



# Community Schools

## What is a Community School?

A community school is a “whole child” school improvement strategy through community engagement. Like every good school, community schools must be built on a **foundation of powerful teaching** that includes challenging academic content and supports students’ mastery of 21st century skills and competencies. What makes community schools unique is the combination of **four key pillars**: 1) integrated student supports; 2) family and community engagement; 3) collaborative leadership practices for educators and administrators; and 4) extended learning time and opportunities.

Because **each community school is a reflection of local needs, assets, and priorities**, no two look exactly alike. What they do share, however, is a commitment to partnership and to rethinking—and at times rebuilding—decision-making structures that put students and their family’s needs at the center. (Community Schools Playbook)

## Why Community Schools?

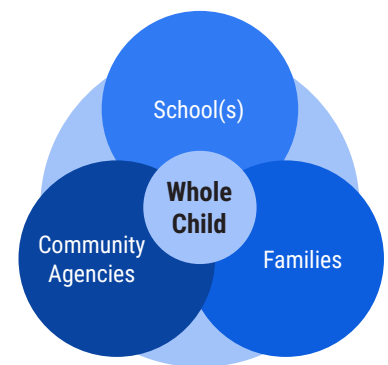
Community schools are a strategic way to attain:

- **Equity & Access:** All students and families will have access to resources, opportunities and supports to academic, social and emotional development and well-being.
- **Improved Outcomes:** Not only has research shown that student achievement and attendance improve, but so do social and economic outcomes of the surrounding community. (Maier, Daniel, Oakes, & Lam, 2017)

## California Community Schools Framework



- **Four Pillars**
- **Key Conditions for Learning**
- **Cornerstone Commitments**
- **Proven Practices**
- **Key Roles**



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# CA Community Schools Framework

## The Four Pillars of Community Schools

### Integrated Student Supports

- Meeting academic, physical, social-emotional and mental health needs
- Coordination of trauma-informed health, mental health, and social services

**"Students must be well-known so that they can be well-served."**



### Family and Community Engagement

- Actively tapping the expertise and knowledge of family and community members to serve as true partners
- Home visits, home-school collaboration, culturally responsive community partnerships
- Develop trusting, inclusive, and collaborative relationships with families and community members

**"If it is not developed *with us*, it is not *for us*."**

### Collaborative Leadership Practices for Educators and Administrators

- Culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility for outcomes
- Professional development to support mental and behavioral health, trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning, restorative justice, and other key areas
- Dedicated staff to support and facilitate partnerships, and discover professional development opportunities to build capacity for collaborative education and community leadership structures and practices



### Extended Learning Time and Opportunities

- Academic support, enrichment, and real-world learning opportunities
- Before and after school care and summer programs
- "Extended" learning and "expanded" learning
- Tutoring and other learning supports during the traditional school day

# CA Community Schools Framework



Please contact your school site to give input regarding the Community Schools framework.



## Key Conditions for Learning

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



## Cornerstone Commitments

- Assets-driven and strength-based practice
- Racially just and restorative school climates
- Powerful, culturally proficient and relevant instruction
- Shared decision making and participatory practices



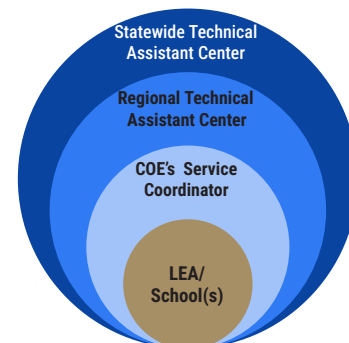
## Proven Practices

- Community Asset Mapping and Gap Analysis
- Community School Coordinator
- Site-based and LEA-based advisory councils
- Integrating and aligning other relevant programs



## Key Roles

California has developed multiple layers to support the implementation of community schools statewide.





## Community Schools in a Rural Setting

32%

of schools in the United States are designated as **rural**!



Nearly every district in Fresno County serves students living in a **rural community**!

Rural schools have higher percentages of students living in poverty, English Learners and students of color.

Rural schools experience challenges such as transportation, strained resources, and ability to attract and retain teachers.

### Why are Rural Schools Ideal for Community Schools?

Community Schools use established partnerships among schools, families, and community organizations to provide well-rounded educational opportunities to meet the academic needs and the social, emotional, physical, and mental health needs of students. They are not a new idea, especially for rural schools.

So why are rural schools conducive to becoming Community Schools?

- Schools in rural settings act as the hub for the community.
- The school holds historical context to the community.
- Generations of families have attended the schools, deepening the commitment to the school and community.
- A community school eliminates transportation barriers, offering students and families access to resources.
- Strong school-parent relationships already exist, as relationships are the core value of rural schools.
- Rural schools have pre-existing relationships with community-based organizations.

Every community determines the unique needs of their community school. Just as there are no two communities that are the same, nor can there be two identical community schools. There is no one size fits all!

### Examples of Services Rural Community Schools Provide

- After-School Program & Summer School
- Health Services (Mobile clinics, clinic partnerships)
- Mental Health Services
- Parent Education (GED, ESL, Parenting Classes)
- Academic Interventions & Preventions
- Early Childhood Development
- Community Partnerships (Food drives, Housing, Workforce Readiness)