Teams recruit diverse community school staff, including a community school coordinator/director, and re-imagine the traditional roles of principals and educators. Schools track critical workforce and professional learning data (e.g., teacher retention rates, school climate surveys) to improve and maintain working environments where educators want to stay and grow.</p>	<p>Schools foster a community culture where community schooling is ingrained as the standard approach to education. Initiatives are closely linked to the community schools approach and are integrated into continuous improvement cycles aligned with the SPSA/LCAP, ensuring a unified focus on enhancing student outcomes.</p>
<p>Strategic Community Partnerships</p>	<p>Shared leadership teams map local assets to develop and disseminate a resource directory of current and potential partnerships that support learning experiences and the wellbeing of students. Partners understand the mutual benefits and impact of the community school strategy.</p>	<p>The results of the needs and assets assessment process are used to create a vision and vetting process for community partnerships to ensure quality and alignment of programs and services. Sites collaborate with partners to streamline service access and delivery.</p>	<p>Community partnerships are strengthened and expanded through collaboration and a shared commitment to data-informed continuous improvement. Services and supports provided are embedded into existing systems and processes to improve access and coordination. Partnerships evolve based on changing needs and assets.</p>

LEA-Level Summaries



LEA-Level Self-Assessment Tool

Capacity-Building Strategy	Visioning	Engaging	Transforming
<p>Shared Commitment, Understanding, and Priorities</p>	<p>To raise awareness and foster shared understanding of the strategy, LEAs collaborate with schools and engage LEA leaders. LEAs leverage existing system-wide structures to facilitate peer-to-peer learning, while data is shared with schools to inform baseline understanding and needs and assets assessment.</p>	<p>To foster shared understanding and commitment, LEAs utilize LEA-wide data to monitor progress, develop a strategic plan, and to provide tailored support to schools for conducting a comprehensive needs and assets assessment in collaboration with interest-holders.</p>	<p>So that all interest-holders share a commitment to and responsibility for community school success, LEAs refine listening habits to facilitate learning and improvement, share best practices among school-level working groups, and ensure transparency by regularly updating the public on the progress of the initiative.</p>
<p>Centering Community - Based Learning</p>	<p>LEAs develop a shared understanding of the principles of community-based learning and support educators in learning about the wealth of knowledge of students, families and communities. LEA's establish instructional systems of site-based collaboration, where educators can learn and grow together to create meaningful learning and restorative school climates.</p>	<p>LEAs support the development of robust teacher-led professional development and explore flexibilities in curriculum and assessment to support powerful instruction and assessment tailored to meet the needs, interests and strengths of students.</p>	<p>Teaching and learning is the cornerstone of the initiative. LEAs foster collaborative, rigorous, and relationship-centered learning environments that are culturally and linguistically affirming, relevant, asset-based, democratic, and community-based.</p>
<p>Collaborative Leadership</p>	<p>LEAs establish the foundation for shared decision-making processes through a steering committee/advisory council, engaging in shared visioning and learning. They model collaborative leadership and provide learning opportunities that emphasize asset-based mindsets.</p>	<p>LEAs provide essential guidance to school-level implementers and provide opportunities for them to contribute to the LEA strategy as co-creators.</p>	<p>To support site goals that lead to transformational outcomes for students, families, and educators, LEAs establish areas of flexibility. LEAs evolve alongside the steering committee/advisory council in ways that are continuously shaped by interest-holders.</p>
<p>Sustaining Staff and Resources</p>	<p>LEAs use the existing inventory of district, city, county, state, and federal systems and resources to create a strategic plan that supports, aligns with, and fully embraces the community school framework. Ensure policies and financial resources support the implementation of the community schools strategy.</p>	<p>Recruit a wide range of staff that will support and strengthen the LEA-wide community schools strategy. Provide ongoing learning opportunities for all staff in different capacities, both site and LEA-level. LEAs survey and monitor working conditions to secure retention of staff and integrate the community schools strategy into the LCAP plan to create coherence and sustainability.</p>	<p>Community schooling becomes the "way" of doing school by providing on-going professional learning. Programs and initiatives are integrated and interdependent and long-term funding streams are secured to ensure sustainability. Policies at all governmental levels are coordinated and aligned to support growth and sustainability.</p>
<p>Strategic Community Partnerships</p>	<p>In order to support sites with the identification and recruitment of partners, LEAs map current and potential partners across the district and develop a central partner repository.</p>	<p>LEAs develop a system-level working group to overcome barriers and make broader change. LEAs foster conditions for site partnerships by developing LEA-wide MOUs, data sharing agreements, and Joint Use Agreements.</p>	<p>In order to practice collaborative leadership with partners, LEAs engage partners in spaces of learning and decision-making. LEAs use systems-level working group to address common challenges that emerge across multiple community school sites.</p>

Glossary of Terms

Advisory Council/Steering Committee: Decision-making bodies that involve students, educators, families, and community members. The representatives provide input and guide the direction of the community school initiative.

Allied Reform: A strategy, initiative or program that compliments the community school strategy.

Assets-Driven: The view and approach that builds on the strengths of the community, students, and families. The languages, cultures, histories, and lived experiences of students and their families are uplifted.

Collective Impact Partnership: An organizational body composed of various community partnerships that improve resources and streamline collaborative efforts.

Communities of Transformative Practice: A professional learning network for ongoing community school implementation across school sites. The learning community is tasked with creating opportunities for sharing best practices and supporting implementation challenges. The membership can include, but is not limited to, the school-level advisory council/steering committee and implementation teams.

Community School Coordinator: A key community school staff member responsible for facilitating the overall implementation of community school processes, programs, partnerships, and strategies at the school site. Their work is focused on facilitation, engagement, and leadership development so that interest-holders can drive the community school transformation process.

Continuous Improvement: A reflective process created by cycles of data-gathering, analysis, and ongoing learning. Community schools create intentional spaces of collective reflection that are informed by a variety of measures to support student and educator growth. Data is used in a way that is action-oriented, holistic and improves practice towards collective goals.

Educator: An individual that serves the community school; it may include teachers, administrators, custodial, front office staff, security, nutrition, bus drivers, and more.

Families: Families come in diverse forms and compositions, many of which extend beyond traditional norms and legal definitions. Families may include parents, multi-generational household members, guardians, and other caregivers. This more inclusive definition of family celebrates connections as opposed to a narrow definition focused on blood ties.

Initial Implementation Team: The initial team of school site and LEA leaders that are tasked with engaging interest holders in crafting a vision for the community school prior to the development of a formal shared leadership structure. This team could be an already existing team or a new team. The initial implementation team develops a plan for the needs and assets assessment. They model and embrace processes for shared decision-making through relationship and trust-building.

Interest-Holder: An individual who is impacted by the community school strategy and can give voice to decision-making. An interest-holder can include, but is not limited to, students, families, community members, teachers, and staff.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): An agreement by two or more parties that formalizes a relationship. Providing a roadmap for collaboration, the MOU clearly articulates goals, expectations, and responsibilities of each party.

Needs and Assets Assessments: Effective needs and assets assessments include accessible surveys, one-on-one meetings, focus groups, and a variety of additional methods of engagement and information gathering. They inform, shape and give life to the community school strategy. The needs and assets assessment involves the following processes:

- **Needs Assessment:** An intentional way of gathering information from students, staff, families and community members to identify a shared vision and set of collective priorities. Families identify barriers to the well-being of students, families, and the community.
- **Assets Assessment:** A process of identifying and illuminating the assets and wisdom throughout the community. It allows schools to build intentional relationships and draw in community-based resources that uplift students, families, educators and the well-being of the entire school community.
- **Gap Analysis:** A process to help members identify the gaps in services, programs and resources that impact school and community well-being.
- **Resource Mapping:** A tool that allows schools to identify community resources in order to create a larger ecosystem of support and resource-building for families, students, educators, and community members.

Possibility Thinking: A mindset or approach that focuses on exploring potential opportunities, solutions, and positive outcomes, rather than dwelling on limitations or obstacles. It involves cultivating a mindset of optimism, creativity, and open-mindedness to envision new possibilities and embrace innovative ideas.

Priority Teams/Working Groups: Teams of interest-holders working together on structured projects addressing collective priorities. Priority teams/working groups are deliberately composed to ensure diverse expertise and experience within a system.

Traditionally and Currently Marginalized Student and Family Groups: Groups which have historically been or are currently denied equitable voice and participation in various aspects of school and society. This includes minoritized racial, ethnic, and religious groups, the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, homeless/foster students and families, and multiple other groups.