

## **NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMUNITY SCHOOLS POLICY**

Voted on and unanimously approved by the Panel for Educational Policy on January 20, 2016.

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### **Community Schools as Part of the Mayor's Equity Agenda**

The New York City Department of Education views Community Schools as a central strategy for achieving an equitable educational system. The Community Schools initiative builds off of the Department of Education's (DOE's) Framework for Great Schools and is aligned with the administration's efforts focused on youth and families, including expanding full-day pre-kindergarten to every four-year-old, offering afterschool programs to every middle schools student, and improving school climate. Community Schools offer an integrated focus on academics, health and mental health services, youth development, expanded learning opportunities and family and community supports to ensure students are ready and able to learn.

With equity as a key driver, the DOE is developing the next generation of Community Schools and creating the systems and structures to ensure that these schools address inequality in sustainable ways, are inclusive, accessible, and prepare students to be college and career ready.

### **Common Values and Features of Community Schools**

Every Community School is different and reflects the strengths and needs of its students, families, and community. The most successful Community Schools are anchored in this set of common values that serve as their foundation:

- Strong instruction designed to provide personalized learning opportunities to increase all students' academic achievement.
- Robust engagement, anchored in positive youth development, ensuring that schools have a positive school climate and are welcoming and empowering to students, families and community members.
- Continuous improvement using school and student data to tailor programming and instruction focused on results.

Community Schools also share common features that support student learning

- School leadership has a clear instructional vision and high expectations for all students.
- Schools implement a collaborative school governance structure that includes a lead CBO partner and members of the School Leadership Team (SLT), and involves parents, educators, community partners and youth in the older grades.
- The lead CBO partner is integrated into the fabric of the school, throughout the school day.
- Expanded learning time includes academic interventions and enrichment activities that are aligned with school day curriculum and expectations. As well as, rigorous, engaging and college and career preparation.
- Student attendance is supported through drop-out prevention strategies.
- Parents and caregivers are real and active partners in their children's education. Transformative family engagement involves families as decision makers in design, implementation, and

evaluation of the community school, builds strong family-school partnerships, and develops leaders who affect change in their school and community. This includes parents and caregivers who have children with disabilities, immigrated to this country, or have limited English proficiency (utilizing interpretation services when necessary).

- Positive youth development strategies are infused across academics, programs and services.
- All community schools stay open beyond traditional school hours and many also offer programming on weekends, school breaks, and during the summer.
- Mental health, medical, and social services are available to students who need them.
- Community members are engaged in activities that develop stronger school community.
- Family members have access to educational opportunities and programs that strengthen families such as adult education, English as a second language (ESL), or computer classes.

### **Core Elements of a NYC Community School**

The administration has developed a framework to ensure consistency and quality across NYC Community Schools, while also providing schools with sufficient flexibility to encourage innovation. That framework is based on the following Core Elements:

#### **Core Programs and Services:**

- Expanded Learning Time
- Early Childhood Education
- Health Services
- Mental Health Services
- Parent and Family Engagement
- Guidance and Social Services
- Adult and Family Services
- Positive Youth Development
- Arts Programming

#### **Core Structures Needed to Provide Services:**

- A lead Community School Community-Based Organization (CBO) Partner
- Dedicated Full-Time Community School Director
- Ongoing Needs Assessment
- Defined Community Partnerships
- Intentional Coordination of Services
- Strategic Data Collection & Analysis
- Authentic School-Based Governance

### **Core Outcomes and Results**

With these; structures, programs, and services in place we are confident that our schools will achieve the following results:

#### Student-Level Results

- Increased attendance and student engagement
- Improved academic performance
- Greater connectedness to adults and classmates in their schools
- Development of social and emotional skills necessary for success

#### School-Level Outcomes

- Improved school culture and climate
- Improved student academic performance
- Families are more actively engaged in children's education
- More seamless service delivery through increased collaboration between schools and partners