Using the Community School Strategy to Develop Effective Collaboration Amongst Stakeholders

THE FEDERATION FOR
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

OVERVIEW

- Community Schools 101
- Community school strategy
- Developing effective collaboration amongst stakeholders
  - ✓ Parent Engagement
  - ✓ Community Engagement
  - ✓ Creating your Advisory Board

THE FEDERATION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

A statewide collaborative that advocates for policies that develop and sustain community schools, which support children, youth, families, and communities.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Nationally

- Full Service Community Schools (Dryfoos)
- Beacons
- Children's Aid Society
- National Coalition

In Illinois

- Polk Bros FSS
- ISBE Full Service Schools
- Chicago Public Schools Community School Initiative
- Chicago Coalition for Community Schools
- Federation for Community Schools

STARTING THE TRANSFORMATION: DIFFERENT POINTS OF ENTRY

Community school transformation starts in a variety of different ways:

- Grassroots – parents
- Funding requirement – Full-Service Community School grant
- As a result of partnerships that meet priority needs, i.e., mental health
- From a stand-alone afterschool program
- Stakeholders working to build off of existing funding stream – Teen REACH, **21st CCLC**

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

A community school is one that actively and intentionally engages a broad range of resources to strengthen the learning and development of its students. Community schools foster shared responsibility for children and youth, see the school as an anchor for community-based learning, and coordinate access to services that support students both during the school day and during out-of-school time. The vision of a community school is that effective and aligned use of external resources supports children, parents, and families.

The **Coalition for Community Schools** defines community schools as:
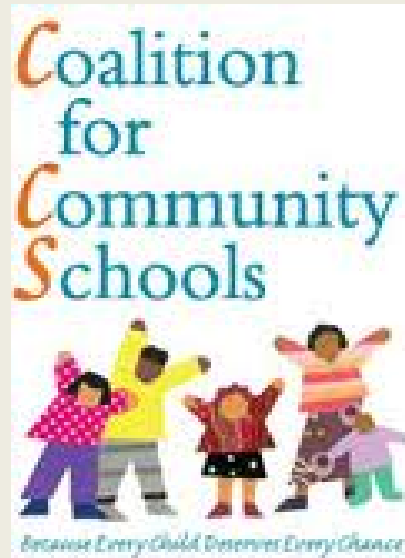
"both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities."

Coalition for Community Schools, 2013

WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

Partners work to achieve these results:

- children are ready to enter school;
- students attend school consistently;
- students are actively involved in learning and their community;
- families are increasingly involved with their children's education;
- schools are engaged with families and communities; students succeed academically;
- students are healthy - physically, socially, and emotionally;
- students live and learn in a safe, supportive, and stable environment,
- and communities are desirable places to live.

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME...

- Community learning centers
- Community schools
- Full-service community schools
- Community service education schools

VIDEO

The Future of Public Education: Community Schools
www.ilcommunityschools.org

A school makes the transformation into a community school by implementing the **ABC**s:

Aligning school programming

Bringing together all stakeholders

Coordinating community resources

ALIGNING PROGRAMMING

In a community school, out-of-school-time programming aligns and complements—but does not replicate--school-day learning

BRINGING TOGETHER STAKEHOLDERS

Community schools bring together stakeholders to work towards a common goal and shared vision of student success

- school administrators and staff

- parents and family members

- community-based organizations and community members

- local business leaders

- local political leaders/elected officials,

- students

COORDINATING RESOURCES

Community schools have a dedicated person responsible for building and managing community resources in the school building.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PARTHENON
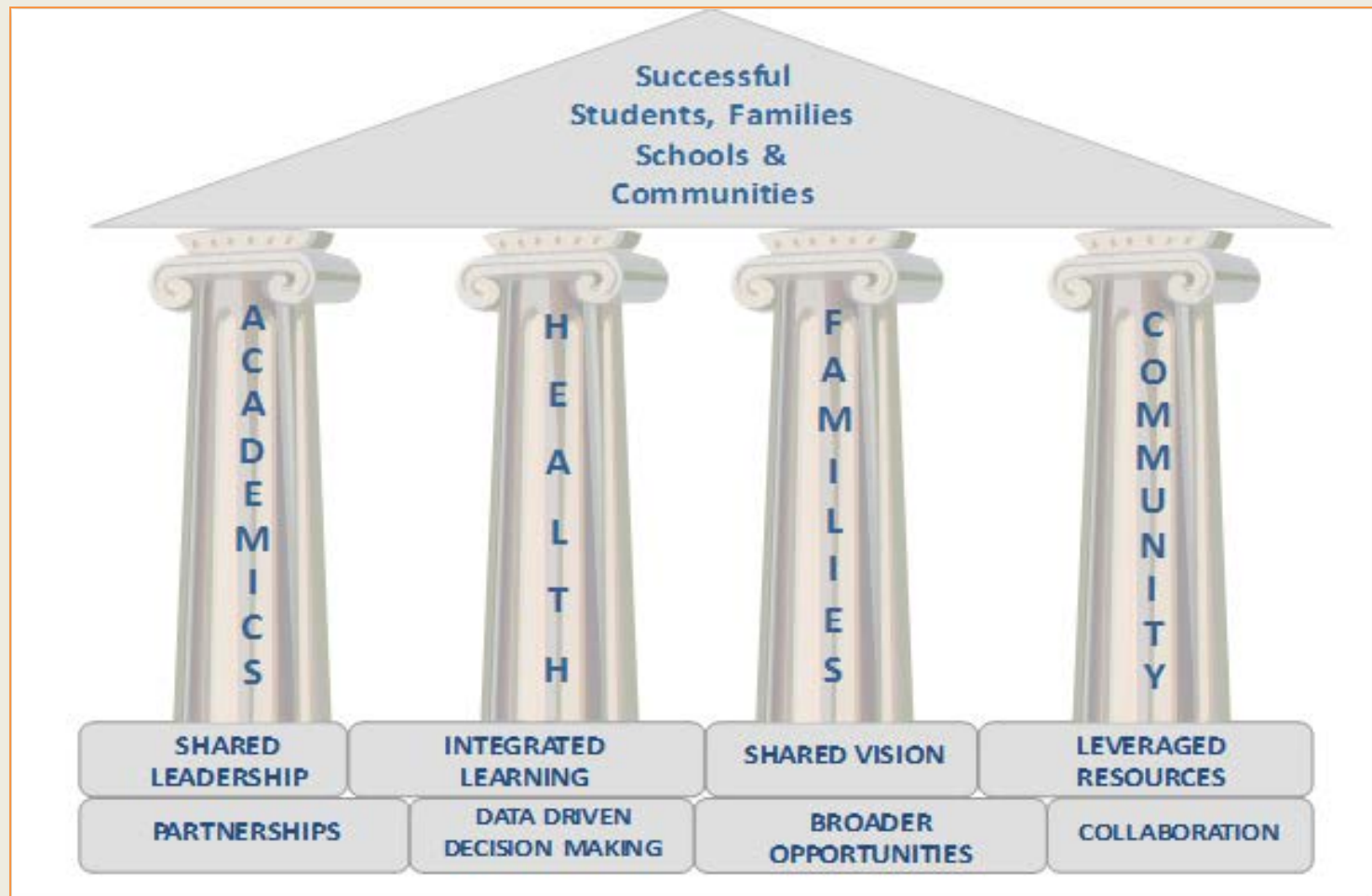
FOUNDATION BLOCKS

- **Shared Leadership** – stakeholders each offer their expertise. They plan & implement together and are mutually accountable for success.

- **Leveraged Resources** – current community resources are coordinated to increase accessibility, effectiveness and efficiency.

- **Data-Driven Decision Making** – data is used to determine what kinds of programs, services, and resources are needed and to evaluate current efforts.

THE PILLARS

An integrated focus on health, family support, community engagement, and academics.
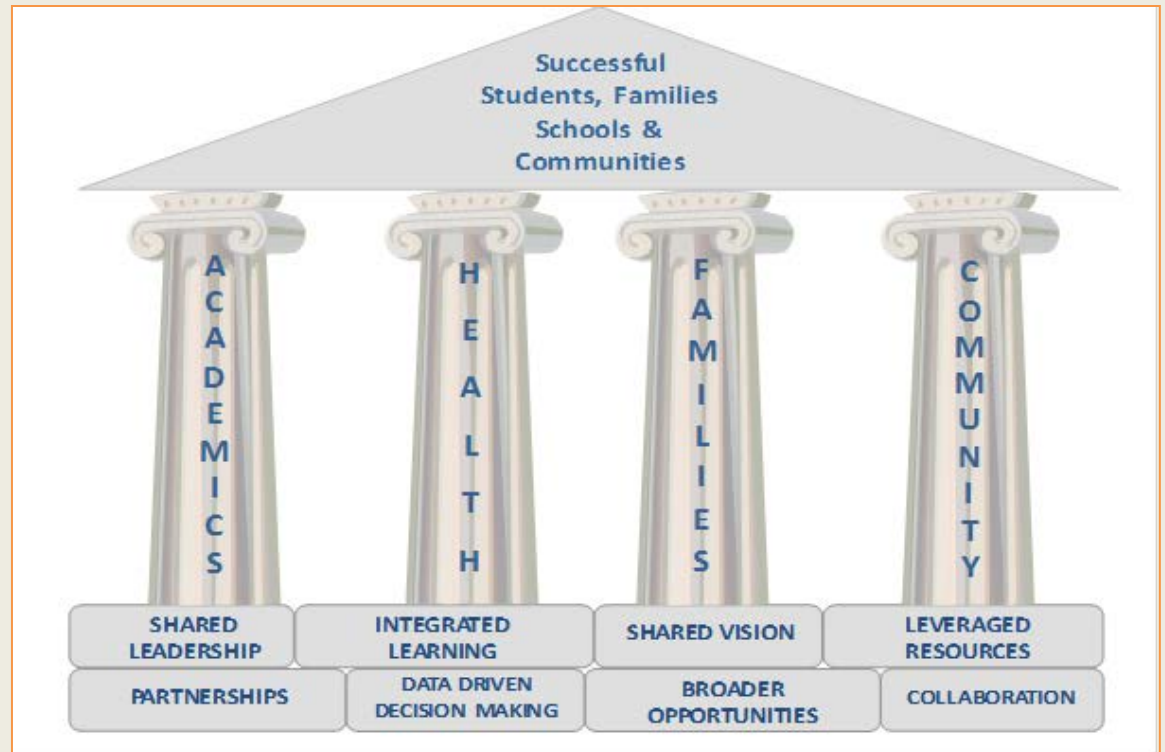
ACADEMICS

Out-of-school time activities are linked to but do not replicate classroom learning:

- Remediation (ie. tutoring)
- Support (ie. homework help)
- Enrichment (arts, music, cultural programs, etc.)
- Adult Education (GED, ELL, job skills,

A C A D E M I C S

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Resources to support the physical and emotional well-being of students and families:

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- Healthy snacks
- Organized sports teams and physical education
- Social emotional learning
- Nutrition education programs and & cooking classes
- School-based mental health services for students and families
- School-based physical health services for students and families

✓ Vision screenings, immunizations, sports physicals

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Potential barriers to parent engagement:

- Parents had a negative experience of school as students
- Parents feel ashamed because they have limited educations or believe they have limited capacity to support their children's educations
- The school is not welcoming to parents
- Parents are only contacted when their child is in trouble
- It is difficult for the parent to get to the school
- There are many stressors in a parent's life that prohibit priority on school engagement

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POTENTIAL BARRIERS

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
(original five-stage model)

Self-actualisation
personal growth and fulfilment

Esteem needs
achievement, status, responsibility, reputation

Belongingness and Love needs
family, affection, relationships, work group, etc

Safety needs
protection, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc

Biological and Physiological needs
basic life needs - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.
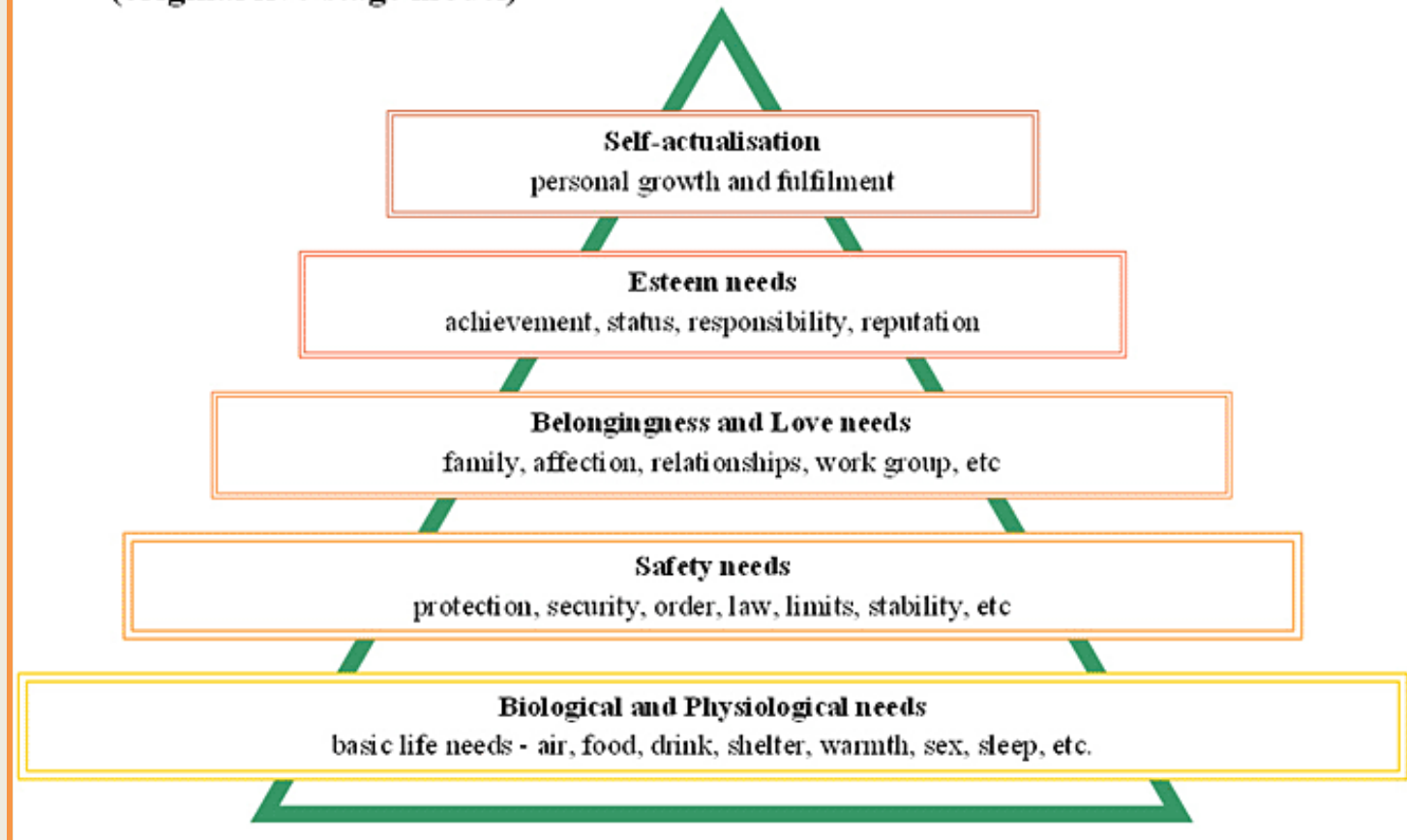
WHO ARE PARENTS?

- Who are we talking about when we say parents?
  - ✓ What about fathers?
  - ✓ "Adult" programming – including teachers or other adults in the building
  - ✓ Family nights

- Parents are individuals, not just parents
  - ✓ Find opportunities to highlight their strengths and special skills
  - ✓ Don't just talk with them about their children!
  - ✓ Engage as valuable leaders in your school
- Acknowledge parents as experts on their children

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR PARENTS

- Support parents' capacity to advocate for their children
- Help them understand what their kids are learning – Common Core is great opportunity
- Support their own development – not just as parents, but as individuals
  - ✓ Job training and skill development for adults
- Sports and recreation for adults and families
- Invite parents to observe their children throughout the year
- Other parents are essential to garnering support for parent events

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY

- Expanding the base of stakeholders involved in your school
  - ✓ Community organizes resources to support youth & adult development

- Creating mutually beneficial partnerships
  - ✓ Community members know the school as a place to access resources & support
    - Access to health and education services
    - *For example:* Square dancing!

EXPANDING YOUR BASE OF STAKEHOLDERS

Partnerships with stakeholders can come from different situations:

- New connections can be made between your school and an agency/community member
- Deeper relationships can develop from partnerships that already at your school
  - ✓ Partners in your school building can be invited to talk about their programs to your advisory committee
  - ✓ Partners in your school building can be required to attend monthly or quarterly partnership meetings
  - ✓ *Lawyers at Brown Elementary School*

MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Identify your school's needs
- Identify a partner who could support these needs
- Anticipate needs of potential partners
- Plan how to communicate to potential partner how a partnership can be mutually beneficial

Tools: *Community Needs Assessment* and *Community Asset Mapping*

MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS: LOCAL AGENCIES

- For non-profits, a partnership can provide access to community members and a way to meet grant requirements
- Local businesses can partner with the school to get involved with preparing students for future involvement in their workforce
  - ✓ Provide career planning, job shadowing, hands-on learning opportunities, and mentoring for students
    - Academic Progress Conferences at Manual High School
    - Workforce development through partnerships with local businesses at South Shore High School
- In high schools, youth can be engaged in doing outreach to local organizations and businesses

MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS: COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Do your local community leaders or policymakers know what is happening in your school building?
  - ✓ Consider: alderman, council members, religious leaders, business leader, etc.
- Are there ways to involve community member not directly affiliated with your school?
  - ✓ Consider: residents who live close but do not have a child attending your school
  - ✓ Parents of alumni who had a good relationship with the school when their child attended

THE ADVISORY BOARD

- Infrastructure for shared leadership and community ownership
- Made up of key school and community stakeholders
- Vary in size

ADVISORY BOARD

- Meet on an ongoing basis to:
  - ✓ Inform each other's knowledge of student and family needs
  - ✓ Determine areas of need
  - ✓ Review data to evaluate services being offered at the school
  - ✓ Coordinate community resources to address areas of need

- This work supports the ABCs of community schools.

BENEFITS OF ADVISORY BOARDS

- Advisory board members can become key ambassadors for your community school

- Members can contribute manpower and skills to special events and projects

- Collective review process can help ensure program quality and improvement of services

- Members knowledge and connections can support your community school's sustainability

FORMING YOUR ADVISORY BOARD

- Step 1: [Identifying Potential Members](#)
- Step 2: [Prioritizing Potential Members](#)
- Step 3: [Identifying Strengths of Potential Members](#)
- Step 4: [Inviting Advisory Board Members](#)

STEP 1: IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL MEMBERS

- Ask others to help brainstorm potential members

- Do not limit your list to people you know or like

Potential Community Representatives	Has knowledge of student and family needs and/or barriers to success	Has knowledge of / or access to resources that serve or could serve students and families	Has relationships with policymakers or key champions for student and families
Health Care Providers			
Human Services Organizations			
Youth Development Agencies			
Family Services			
Parent Support Services			
Parent Organizations			
Informal Parent Groups			
Community Organizers			
Parks & Recreation			
Law Enforcement			
Juvenile Justice			
Local Government			
State Representatives			
Faith Community			
Childcare Providers			
Local Business			
Local and National Corporations			

- Based on your knowledge of what the school needs, prioritize members who can help manage and provide for necessary changes.

- Think about people or organizations who may challenge your work if they are not involved more explicitly.

From your list of potential advisory board members in Step 1, prioritize potential members using these or other criteria:

People/organizations that can help manage the changes that will need to happen to open the school up for other services and programs. List people from Step 1 who can help with this:

Current strategic partners of the school (district) who know about Needs and Resources of our community. List people from Step 1 who will bring this

Potential partners whose vision / mission closely aligns with the vision / mission of the community school. List people from Step 1 here.

People/organizations that could be challenging to your work if they are not part of the initiative: List people from Step 1 here:

STEP 3:
IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS OF POTENTIAL MEMBERS

- Think about the capacities of each person identified in Steps 1 and 2

Early tasks of the Advisory Board	List members who were prioritized in step 2 in appropriate areas below:
Define a community definition for student/family success	
Create a collaborative process for cross sector dialogue and decision making	
Organize school and community resources to work together around student and family development	
Identify the kinds of impact that our programs and services should have on students and families in order to consider our work a success	
Develop a plan for organizing and delivering programs and services that meet student and family needs	
Market what is (will be) available at the school for students, families, and community members	
Identify the kinds of people we need to manage the work we are creating.	
Participate in the interview and hiring process for the staff for our community school.	
Ongoing tasks of the Advisory Board	**List people from Step 2 in appropriate areas below:**
Monitor our progress in the plan that we create.	
Decide which programs and services will occur in the Community School	
Identify potential community resources and program providers	
Engage community members as partners to participate in and to deliver programs and services	
Address specific challenges to community school transformation as they arise	
Call and advocate for policy changes in key institutions to support community school development	
Develop long range funding and sustainability strategies	
Carry our vision of success to the community and other stakeholders	

STEP 4:
INVITING ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

- Instead of sending blanket invitations, consider having individual conversations with potential members
- Consider who would be best to ask the potential member
- Make sure to let members know that you think they have important skills and assets that can benefit the school
- Develop your "ask:" Plan and practice describing what Advisory Board members will do

STEP 4:
INVITING ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

- Be prepared to respond to questions:
  - ✓ How big of a commitment is this?
  - ✓ How long will the meetings last?
  - ✓ Will I only need to go to meetings?
  - ✓ Will there be work between meetings?
  - ✓ How long is this commitment?
  - ✓ Do I have to decide now?

- What are other questions or concerns potential members may have?

MOVING FORWARD: ADVISORY BOARDS IN PRACTICE

- Create an environment of engagement, reflection, and collaboration for your Advisory Board.

Tools: *Creating an Engaging Environment* and *Sample Meeting Agenda*

RESOURCES

- Federation for Community Schools tools and resources

  www.ilcommunityschools.org

  - ✓ Illinois Community Schools Forum:
    November 14-15, 2013
    Hilton of Lisle/Naperville, IL

- The Coalition for Community Schools
  www.communityschools.org

  - ✓ National Community Schools Forum:
    April 9-11, 2014
    Cincinnati, OH

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