The CPG Toolkit:

Implementing the Concentration of Poverty Provision of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future

Introduction

Community schools promote equity, prioritize the needs and health of students and families, and effectively utilize community-based organizations and other cross-sector systems to provide services and opportunities to students and families. Maryland is home to more than 300 community schools, serving students from more than a dozen local school systems.

These institutions provide students with the resources, opportunities, and supports that make academic success possible and create strong ties among families, students, and schools. They serve as hubs of community and bring in coordinated, wraparound services that remove barriers to learning for students, enhance engagement with families and the greater community, and promote investment in students and the school.

Educational equity is a critical focus for all Maryland schools and school systems. Community Schools were identified by the Kirwan Commission for Education Excellence as transformative vehicles to bring equity in opportunity and funding to Maryland's historically underserved and underutilized communities. With dedicated Community School Coordinators and Healthcare Practitioners, the strategy utilizes data-based decision making that allows schools and districts to respond to the needs of their students and families and address the structural and institutional barriers to student achievement.

This toolkit is meant to serve as a collection of resources and recommendations for Community School staff and stakeholders as well as school and district leaders as they implement the strategy. It contains an explanation of current legislation, implementation models, resources for building district and local partnerships and support, recommendations for aligning and utilizing out-of-school time (OST) programs, role outlines for key Community School stakeholders, and local, state, and national resources for review.

This toolkit was created by the Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) and Maryland Coalition for Community Schools (MD4CS) with reference to the Maryland State Education Department's (MSDE) Community Schools Toolkit and other state, local, and national resources linked throughout.

Legislation

Concentration of Poverty Grants

The [2019 Blueprint Bill for Maryland's Future](#) (Blueprint Bill) established the Concentration of Poverty grant program (CGP) and provides additional per pupil funding for wrap-around services in schools with high concentrations of poverty to form community schools throughout the state. This grant program provided the personnel funds to hire a Community School Coordinator to implement the strategy on a school-level and a Healthcare Practitioner to provide in-school healthcare and support to students in families. The Healthcare Practitioner must be a "licensed physician, a licensed physician's assistant, or a licensed registered nurse, practicing within the scope of the healthcare practitioner's license".

Additionally, the grant provides additional per pupil funding for wraparound services and supports. Eligibility for the program is based on the number of students in the school receiving Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs), or in the case of districts like Baltimore City that are subject to the federal community eligibility program, are determined by alternative forms data like Medicaid/Medicare and Food Stamps. In districts with more than 40 eligible schools, districts can work with the eligible schools to distribute funds; otherwise, the monies are sent directly to the eligible schools.
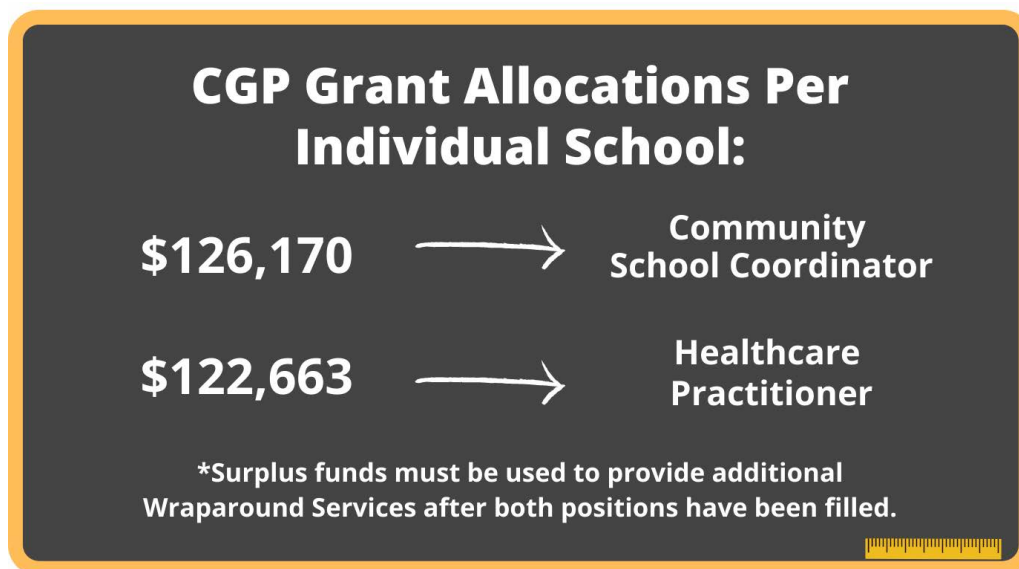
The bill passed in the legislature with bipartisan support but was vetoed by Governor Hogan. In 2020, the legislature overrode the veto.

The 2020 Blueprint Bill established the timeline for the rollout of both the CGP personnel funding to add community schools and the percentage of additional per pupil funding amounts for wraparound services and supports. The bill also established a Director of Community Schools position at MSDE to review needs assessments, district-level plans for implementation, and provide professional development for community school coordinators state-wide.

The 2021 Companion Bill made some changes to the funding timeline and CGP grant amounts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Personnel Grants

The Companion Bill increased the personnel grant, providing that the State will distribute $248,833 in fiscal year (FY) 2022 to each county board for each eligible Community School for the hiring of a dedicated Community School Coordinator (CSCs) and Healthcare Practitioner, including salary and benefits. Eligibility for the Personnel Grant is determined by the school's concentration of poverty level.

CGP Grant Allocations Per Individual School:

$126,170 ⟶ Community School Coordinator

$122,663 ⟶ Healthcare Practitioner

*Surplus funds must be used to provide additional Wraparound Services after both positions have been filled.

The Personnel Grant will be phased in through FY 2025. Eligibility will be determined based on the proportion of students in each school receiving free and reduced meals (FARMS), as depicted in the chart below.

FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
at least 80%	at least 75%	at least 70%	at least 65%	at least 60%	at least 55%

The legislation does not require that the total amount of the Personnel Grant be spent exclusively on the two salary positions. Districts and lead agencies may still set a salary and benefits amount for CSCs and Healthcare Practitioners. After these positions have been filled, any remaining funds must then be spent on wraparound services. The funding is still provided to the school even if they already have a CSC or healthcare practitioner employed. The funds can be used to pay for the subsequent year's salary or for wraparound services.

Examples of Additional Wraparound Services

- Extended Learning Time (afterschool, weekends, summer learning, extended school year)
- Safe Transportation to School
- Vision & Dental Care Services
- School-based health centers
- Physical Wellness and Healthy Meals
- Behavioral or Mental Health Services
- PD to school staff for Trauma Informed Interventions

- Student Enrichment Experiences
- Student Attendance
- Learning Environment at School
- Professional Development for Teachers and Staff
- Workforce Development Training
- Family & Community Engagement and Supports
- Early Education Programs
- Language Classes

Per Pupil Grant

One year after receiving the Personnel Grant, each eligible school shall receive a Per Pupil Grant each FY. The value of the grant is determined by a funding formula which allocates funding based on a school's concentration of poverty level, with funding being phased in over time from FY 2022 through 2030. All values are adjusted for inflation. Read more about the funding formula and phase-in process here.

Note that only schools with a concentration of poverty level greater than 55% are eligible for the per pupil grant. Schools with a concentration of poverty level between 55% and 80% subject to the per pupil funding formula, while those with a concentration of poverty level of 80% or more are automatically eligible for the maximum per pupil amount ($3,374.48 per student when fully phased-in).

Per Pupil Grant Phase-in Across Concentration of Poverty Levels

	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	56%
FY 2022	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
FY 2023	32%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%
FY 2024	37%	32%	16%	0%	0%	0%
FY 2025	55%	37%	32%	16%	0%	0%
FY 2026	66%	55%	37%	32%	16%	0%
FY 2027	75%	66%	55%	37%	32%	16%
FY 2028	100%	75%	66%	55%	37%	32%
FY 2029	100%	100%	75%	66%	55%	37%
FY 2030	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The Companion Bill adjusts the three-year average compensatory education enrollment count used for CGP grants to exclude the 2020-2021 school year to ensure districts and schools aren't penalized for the impact of COVID-19. It also modifies the phase-in of per pupil grants for CGP schools beginning in FY 2022 to accelerate funding for the higher concentration schools and ensure full funding by FY 2030.

COVID-19-related Programs

The Companion Bill also requires local boards of education to create or expand additional supports utilizing state and federal funding provided for COVID-19 relief in the state budget to lessen the impact of the pandemic on students and families and respond to needs highlighted in the past year.

Free Summer School Programs: These supports must be created or expanded during FY 2021-2022 at no additional cost to schools.

Tutoring and Supplemental Instructions: Each county board must provide or expand tutoring and supplemental instruction for students in grades 4-12 to address pandemic-related learning loss in both FY 2021-2022 and FY 2022-2023.

Trauma and Behavior Health Supports: During FY 2021-2022 each county board must address pandemic-related trauma and behavioral health issues and identify and provide the necessary supports and services for students and their families. Each board must submit a plan for how those trauma and behavioral health funds provided in the state budget will be used before FY 2022 funds may be released and report on how FY 2021 funds were used during summer school to address those needs.

Expert Review Teams: Beginning in the FY 2022-2023, MSDE must send Expert Review Teams to schools or groups of schools that continue to have persistent, pandemic-related learning loss to determine the reason that the learning loss persists.

Use of Certain Federal and State Funds by Local Boards of Education

Each local board must use pandemic-related, federal funding to mitigate learning loss and support the goals of Blueprint Bill, including for summer school, tutoring and supplemental instruction, and trauma and behavioral health programs. They must report on the use of these funds by July 1, 2021.

MSDE has created an FAQ document for common questions related to the CGP grants and community schools.

Additional Community School Legislation

There are two additional pieces of legislation passed that relate to community schools. In 2016 the legislature passed a bill requiring MSDE to notify and encourage local school systems and community schools to apply for Title dollars to support the community school model as well as provide technical assistance for applying for those funds.

The 2019 Community School Established bill outlined the necessary requirements to become a community school. In particular, it stated a community school must have a dedicated community school coordinator; active family and community engagement, including opportunities for adults and community members; expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities provided afterschool; collaborative leadership practices; a parent-teacher organization or school-family council; and a community school leadership team. The bill also required the community school coordinator to lead the school in completing a needs assessment and bring in partners to meet the needs identified by students and families. This bill was largely incorporated into the 2020 Blueprint Bill.

Recommendations for Funding Implementation

The Community School strategy is designed to be adapted to the school and community where it's implemented. While there is no set structure for a Community School, all effective Community Schools share similar foundational elements.

Integrated Student Supports

Community Schools provide and coordinate wraparound services and supports to overcome both academic and non-academic barriers to student success. Services and supports should be aligned with the needs assessment. The Blueprint Bill identifies supports like medical, dental, and mental healthcare services; tutoring and other academic supports; and resources for families, such as parent education classes, job training, housing assistance, and food access. The Companion Bill states that programs should include trauma-informed care and restorative practices to support mental health and lessen the impact of the pandemic on students and families.

Students receiving school-based supports often show significant improvements in attendance, behavior, social well-being, and academic achievement. One of the responsibilities of a full-time community school director is to develop partnerships with community-based providers and connect students and families with available services, as well as fostering a positive and healthy school climate.

The presence of Integrated Student Supports does not automatically make a school a "Community School." These services and supports must be identified using a needs assessment, coordinated by CSCs, and integrated into the strategy and other practices.

Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities

Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities are essential aspects of supporting students and families. It not only helps them develop socially, emotionally, and physically but also provides them with safe, supportive environments to explore new opportunities and improve their academics.

In high-quality Community Schools, educators and staff collaborate with community-based partners to provide structured, learning activities during OST and the summer months in both the school building and in community spaces. This approach makes clear that enriched and expanded learning time is the responsibility of both schools and greater communities. Similarly, partner organizations are brought into the schools to support academics during the regular school day through internships, college and career readiness, service learning, and STEAM programs, like science, technology, math, and the arts. Students not only get to know the organizations and systems around them but also see that adults throughout the community are invested in their long-term development and success.

Active Family and Community Engagement

Active family and community engagement is crucial to fostering authentic, trusting relationships, building capacity for stakeholders, creating decision-making processes where students and families feel empowered and respected, and leveraging local resources and expertise for the school community. Community schools should establish systems, structures, and supports that prioritize meaningful and ongoing engagement of students, families, and the greater community. Active family and community engagement makes programs more impactful, partnerships more effective, and students and families more connected to the school and the strategy. Every stakeholder should feel welcome to participate, supported in their needs and wants, and valued as essential partners.

Partnering with students, families and the community at the beginning of and throughout implementation of the strategy is essential to developing a full understanding of the assets and needs of the school community and identifying what services, supports, and opportunities should be prioritized and integrated into the school. Engagement strategies should be informed by historical challenges to meaningful involvement, like administrators and educators who have not always exhibited cultural competence, language barriers, inflexible work schedules, and reliance on public transportation.

Active family and community engagement takes time and effort, and is the foundation for building the trust and respect that is needed to make systemic change. Community schools can help address endemic challenges by streamlining access to services and supports, fostering safe and welcoming spaces for students and families, and scheduling programs and meetings at times and locations that allow for the broadest participation.

Collaborative Leadership Practices

Collaborative leadership practices connect and reinforce the other aspects of effective Community Schools. Community Schools are made more effective when stakeholders develop a set of shared vision and goals and create participatory practices for distributing responsibilities. Collaborative leadership opportunities like professional learning communities, site-based teams, teaching development strategies, and peer assistance allows schools to leverage the collective expertise of all of its stakeholders.

Community School collaboration and shared leadership extend beyond the school building and staff to include students, families, community leaders, local government agencies, and other partners. Collaboration at the district level is also central to successful implementation, especially in districts with numerous Community Schools. Collaboration with families, community members, and local organizations in planning, implementation, and monitoring of the strategy improves district coordination of services and programs, helps align district goals, and fosters strong and sustainable partnerships.

Collaborative leadership practices also ensure that implementation is inclusive and equitable by creating shared ownership of the strategy and coordinating services and supports based on identified needs and assets. Increased leadership and participation from students, families, and partners, Community Schools can better serve as community hubs where everyone is welcome, included, and successful. Furthermore, collaborative practices help build investment and community support for the school and public education in general.

- Prince George's County Public Schools 6 Pillars of Community Schools
- Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence
- Community Schools Playbook

Community School Models

Districts with community schools prior to the Blueprint Bill are generally organized by the lead agency model wherein community-based organizations serve as the primary partners and organizers of community school implementation. They hire the community school coordinator, provide training and technical assistance, and are able to leverage their connections in the community and the national sector to bring additional funds into the school to support students and families.

Schools added as a result of the Blueprint Bill have primarily been district-led where the coordinators are hired by the district; and the district is responsible for professional development; and in those districts with 40 or more community schools, can distribute funds from the district-level to align with district-wide priorities.

It is not required by law that new community schools be organized by the district model. School administrators and principals should consider whether a lead agency model would work better for the individual community schools. In some areas, there are numerous community-based organizations that have the capacity, connections, and context to provide the needed supports and services.

Community School Pillars	Associated Characteristics
Integrated student supports address out-of-school barriers to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies and providers, usually coordinated by a dedicated professional staff member. Some employ social-emotional learning, conflict resolution training, and restorative justice practices to support mental health and lessen conflict, bullying, and punitive disciplinary actions, such as suspensions.	• Attention to all aspects of child development: academic, social, emotional, physical, psychological, and moral • Extra academic, social, and health and wellness supports for students, as needed • Climate of safety and trusting relationships
Expanded learning time and opportunities, including afterschool, weekend, and summer programs, provide additional academic instruction, individualized academic support, enrichment activities, and learning opportunities that emphasize real-world learning and community problem solving.	• Learning is the top priority • High expectations and strong instruction for all students • Sufficient resources and opportunities for meaningful learning
Active parent and community engagement brings parents/community into the school as partners in children's education and make the school a neighborhood hub providing adults with educational opportunities they want, such as English as a Second Language classes, green card or citizenship preparation, computer skills, art, STEM, etc.	• Strong school, family and community ties, including opportunities for shared leadership • Climate of safety and trusting relationships
Collaborative leadership and practices build a culture of professional learning, collective trust and shared responsibility using such strategies as site-based leadership/governance teams, teacher learning communities, and a community-school coordinator who manages the multiple, complex joint work of school and community organizations	• Culture of teacher collaboration & professional learning • Assessment as a tool for improvement and shared accountability

Source: Learning Policy Institute

Considerations for Models of Implementation:

1. Are there community-based organizations in your area that have the capacity to support implementation?
2. Is there a community-based organization that has a history of partnership into a specific school and is already well integrated?
3. Does the school need more specific support that can be better served by a community-based organization that specializes in that area?
4. Does the district have a community school plan, policy, or advisory group in place to support implementation and help build partnerships for the school/s?

There is no "right" way to organize a community school, even on a district level. The model is specifically made flexible to adapt to the needs of the school, district, and community in which it sits. It is important to remember and consider that there are many partnership options to implement the strategy.
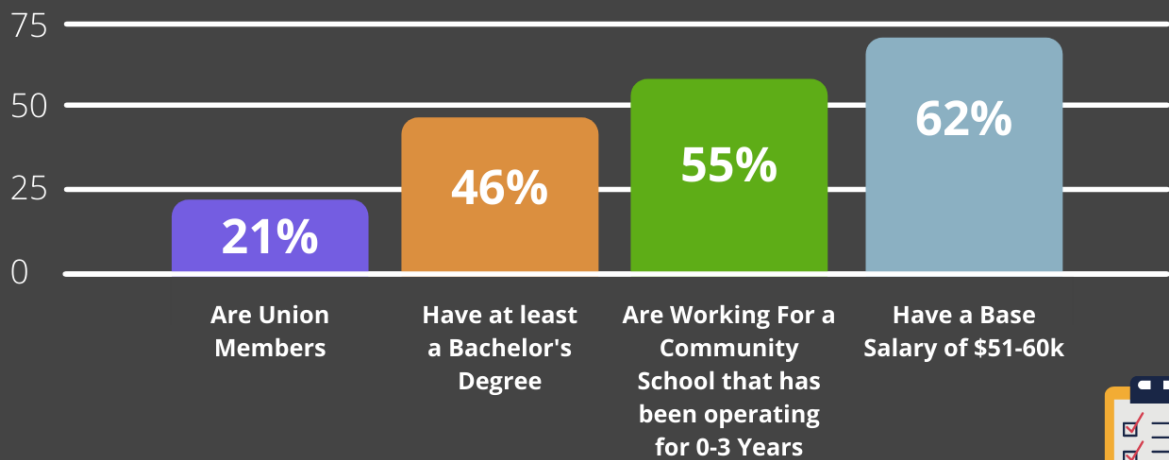
Community School Coordinators

CSCs are the key to a community school. They create, strengthen, and maintain partnerships between the school and community. CSCs facilitate and provide leadership for the collaborative process and development of a continuum of services and supports for children, families, and community members within a school neighborhood.

The Blueprint Bill requires CSCs to be full time positions with dedicated staff members. They must carry out all work in partnership with school leadership, staff, students and families, and any community and family groups that support the school. CSCs are expected to assess the assets and needs of the student and school community and compile the information into a needs assessment. The needs assessment drives the programs, partnerships, and supports the CSCs pursue throughout the school year and summer months. These coordinated resources and programs should address key areas identified in the needs assessment and aligned to school, district, and even city priorities like attendance, behavior, literacy, math, youth and family engagement, and expanded learning opportunities.

Community School Coordinator Employment Survey

21%	**46%**	**55%**	**62%**
Are Union Members	Have at least a Bachelor's Degree	Are Working For a Community School that has been operating for 0-3 Years	Have a Base Salary of $51-60k

*Source: Baltimore City CSSC Sustainability Committee

Sample Job Descriptions

Like the community school model, CSCs do not necessarily have a set of qualifications or eligibility requirements to make them successful. Some schools or districts look for licensed social workers, for example. The most important things to consider are their understanding and commitment to the strategy, their knowledge of the community, their willingness to build authentic relationships, and their ability to integrate into the school culture. Position summaries, descriptions, and qualifications for CSC positions around the state can be found here:

- Allegany County Public School
- Baltimore County Public School
- Prince George's County Department of Social Services
- University of Maryland School of Social Work
- The Y in Central Maryland
- National Center for Community Schools, Children's Aid Society

Needs Assessment

CSCs must complete a needs assessment for their school by July 1st of the first year it is designated a community school. Legislation requires that the needs assessment be completed in collaboration with the principal, Healthcare Practitioner, school staff, and a parent teacher organization or school family council. It is a good idea to include any current school partners in the assessment as well. The needs assessment should provide a full picture of the physical, behavioral, and emotional health needs of students, families, and the school community.

The needs assessment should include a combination of quantitative and qualitative data from surveys, census data, focus groups, interviews, and other data points designed to ensure that a variety of stakeholders that are representative of the school population can provide feedback on the assets and needs of the students, families, and greater school community. CSCs can also incorporate data from Title I, Title III, Title IV, Part A, Judy Center, Head Start, and even partner assessments that have been completed to create a full picture of their school health and climate.

The needs assessment should be used by the CSCs, Healthcare Practitioner, principal, and other school staff to identify and align priority areas for programming and drive partnership development. Results of the needs assessments should be widely circulated to all community school stakeholders, including students, families, and partners. The needs assessment is a starting point to identify and implement necessary wraparound services and supports. CSCs should continuously collect, analyze, and evaluate the effectiveness of programming, wraparound services, partnerships, and other activities within the community school in order to maximize the impact funding and supports have on students and families. The Blueprint Bill requires CSCs to submit their needs assessments to MSDE annually for review.

Types of Forms that can Inform a Needs Assessment:

- Student Climate Surveys
- Parent Needs Surveys
- Teacher Assessments of Student & Teacher Needs
- Community Resource Mapping
- Partnership Capacity & Quality Assessments
- Community Assessments

Sample Needs Assessments

MSDE is in the process of producing a sample needs assessment that can be used by CSCs and school systems. While use of the sample needs assessment is encouraged, some schools opt to create their own assessment in collaboration with CSCs, school leaders, and students and family groups. It is recommended that CSCs and the school adapt any needs assessment to their specific school by adding or removing questions or changing language. Read sample needs assessments here:

- Baltimore City Schools
- Linkages to Learning, MCPS
- National Center for Community Schools, Children's Aid Society
- Coalition for Community Schools
- Coalition for Community Schools, Indicators of Success

Additionally, CSCs and schools may want to invest in asset mapping in addition to completing a needs assessment. Asset mapping can provide a plethora of information about the wider community and is particularly helpful in identifying potential school partners and gaps in community services that can impact students and families.

- Healthy City
- UCLA Center for Health Policy Research

Partnerships

Partnerships are a critical component of community schools. They can not only provide the necessary wraparound services and supports that improve the lives of students and families but also bring in new funding and opportunities to expand and improve the school. Partnerships bring together diverse individuals and groups to expand opportunities for children, families, and communities. Partnerships can include principals, school staff, school superintendents, school boards, community-based organizations, youth development organizations, health and human service agencies, parents and other community leaders, and local government organizations.

Effective partnerships need to define a vision and clear goals, have an effective governance and management structures, and have an evaluation mechanism to ensure programming is responsive to the school community's needs. CSCs should consider partners with a broad range of perspectives and expertise that represent the school population.

Partners have a unique ability to connect, coordinate, and leverage funding and resources to better support a community school. CSCs should ensure that partners are kept informed of what's happening at the school and utilized effectively for the benefit of students and families. Partnerships, like CSCs work best over the long term so partnership development should also include a detailed plan for sustainability, evaluation, and communication.

Partnership Resources

Some schools, including community schools, have partners in place prior to receiving CGP dollars. CSCs may expand upon these partnerships, revitalize them, or seek to establish new opportunities. All partnerships should arise from the needs identified in the needs assessments and be reviewed based on their capacity to provide wraparound services and supports to students and families.

- Coalition for Community Schools, Assessment Toolkit
- Coalition for Community Schools, 9 Elements of Effective Partnerships
- The Expanded Learning & Afterschool Project

District Policy

Enacting district policies and recommendations are a great mechanism to support community school implementation, measure their effectiveness, align them to wider district goals, and support stakeholders with professional development and technical assistance. It also signals to students, families, and the community that the district has made an investment in the success and sustainability of the strategy.

Policies are most effective when they define community schools, identify specific aspects of implementation, include mechanisms for conflict resolution and partnership support, invest in professional development and collaborative leadership practices, identify or form cross-sector steering committees or implementation teams, address interagency collaboration, and ensure the voice of stakeholders like students, families, and other stakeholders.

District policies should be created, expanded, or assessed in collaboration with community school stakeholders and partners. Policies should align community school initiatives with existing school and district improvement plans to determine how the strategy can be utilized to make those plans more effective. Additionally, special attention should be paid to feedback mechanisms for students, parents, partners, school staff, and CSCs. Sample District Policies from around the state can be read here:

- Baltimore City Schools Administrative Regulations
- Baltimore City Schools Board Policy
- Prince George's County Public Schools
- Community School Playbook

School District Organization

It is helpful for community school stakeholders like CSCs, principals, and students and families to understand where the community school and its partnerships live in relation to the greater district organization. Because the number of community schools per district varies, some districts will have a central department for community schools while others will place the initiative under relevant departments. CSCs and stakeholders can better navigate the chains of authority and responsibility within the district and identify potential resources, like important information, policies, and protocols, that they can utilize in their school.

- Prince George's County Public Schools
- Allegany County Public Schools

City and County Support

Districts and CSCs should not neglect city and county champions. School needs assessments should be shared with local representatives and included in any presentations during any county education meetings. Local representatives can be great advocates for the Community School strategy, including bringing in resources to schools, attracting and supporting partnerships, leverage funding, and supporting professional development.

CSCs, in particular, should meet with and get to know their local representatives by having informational sessions with them. They can create and share one-pagers about their schools including the number of students, a description of the population, data from the needs assessment, an overview of partnerships, and any areas where the representative can support them. Additionally, they can invite local representatives to participate in a school tour to better understand how the strategy operates.

Professional Development

Ongoing professional development and technical assistance must be included in the implementation of the Community School strategy. This should be available to all stakeholders. CSCs need to understand their role in the system, effective strategies for completing needs assessments and building partnerships, establishing authentic relationships with students and families, and utilizing local, state, and federal funding. Principals and other staff need to understand the role of the CSCs and how the strategy can be aligned to their school's priorities. Administrators should receive technical assistance on aligning district goals, creating policies and procedures, evaluating the strategies effectiveness, and managing partnerships. Additionally, students and families can also benefit from professional development with programs aimed at leadership development and advocacy.

MSDE, some districts, lead agencies, and community partners already offer some professional development and technical assistance. These offerings should be utilized and expanded. Districts should take account of what's available to them and create a mechanism for addressing gaps and disseminating information. Likewise, lead agencies should support their CSCs in participating in available options and work together to develop or bring in new opportunities.

- [Family League Professional Development](#)
- [MSDE Director of Community Schools](#)

Peer-to-Peer Mentoring

Peer-to-Peer Mentoring is an effective tool for professional development, especially in districts where there are Community Schools that existed prior to Blueprint Bill funding. Experienced CSCs can provide implementation support, information sharing, and coaching for new CSCs. This provides additional leadership and development opportunities for experienced CSCs who have already received introductory professional development on the strategy.

MD4CS has created a Peer-to-Peer Mentoring program in partnership with Family League and Baltimore City Schools in Baltimore. For more information about the project and to inquire about participating in the next cohort, please contact hmay@mostnetwork.org or visit the [MD4CS website](#).

Branding and Building Champions

Branding the Community School on a district level or school level is an often overlooked topic, but it's important to consider how the strategy is being introduced to the wider community and its impact on development partnerships, building champions, and obtaining funding.

Districts with multiple Community Schools should work with the appropriate district agencies, any advisory committee established to implement the policy, and student and family groups to consider how to brand their Community Schools and align them with other district materials and priorities. CSCs at individual Community Schools should work with their parent teacher or community group to develop materials that present the school, the strategy, and its goals.

Districts and CSCs should share out these materials on their social media accounts, websites, and in online and print materials. Explaining what the strategy is about, why it's effective, and how community members can participate and support it will help build investment from students and families, encourage strong partnerships, and open up new pathways for funding.

- [Prince George's County Public Schools](#)
- [Building Design & Construction](#)

Alignment with Out-of-School Time

How OST & Community Schools Can Work Together:

Prioritize Out-of-School-Time in Wrapround Funding

Look for Partnerships that Support Expanded Learning Time

Apply the Community School Strategy to Expand Learning Opportunities

Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs are some of the most critical services a Community School can offer to students and their families. Consider that nearly 80% of a young person's life takes place outside of school. These untapped hours present an opportunity to help young people develop a broader base of experience, discover new interests and talents, and build strong relationships with peers and caring adults.

Effective OST programs and Community Schools have a symbiotic relationship - each strengthening the other. Afterschool and summer programs that are located in Community Schools have greater alignment with the school day, greater access to data about their participants, and have strengthened recruitment and retention through their partnership with Community School Coordinator. Community Schools often find that parent and family engagement strategies may initially be more successful through the afterschool program when community-based providers have strong, positive relationships with family members. With afterschool and summer programs keeping the doors open into the evening hours, it also provides additional opportunities to offer family and community engagement and education programming during non-school hours. OST programs also provide the opportunity to serve snack and supper during the school year and augment and attract students to feeding sites during the summer months.

MOST will soon release an Expanded Learning Toolkit to provide in-depth guidance on the best-practices and resources for designing a holistic out-of-school time strategy.

Some general considerations include:

- Community-based partners can provide a second shift and leverage additional resources into programs. If you need help finding a partner you can reach out to MOST and also check our OST/School Partnership Portal
- Full-school expanded learning models (extending the school day and school year) can be successfully implemented when:
  - Resources are sufficient to cover and sustain the costs
  - The broader community of students, families, and teachers have significant buy-in and participate in the design
  - IEP and Section 504 plan supports are in place across all hours
  - Union agreements for modification of teacher and staff hours have been negotiated
  - The school day is fully redesigned, including an integration of partners and enrichment activities - that supports engaged learning - not just tacking on extra instructional time
- Targeted afterschool and summer programs are cost effective strategies to improve school attendance and learning readiness
  - Programming should be engaging and not repetitive of content from the school day - young people vote with their feet.
  - STEM and Arts programming offer creative opportunities to integrate academic skills into hands-on-project based learning
  - Youth voice and choice are critical positive youth development principles which should be incorporated into program design.

In addition to the CGP per-pupil funding there are variety of public sources of funding that can be leveraged to support afterschool and summer programming including Title I, Title 4 part A, The Nita Al Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants and several state grant opportunities including the Public School Opportunity Enhancement Grant program, LEAP, and Next Generation Scholars Program (specific to Middle and High School college/career readiness). For more information about Funding Opportunities for OST programs visit: https://www.mostnetwork.org/resources/funding-opportunities/.

Recommendations for Utilizing Pandemic-Related State & Federal Funding

MOST produced recommendations in partnership with local advocates and practitioners in the out-of-school time field to support the MSDE and Local Education Agencies in implementing the various provisions of the American Rescue Plan for expanded learning. The Afterschool Alliance also created a site to help practitioners, schools, and districts learn more about the American Rescue Plan funding.

Finding Professional Development Opportunites for Practioners:

Local
- Utilize your partners
- Seek support from district
- Local Union

State
- MSDE
- Maryland Coalition For Community Schools
- MSEA

National
- IEL
- National Coalition For Community Schools
- National Education Association

What Does It Mean for Me?

The Blueprint Bill brings new funding, supports, and responsibilities for many stakeholders. Below is an overview of additional considerations for administrators, principals, and community school coordinators.

Administrators

The bill allows for district level organization and planning for the implementation of the Community School strategy. Administrators should work with stakeholders to create district-level policies and regulations, create steering committees to support implementation, review needs assessments, and assist in the hiring and training of CSCs. Administrators should also work with MSDE's Department of Community Schools to ensure compliance with the Blueprint Bill.

They are in a unique position to work with lead agencies and other community-based organizations to create and expand technical assistance and professional development for principals and CSCs, brand the strategy in their district and county, as well as supporting partnership development. Administrators can also assist with securing and braiding funding, particularly newly available federal funding, for Community Schools in their district.

Principals & Vice Principals

Principals and Vice Principals will work with CSCs, Healthcare Practitioners, and other stakeholders to ensure integration of the strategy at the school and alignment with school-level priorities. They can also play a big role as strategy champions by doing educational outreach to other school employees, families, partners, and local leaders.

Understanding the strategy and role of the CSCs will create a cohesive workplace where roles and expectations are clear. Principals and Vice Principals can support the strategy by encouraging and participating in professional development and technical assistance and sitting on district advisory committees and boards.

Community School Coordinators

CSCs are one of the linchpins of the Community Schools strategy. CSCs are responsible for student and family outreach, completing the needs assessment, identifying partners to bring in supports and services to the school, and pursuing grants and other funding for their school.

CSCs also act as ambassadors of their school and the strategy to their local representatives and communities. They will have the opportunity to participate in district and state professional development and technical assistance as well as leadership roles in district advisory committees and boards.

Healthcare Practitioner

Like Community School Coordinators, the newly added Healthcare Practitioners are critical partners in student and family success. They should work with the CSCs, principals, and other school staff to develop the needs assessment and foster collaborative leadership practices so programs and supports are effective and tailored to students' individual needs. They can also provide some of the health-related services identified by the needs assessments in the school building or refer out to a local community organization.

Additional Resources

State Resources for Maryland Community Schools

- Marylandpublicschools.org has provided a valuable document outlining many of the preliminary steps community leaders must take when establishing a community school, including conducting needs assessments, and including community stakeholders in leadership decisions.

- While Baltimore has much to gain from further community school implementation, community schools currently operating in the city have already made significant improvements in student equity and well-being. A report compiled by the Baltimore Education Resource Consortium discusses how students in Baltimore community schools experience less chronic absenteeism and are more likely to feel that school staff members care about their future.

Rural & Urban Community School Implementation

- Although Community School partnerships are more common in urban and suburban environments, rural communities are uniquely positioned to benefit from Community School implementation. Past findings from the Coalition for Community Schools suggest that the tight-knit social bonds endemic to these regions provide the ideal avenue for local stakeholders to bridge the divide between the education system and the wider community. Other research indicates how Community Schools can serve as a bulwark against rural poverty and brain-drain, allowing rural communities to thrive in an ever-urbanizing world.

- Cities have often served as the primary testing ground for community school implementation, leveraging the diversity and dynamism of America's urban centers to pioneer innovative educational programs. Examples of community school implementation in Baltimore, Chicago and New York City over the past decade serve as valuable case studies for future CS initiatives.

Other Resources & Reports

- Maryland's Community Schools were established by the Maryland General Assembly in 2019, codifying the structure and goals of these partnerships in state law. The full text of the bill can be read here. The 2019 Blueprint for Maryland's Future is also publicly available and can be read in its entirety or as a simplified outline

- A growing collection of research suggests that community schools demonstrate great promise when it comes to preparing students for their careers and alleviating racial and economic disparities endemic to the education system. Community school leaders can and should leverage these findings to meet evidence-based requirements for federal support as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). This report published by the Learning Policy Institute and the National Education Policy Institute discusses how to do so.

More About the Maryland Coalition for Community Schools

Maryland Coalition for Community Schools is a statewide group of education advocates and practitioners who come together to share resources and professional development opportunities to build capacity for the community school system in the state.

Our goal is to reduce opportunity gaps that exist in low-income areas by assessing the needs and assets of the community and forming intentional partnerships with local, community-based organizations to eliminate the out-of-school barriers to learning. We advocate for greater funding, systems building, and effective implementation of the community school strategy in Maryland.

How Can We Help You?

Contact us for FREE, personalized professional development and technical assistance for your community school or district.

- Systems building
- Policy Development
- Implementation Support
- Knowledge & Community Building

contact info: Heather May, Project Manager hmay@mostnetwork.org

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