



Community Schools – Results That Turn Around Failing Schools

Test Scores, Attendance, Graduation
and College-Going Rates

May 2010

Great strides have been made by community school initiatives across the nation in their efforts to impact student achievement, attendance, student engagement, graduation rates, parent involvement and more. Data on community schools is growing and we encourage readers to review research reports and syntheses on results.¹ The following results were gathered from community schools around the nation from 2007-2009.

Academic Performance

National — Communities in Schools (CIS), the largest nationwide model of community schools, reported that schools that fully implement the CIS Model of integrated student services have higher percentages of students achieving math and reading proficiency than did students in other schools.

California

- ✓ San Mateo County Community Schools' most seasoned schools have students who regularly reach the state's Academic Performance Index standards and achieved advanced scores on the state's English Language Arts assessment.
- ✓ In Redwood City, CA, Taft Elementary School is one of only nine schools in the state to come out of PI status under NCLB in 2009.
- ✓ Anna Yates Elementary School in Alameda County saw an increase in their API (California State's Academic Performance Index, which is more rigorous than AYP) by 41 points and Emery Secondary School, in the same county, saw their API increase by 27 points. These results in student achievement are further highlighted when compared to an average increase of 19.2 points for the 15 others districts in Alameda County. These scores are almost double the average county rate of increase.

New York, NY — In a 2009 study comparing Children's Aid Society (CAS) community schools to other New York City schools, CAS schools' students scored significantly higher on math tests than students in other city schools. Furthermore,

- ✓ CAS schools do particularly well with the lowest 1/3 of students, making at least one year of academic progress in both elementary and middle schools.
- ✓ Every CAS elementary school scored at least 70% on progress; city-wide mean is 50%. PS 8 scored 100%, meaning no schools in the city did better on progress.
- ✓ All CAS middle schools but one (IS 166) outperformed peer and city-wide schools in making one year of progress, with MS 319 and MS 324 at 100 percent, and CAS middle schools academically outperformed peer schools in math progress for the lowest 1/3 of students.

Chicago, IL — The 162 schools in the [Chicago Community School \(CSI\) Initiative](#) have delivered standardized test results that show a steady closing of the achievement gap with other Chicago schools. CSI links out-of-school time to increased reading and math scores.

Cincinnati, OH — During the 2007-08 school year, nine Cincinnati Public School pilot community schools showed promising trends in benchmarks, including school rating (continuous improvement), student enrollment (10% increase), behavior incidents (10% decrease), achievement tests (10% increase in proficient or better), dental health (90% fully screened and treated), AYP index (met), average daily attendance (93% daily), student stability (5% increase), physical health (95% immunized), and developmental assets (5% increase).

All nine sites showed progress toward meeting benchmarks, but two schools (Winston Hills Academy and Riverview East) made significant strides, meeting 89% of the benchmarks for 2007-08. Key factors that have been attributed to the success of these schools include:

- ✓ A full-time resource coordinator.
- ✓ Full-time co-located community partnerships including daily afterschool programming.
- ✓ A school nurse and an on-site mental health professional.
- ✓ Ongoing, meaningful community and parent engagement.

Graduation Rates, Attendance and Dropout Rates

Communities in Schools is the only research-based dropout prevention program in the country proven to increase graduation rates, graduating students on time with a regular diploma, compared to organizations listed in the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse.

In **New York City**, in a 2009 study comparing CAS community schools to other New York City schools, those with on-site health clinics tend to have higher attendance than those without. Also, CAS students who participated in after school programs for three or four years had better school attendance than students who participated in less time or no time at all.

In **Providence, RI**, in data collected in late 2009, there were 55% fewer incidences of chronic absenteeism among participants in Providence Full Service Community Schools' (FSCS) programs than in the general school population and children with parents in Family Literacy had a 97.3% attendance rate.

In **Tukwila, WA**, Community Schools Collaboration's on-time graduation rate has increased annually since 2001; the rate of absentee and drop-outs for middle and high school students has also dropped.

Improved Behavior

In **Chicago**, CSI students have consistently demonstrated significantly lower numbers of serious disciplinary incidents compared to schools with similar demographics.

Shaw Middle School in **Philadelphia**, a community school partnering with the University of Pennsylvania, saw suspensions decrease from 464 to 163 over a span of six years.

CAS Community Schools found significant increases in self-esteem, career, and other aspirations for surveyed students and decreased reports of problems with communication across all three study years.

New York City—In another New York City-based community school model, [Beacons](#), students reported that they were less likely to intentionally hurt someone physically, damage other people's property, steal money, or get into a fight.

Parent Involvement

Arlington, VA—Carlin Springs Elementary School serves a high population of children from non-English speaking families. To improve communications with parents, the school provides adult ESL classes. This effort has paid off as 95% of parents taking ESL classes also attended parent-teacher conferences at the school and report that they are now more likely to be engaged in their children's education.

Philadelphia, PA & Independence, MO—At Sayre High School in Philadelphia and Independence School District in Independence, 90% of Family Fitness Night participants reported that they are eating healthier and exercising more.

Providence, RI—Data collected in late 2009 on the city's FCSC with approximately 350 students, a total of 333 different adult family members participated in school-based family engagement events within the year. One hundred sixteen parents participated in 3 or more school-based family engagement events. Eighty-nine percent of parents demonstrated significant improvement in their ability to communicate and relate to their child's school environment. Forty-six percent of parents in Family Literacy classes increased an Educational Functioning Level—the equivalent of 2 grade levels in reading.

San Mateo County—Results from community school study show that 93% of parents attended parent/teacher conferences and a high percentage of parents encouraged their child to complete homework and talked to their child about school.

Data Highpoints on High Schools

Graduation Rates

- ✓ From 2000 to 2008, the Cincinnati school district's high schools have seen the graduation rate improve from 51% to 82%.
- ✓ Foster High School in Tukwila, WA, had an on-time graduation rate of 74% and an 83% extended graduation rate in 2006-07, both of which are several points higher than Washington's state-wide average.
- ✓ In 2006, Community Links High School in Chicago has maintained a 99% graduation rate, with an 85% college-going rate and 97% daily attendance rate.
- ✓ In 2009, Little Village Lawndale, Chicago, IL, graduated its first senior class and 75-80% of all seniors were on track for graduation (compared to other neighborhood high schools, whose rates are in the upper 40s).
- ✓ In 2006-07, Sayre High School's (Philadelphia, PA) first senior class had a 90% graduation rate compared to a city-wide rate around 50%. Of these graduates, 56% enrolled in post-secondary education, and community school partners helped secure more than \$50,000 in scholarships.

College Going Rates

- ✓ Attendance at George Washington High School (Indianapolis, IN) has risen 8%, reaching 96% in 2008-09 and exceeding the district goal of 95%. One hundred percent of graduates have been accepted into a post-secondary institution.
- ✓ Among 2006-07 graduates of Fannie Lou Hamer High School, Bronx, NY, more than half planned on attending a four-year college, while an additional 38% planned on attending a two-year college.
- ✓ In 2006-2007, 95% of Sayre High School seniors graduated on time, 68% enrolled in a two-year or four-year college, and 16% secured a full-time job upon graduation. In 2009, 84% of seniors were college-bound.

Community Schools – High School Profiles

A 2009 Coalition for Community School report, [Raising Graduation and College Going Rates – Community High School Case Studies](#), demonstrates how high schools with deep and purposeful ties to community are improving student performance. Schools featured in the report get their strength from the local community as they create personalized environments, ensure a relevant and rigorous curriculum, and build sustainable partnerships that put a caring adult in students' lives before, during and after school.

George Washington Community High School – Indianapolis, IN

100% of Washington's graduates have been accepted into a post-secondary institution. Attendance has risen 8%, reaching 96% in 2008-09 and exceeding the district goal of 95%. Under the new state formula, the school had a 49% graduation rate in 2008 (47% was the district-wide average), and an additional 20% of seniors remained in school.

Fannie Lou Hamer High School – Bronx, NY

In 2007-08, Fannie Lou met 100% of its improvement targets from the previous year. With an overall score of 90.7 (measures in four areas: school environment, student performance, student progress, and closing the achievement gap). Among 2006-07 graduates, more than half planned on attending a four-year college, while an additional 38 % planned on attending a two-year college.

Oyler Community Learning Center – Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, OH

Oyler Community Learning Center became a Cincinnati Public School community school pilot site in 2007-08. Since that time no students have dropped out. The school is located in a community that is more than 25% illiterate and, according to school staff, many of the students who attend say they did not consider attending college as a serious possibility. Oyler is co-located with a Boys & Girls Club and a school-based health center where students are able to get free, nutritious, hot meals provided by Freestore Foodbank and have access to full health services such as dental, vision, and mental health care. The school has mentoring and college preparation readily available, linking students to healthy, caring adults and academic/career advisors. The school's supporters believe that the success students are experiencing comes because the community and school purposefully joined together to level the playing field, open the door to high school graduation, college attendance, promising careers, and a transition to a healthy and productive adult life.

From 2000 to 2008, the Cincinnati school district's 17 high schools have seen the overall graduation rate improve from 51 to 82 percent. When the district committed to making every school a Community Learning Center, they also engaged in a \$1 billion Facilities Master Plan. The investment in schools provided an opportunity to rebuild every school through an extensive community engagement process, which is making a dramatic difference for Cincinnati's young people.

Parkrose High School – SUN Community Schools, Portland, OR

In recent years, Parkrose High School has seen its **dropout rate fall from 8% to as low as 2% in 2006**. Of the 566 students regularly participating in community school activities in 2007-08, **79% increased benchmarks in reading and 69% increased benchmarks in math**. The **average daily attendance of SUN students is 91%**. According to teachers, of the students who regularly attended SUN activities: 81% turned homework in on time, 90% had a more positive attitude toward school, 81% improved classroom participation, and 78% improved on finding alternative resolutions to problems. Under Oregon's new graduation formula, 72% of Parkrose's 2008 seniors graduated, compared to Portland Public Schools' district-wide rate of 54% and the state-wide rate of 68%.

Foster High School – Tukwila, WA

As a result of growing community school efforts, Foster had an **on-time graduation rate of 74.4% and an 82.5% extended graduation rate** in 2006-07, both of which are several points higher than Washington's state-wide average. Based on success in Tukwila, CSC received funding to expand their programs into several schools of the nearby Highline School District.

Community Links High School – Chicago, IL

Since graduating its first class in 2006, Community Links High School has maintained a 99% graduation rate, with an **85% college-going rate and 97% daily attendance rate**. In the summer of 2009, the principal will help launch a new high school program at nearby Mason

School, modeled after Spry Community Links High School.

Little Village Lawndale – Chicago, IL

Across the four schools on the Little Village campus, there is a **90% daily attendance rate and less than 1% truancy rate**. In the spring of 2009, each school graduated its first senior class and **75-80% of all seniors were on track for graduation** (compared to other neighborhood high schools, whose rates are in the upper 40s).

Sayre High School – Philadelphia, PA

After completing its transition from middle to high school in 2006-07, Sayre's first senior class had a **90% graduation rate** (compared to a city-wide rate around 50%). Of these graduates, **56% enrolled in post-secondary education**, and community school partners helped secure more than \$50,000 in scholarships. Seniors had great success in the first year with **95% graduating on time, 68.4% enrolled in a two-year or four-year college, and 15.7% secured a full-time job upon graduation**. In 2009, 84% of seniors are college-bound.

The Coalition for Community Schools, housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership, is an alliance of national, state and local organizations in education K-16, youth development, community planning and development, family support, health and human services, government and philanthropy as well as national, state and local community school networks. The Coalition supports the community school strategy because it provides access and leverage of local resources and programs, changing the look and feel of the traditional school structure to best meet the needs of children and families in the 21st century.

Martin Blank, Director
Sarah S. Pearson, Deputy Director
Coalition for Community Schools, c/o Institute for Educational Leadership
4455 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 822-8405; blankm@iel.org, pearsons@iel.org,
www.communityschools.org

May 2010

ⁱ [American Educator, Summer 2009](#). Surrounded by Support *and* Community Schools: Producing Results That Turn Around Failing Schools. This brief highlights examples gathered from community schools around the nation from 2007-2009 data on academic achievement and nonacademic development.