



**SOUTHWARK  
SCHOOL  
(GRADES K-8)**



MAYOR'S OFFICE  
OF EDUCATION



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
PHILADELPHIA

A City of Philadelphia  
Designated Community School

COMMUNITY  
SCHOOL PLAN  
MARCH 2017

## LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



This past July, the City of Philadelphia, in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, proudly announced the first cohort of Community Schools. The Community Schools initiative is a key piece of our shared vision to improve the educational landscape of our city. This effort marks a new approach for how the City supports students and families, strengthens schools, and revitalizes neighborhoods.

By providing services like food pantries or access to dental care we remove barriers that prevent our students from learning. Ultimately, Community Schools and the services they provide allow our students to focus on learning and our teachers to focus on teaching.

I am happy to share that over the past six months the Mayor's Office of Education has conducted a thorough analysis of each of our nine community schools. Our dedicated team has surveyed more than 2,000 community members, students, school staff, and parents to get a comprehensive understanding of the unique needs within each school community. More than 500 additional people participated in 1 of 50 in-person focus groups, providing feedback that informed this report.

This report highlights the ways the City will expand services to meet the specific needs of our schools. Our Community School Coordinators will continue to work closely with their Community School Committees over the next year and we invite you to join them in this shared effort to strengthen our schools and neighborhoods.

Together, we will help our children reach their full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James F. Kenney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James F. Kenney  
Mayor of Philadelphia

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## SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES, STRENGTHENING SCHOOLS, REVITALIZING NEIGHBORHOODS

The City of Philadelphia's Mayor's Office of Education (MOE) launched the Community Schools initiative, in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, to strengthen school communities by improving access to programs, services, and supports for the children and families of Philadelphia. Funded by the Philadelphia Beverage Tax, nine community schools were established during FY17.

Community schools are public schools where a full-time coordinator works with the entire school community—students, families, teachers, administrators, service providers, and neighbors—to identify student and community needs, such as expanded health services, after-school programming, and job training. The coordinator then works with service providers and City agencies to bring these resources directly into the school, enabling community schools to become thriving neighborhood centers.

Successful community schools leverage public, private, and philanthropic resources to address non-academic barriers and challenges that too often keep our students from learning. Through this strategy, the City strengthens schools and the School District by sharing the responsibility for meeting the needs of the whole child, and thereby helping hardworking educators focus on teaching.

### Community School Coordinators

A key tenet of a community school is a dedicated Community School Coordinator who works directly in the school and with the entire school community. Philadelphia's Community School Coordinators are city employees reporting to MOE, and working in partnership with the school principal. MOE also provides technical and programmatic assistance to support principals, coordinators, and community partners to secure resources and create opportunities that benefit students, families, and neighbors. Examples of this centralized support include systems strategies around resources such as social and emotional wellness, health services, training and professional development, identifying new resources and partners, and working with local and national coalitions.

### A Focus on Health

Because the physical, social, and emotional health of children is critical, MOE is also working closely with the School District of Philadelphia, various city departments, community organizations, and service providers to develop strategies to increase these services. One highlight is a new collaboration between MOE and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) to develop expanded health services and access in school communities, including dental and vision, asthma care and other strategies to support the district's school nurses. Through this partnership, MOE also hired Healthy Schools Coordinators to provide additional support to community schools. Grounded in the understanding that healthy, active, well-nourished children learn better, they are working to improve access to healthy foods, physical activity and drinking water habits that students need to thrive in and out of the classroom.

### Community School Committee

Each school has organized an advisory committee to review information and provide guidance on priorities for the community school plans. The Community School Committee (CSC) is comprised of school staff, parents/caregivers and community members. The CSC works with the Community School Coordinator and school leadership to develop and implement this plan based on the unique set of needs of their community school. The CSC sets priorities, and advises in the implementation of the community school plan.

# IDENTIFYING SCHOOL NEEDS

Once a school receives designation as a community school, the first step is to conduct a needs assessment in order to discover the strengths of the school and its neighborhood assets, as well as what the school community identifies as priorities for the community school to address.

## What MOE did at every school:

MOE utilized a variety of tools to obtain feedback from community school stakeholders. Staff engaged five stakeholder groups: students, parents, teachers/staff, organizations providing services in the school, and representatives from the community. Methods included:

- ✓ Surveys (paper and digital)
- ✓ Focus groups
- ✓ One-on-one interviews
- ✓ Participation in school activities to hear from as many stakeholders as possible



MOE also analyzed community datasets including information from the American Community Survey, the School District of Philadelphia’s annual student, family, and staff surveys, Public Health Management Corporation’s Household Health Survey, the Community Health Assessment, and other data sources. This data review process helped provide context for understanding neighborhoods, and was used in conjunction with information from surveys and focus groups. Using this data, MOE created maps and presented detailed data presentations on neighborhood resources, health and census information to each community school committee for their specific neighborhood.<sup>1</sup>

## What MOE learned across schools:

During citywide community outreach there were some consistent themes across all nine of our community schools:

- Job training and access to job opportunities
- Food insecurity and access to healthy foods
- Access to physical, social and emotional health services, including the need for a “trauma informed” approach to serving students
- Access to clothing and uniforms
- Cultural and social opportunities

For example, students who are hungry are not ready to learn, and in many of the neighborhoods where community schools are located people identified food insecurity as a need. To address this broader need, the Mayor’s Office of Education is working with SDP and key partners including philanthropic and community organizations to implement food access programs at all the community schools. These programs may include a food “backpack” pilot where students take home food monthly, establishing food pantries and/or fresh produce stands to bring healthy and

<sup>1</sup> A detailed methodology description is available in Appendix A

## IDENTIFYING SCHOOL NEEDS

affordable foods directly to community schools, working with partners like Philabundance, the SHARE Food Program, the Food Trust and Common Market. Some programs will take time to develop and some are advancing already.

As Mayor Kenney has said, every City department has a shared responsibility to improve the ways the City of Philadelphia supports students, families and local schools. MOE is working closely with numerous departments and agencies to create opportunities that can build upon existing good work and align the City's many programs and services. For example, the Community Schools initiative is partnering with the Health Department to place Healthy School Coordinators in schools to support programs to increase physical activity; promote access to healthy food and drinking water, physical activity, and family engagement in wellness. In addition to working closely with the Health Department, the Community Schools team is working with the REBUILD initiative, PHLpreK, the Department of Human Services, and the Managing Director's office to align strategies to serve families and neighborhoods. The Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS) is working with MOE to help identify schools' ongoing needs and barriers to services, with the goal of strengthening connections to behavioral health services for students and families. Technical assistance staff work closely with the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity to refer families to programs that will connect them to public benefits, and with the Commerce department to expand workforce development efforts. The Office of Adult Education is working to help bring their extensive portfolio of adult education to schools. Other examples include working with the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy and Mural Arts to bring arts and cultural opportunities to schools. MOE is also partnering with the Office of Immigrant Affairs to respond to the critical challenges our immigrant and refugee families are facing.

From this work, MOE created a profile of each school, including an assessment of community resources, demographic information, and information about the neighborhood and specific school community.



***“We cannot expect our children to succeed academically if they come to school hungry, sick or too traumatized to learn. Expanding the community schools approach is one way that we will strategically align City services and other resources to better address the needs of students and families. I’m excited to expand this proven strategy in Philadelphia and look forward to working with these school communities.”*** - Mayor Jim Kenney

# ABOUT SOUTHWARK SCHOOL

**Southwark School** is located at 9th and Mifflin Streets in South Philadelphia's East Passyunk neighborhood. It is incredibly diverse and more than seven languages are spoken at the school. School enrollment has increased nearly 30% in the last three school years. Within the community, residents report that the demographic is changing from older Italian families to immigrants from Central and South America, Southeast Asia, and Central Africa. Southwark has developed a strong relationship with the East Passyunk Crossing Civic Association.

## Current Offerings:

- Dual Language Immersion program in English and Spanish
- All-school Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program
- A middle school Career and Technical Education (CTE) program
- Head Start pre-K program serving 40 students
- Arts, dance and music during the school day

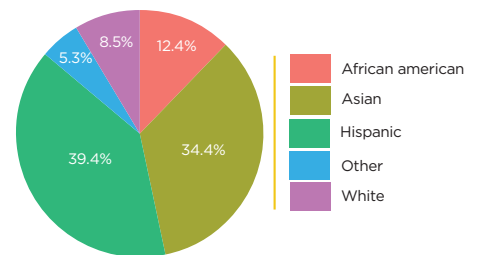
## Partners<sup>4</sup>:

- Four out-of-school-time (OST) programs have each operated at Southwark for more than four years and serve more than 200 students
- Thomas Jefferson University Hospital
- City Year
- Center for Literacy
- Children's Literacy Initiative

Many partners participate in monthly partnership meetings, and some are active School Advisory Council members.

Total students <sup>2</sup>	752
English Language Learners	41%
Special Education	9.2%
Economically Disadvantaged	100%

## Southwark School Demographics



Percentage of population born outside of the United States, Southwark<sup>3</sup>:

**32.6%** 99th percentile

City average: **10.7%**

<b>Recreation Centers</b>	The East Passyunk Community Center is within walking distance. It opened as a Parks and Recreation facility in 2015
<b>Libraries</b>	The South Philadelphia and Whitman Branches are within walking distance
<b>Green Space</b>	The nearest large area of green space is Dickinson Square Park at 4th and Tasker
<b>Health Resources</b>	There is a community health center nearby (The Health and Literacy Center at Broad and Morris)
<b>Grocery Stores</b>	The Acme grocery store is at 10th and Reed, and many of the corner stores offer fresh produce, meat and cheese
<b>Hospital/Medical</b>	Methodist Hospital - many families also rely on health clinics located on Washington Avenue, as well as Puentes de Salud Health and Wellness Center

<sup>2</sup> Data in this table is taken from the School Profiles on The School District of Philadelphia website, [https://webapps1.philasd.org/school\\_profile/](https://webapps1.philasd.org/school_profile/)

<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey 2009-2014

<sup>4</sup> This is an abridged list of Southwark's partnerships

# ABOUT SOUTHWARK SCHOOL

## What We Learned at Southwark School

More than 350 students, staff, families, community members and school partners completed surveys, participated in focus groups or interviews.

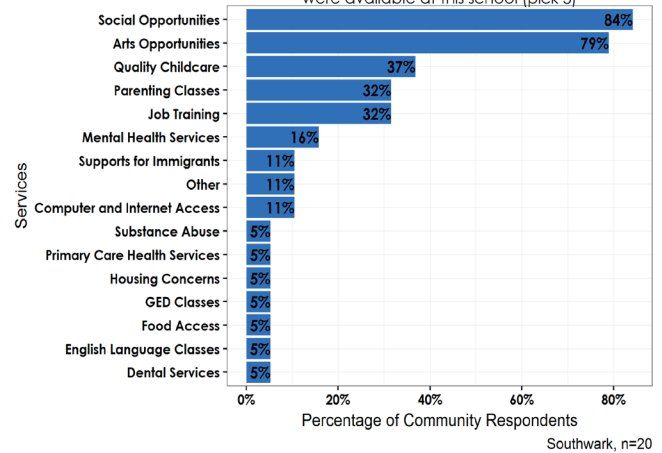
- ✓ Students, staff, families, and service providers agree that students need more academic supports, which include homework help, afterschool programs and classes for English Language Learners
- ✓ Supports for immigrants are needed; including English classes for adults
- ✓ Staff, service providers, and the principal identified a need for mental health services for students and programs that address student behavior and bullying

Additionally, some families taking the survey in Spanish identified computer/internet access as a need. According to data from School District of Philadelphia surveys, 55% of families do not have internet at home. Another key concern is beautifying the school, and the need for more green space in the neighborhood.

Southwark's community school committee (CSC) consists of families, teachers, staff, community members, school partners, the assistant principal and both the community school and healthy school coordinators. (A list of CSC members is available on page 13.)

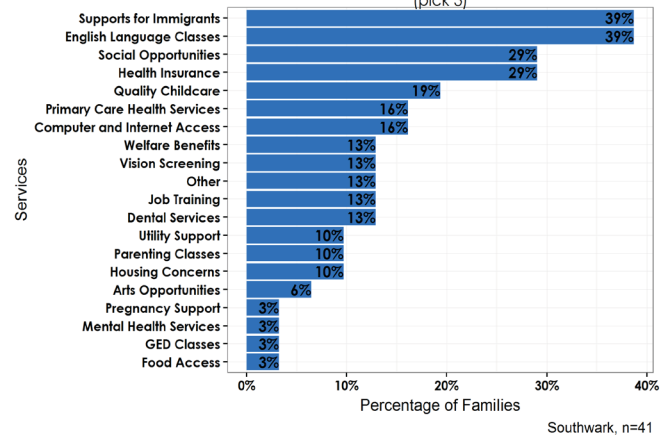
### Services The Community Wants

Please choose the services you would participate in if they were available at this school (pick 5)



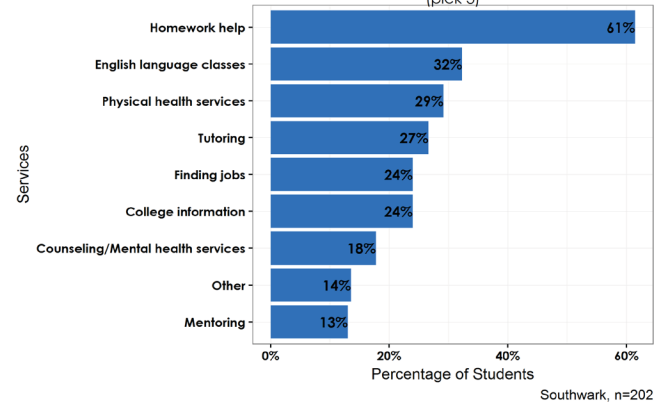
### Services Families Want For Themselves

Please choose the three biggest needs for yourself (pick 3)



### Services Students Want

What Services Do You Need More of At Your School? (pick 3)





# SOUTHWARK'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOCUS AREAS

## PRIMARY PRIORITIES

- Increase supports for immigrant families, refugee families, and community members;
- Increase social and emotional health services for students;
- Increase community supports and programs for academics (with a literacy emphasis); and
- Align partners and resources to strengthen the school environment (Including school climate and behavior plan)

### **Increase supports for immigrant families, refugee families, and community members**

The community surrounding Southwark is home to many Hispanic and Southeast Asian immigrants and refugees, as well as newly arrived refugees from Central Africa. It is in the 99th percentile in the city for foreign born population. All stakeholder groups identified supports for immigrants and refugees and the need for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes as important for Southwark families and community members. Support services for refugees are also particularly important because recent arrivals to the United States only receive state and federal resettlement assistance for a few months.

#### *Initial action steps (3 months)*

- Identify available resources for immigrant and refugee families, including assistance obtaining benefits, adult education and job training, healthcare and insurance access, and child care options
- Work with the City's Office of Adult Education to identify ESL providers and expand existing programs

#### *Short-term goals (6-12 months)*

- Develop communication strategies to share resources with families and community members, including building relationships with trusted community leaders
- Offer additional adult ESL classes at Southwark at nights and/or on weekends
- Help families who need to obtain internet access, either through low-cost home services or increasing available community resources

#### *Long-term goals (2 years)*

- Establish a comprehensive system to connect immigrant families to community services, including benefits, legal support, resettlement services, and job training/placement
- Connect families to affordable, quality child care and pre-K so more children enter Kindergarten ready to learn

### **Increase social and emotional health services for students**

Southwark provides an Emotional Support Program for 3rd - 5th grade students in its geographic area in South Philadelphia. In addition, Southwark has students who have experienced significant trauma in their lives, which can include time spent in refugee camps before coming to the United States. The need for additional mental health services was identified during staff and service provider focus groups as a key need, a finding that was echoed in staff surveys. Although Southwark has trained special education teachers, District one on one workers for designated students and a School Therapeutic Services (STS) program, the level of mental health needs for students is so significant that additional services for these students are critical.

## SOUTHWARK'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOCUS AREAS

### *Initial action steps (3 months)*

- Meet with Principal, Assistant Principal, Counselor, School Psychologist, Special Education staff and STS provider for input and guidance regarding available District and community services and resources appropriate for Southwark students

### *Short-term goals (6-12 months)*

- Increase students' access to off-site and on-site mental health services through partnering with the District, the Department of Behavioral Health/Intellectual disAbilities Services (DBHIDS) and current community partners with support for addressing potential barriers
- Build cultural competency among partners working with families around how mental health issues are viewed in different cultures

### *Long-term goals (2 year goals)*

- Ensure all students have ongoing access to the mental health services they need, which may take place during the school day, after school, or on weekends
- Coordinate student participation with off-site mental health service providers

## **Increase community supports and programs for academics (with a literacy emphasis)**

Both students and teachers in our surveys identified this as a high priority for Southwark. Nearly two-thirds of students said they needed homework help, and 25% said that more tutoring services were needed. Academic supports are particularly important at Southwark, because approximately 40% of students are English Language Learners, and many Southwark parents do not speak English, presenting a barrier to homework assistance at home.

### *Initial action steps (3 months):*

- Convene regular meetings between teachers and afterschool program providers to discuss academic alignment
- Identify partner(s) to provide reading coaches for students
- Identify nonprofit and university academic enrichment and tutoring programs

### *Short-term goals (6-12 months):*

- Improve communication/academic alignment between teachers and afterschool program providers
- Start a reading coach program

### *Long-term goals (2 year goals):*

- Establish academic enrichment, tutoring and homework assistance programs with nonprofit organizations, universities, etc.
- Increase opportunities for tutoring

## **Align partners and resources to strengthen the school environment (including school climate and behavior plan)**

Key needs identified in surveys and focus groups were more behavioral health supports and the need to better manage disruptive behavior and instances of bullying. A holistic approach to strengthening the school environment will include increasing opportunities for mentorship and anti-bullying programs, implementing movement breaks, having healthy snacks, and beautifying the school. Together, these resources will support the school's plan to improve climate and behavior.

## SOUTHWARK'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOCUS AREAS

### *Initial action steps (3 months):*

- Meet with Principal, Assistant Principal, Counselor, School Psychologist, Special Education and other key staff to identify programs related to behavior management and anti-bullying and develop action steps
- Work with Principal, School Engineer, and Facilities Area Manager on school beautification plan
- Identify programs to provide healthy snacks
- Research and work with staff to develop plan for movement breaks

### *Short-term goals (6-12 months):*

- Implement movement breaks during the school day
- Identify partners to support school beautification projects
- Ensure students have regular access to healthy snacks
- Identify nonprofit organizations and university departments that provide mentorship, anti-bullying and/or student behavior management programs
- Introduce mindfulness techniques to students

### *Long-term goals (2 year goals):*

- Implement mentorship, anti-bullying and/or behavior management programs

## SECONDARY PRIORITIES

**Increase after school and extracurricular programming (sports, art, music, etc.)** A significant finding in both surveys and focus groups was the need for more afterschool and extracurricular programming, with an emphasis on the arts and sports opportunities. While Southwark has a very robust after school program, with five organizations currently providing programming, there is always a significant waiting list for these programs. One challenge to this priority will be the limited space currently available at school after school hours for additional programming. Increased extracurricular programming will provide student enrichment that might not otherwise be available to our students and families expanding opportunities for learning.

**Improve communication between the school and families.** In addition to the ordinary challenges typically associated with parent communication and parent engagement in a public school setting, Southwark parents speak seven primary languages in addition to English. Parents expressed a desire in the surveys, and particularly in the focus groups, to know more about what is happening at the school, and to have ongoing ways to communicate specifically with their children's teachers. Therefore, it will be important to develop a communications plan connecting Southwark families, school staff, and partners.

**Support development of a guided recess program and Increase opportunities for structured physical activity during recess.** Recess at Southwark is currently unstructured, and during inclement weather recess is held indoors, often in the school auditorium. In addition, although plans are underway for a schoolyard redesign, the current schoolyard is a large concrete lot with no play equipment or appropriate areas for games and sports. These conditions can lead to bullying and disruptive behavior during recess. The Healthy School Coordinator will work with staff, students, and partners to design a recess program that includes guided and inclusive play activities and conflict resolution techniques, with the objective of improving student behavior and promoting a positive recess experience for all students. This guided recess program will work in conjunction with the improved school-wide climate and behavior plan discussed above.

# GET INVOLVED

## What's Next

As the name implies, Community Schools are not the work of one person, but of all the people in the school and in the neighborhood. Already, partners are coming together every month to share resources and identify new ways to help the school families and staff are meeting regularly at Community School Committee meetings, and new strategies are being developed to achieve the community school's goals. The principal, staff, and Community School and Healthy School Coordinators will continue to work together with existing community partners to expand services and opportunities that meet the needs of students, families, and community members.

## Get Involved

There are many ways to support your neighborhood community schools:

- **Volunteer** - Community schools offer events throughout the year that require volunteers. Volunteering can include one-time opportunities, such as presenting during career days, special event support, or ongoing opportunities with the school or one of the many partners who work there. *Volunteers in community schools will need to follow the SDP volunteer guidelines and complete all required background checks.*
- **Partner** - Philadelphia is a city with many strong neighborhood, community and citywide organizations that are working, or would like to work with schools to bring additional resources and opportunities to children and families. *Please be aware that if your organization is interested in working in a school there are School District of Philadelphia requirements you may have to meet.*
- **Contribute** - Community schools are often looking for donations, including in-kind items such as winter coats or uniforms for clothing closets, as well as for funding for specific initiatives or programs.

To learn more about how to volunteer, partner or contribute, contact our office at **Community.Schools@phila.gov**



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To find out more about the Community School Committee or specific opportunities at this community school, contact the Southwark Community School Coordinator, Beth Dougherty. **Email: [beth.dougherty@phila.gov](mailto:beth.dougherty@phila.gov)**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The Mayor's Office of Education would like to thank the following individuals, organizations, and city departments for their valuable support in producing this plan.**

School District of Philadelphia  
Southwark Principal Andrew Lukov

The members of Southwark's  
Community School Committee:

Gena Bernal, *OST provider*

Johanna Bogden, *Counselor*

Oneka Bouy, *Teacher*

Rickie Brawer, *Jefferson University*

Lauren Ferri, *former Southwark parent  
and community member*

Natalie Gorodetzer, *Assistant Principal*

Lisa Grainge, *parent*

Caroline Henley, *OST provider*

Julie Laquer, *OST provider*

Lian (Esther) Niang, *Burmese BCA*

Shelley Ruderman, *ESL Coordinator*

Sulay Sosa, *parent*

Alexandra Wolkoff, *OST provider*

Thank you to the many educators and administrators of the School District of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers who have worked with MOE to develop this strategy to support our schools.

Many City Departments and City Council Offices have offered their partnerships, and shared their knowledge, ideas, and resources to support this initiative.

## METHODOLOGY

### Survey Development

To develop the community school surveys, the Mayor's Office of Education worked with local and national partners, reviewed surveys used by other community school initiatives and cities, and worked with coordinators and students to ensure that the data collected was useful and the questions meaningful. In total, nine surveys were reviewed by two national and seven local partners including the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, Community Legal Services, and more. Initially, surveys were created for each key stakeholder group: students, families, school staff, community members, and service providers. An additional survey for younger students (grades Kindergarten - 2nd) was also used. Themes incorporated into the surveys included questions about needs and services, and stakeholders' perspectives on the school and community.

### Focus Groups

Focus groups provided community school coordinators the opportunity to have deeper discussions with stakeholders about their concerns and priorities. Each focus group was facilitated by either the community school coordinator or healthy school coordinator. Staff from the Mayor's Office of Education supported the process as note takers when necessary. Training on facilitation was provided to community school and healthy school coordinators in August, and sample focus group scripts were shared with all coordinators. Questions focused on the needs of the school and community. Focus group notes were reviewed, themes were identified for each discussion and entered into a summary table for comparison across stakeholder groups.

### Interviews

In order to collect as much information as possible, some coordinators chose to do additional outreach to stakeholders in the form of 1:1 interviews. Interviews were between 20 and 60 minutes long and notes were collected and reviewed similar to focus groups.

### Community Data

The community information section presents findings from an analysis of data from the American Community Survey (ACS), Philadelphia Health Management Corporation's (PHMC) Household Health Survey, the Philadelphia Police Department, and Get Healthy Philly.

- Key measures asked in the 2009-2014 ACS were measured in all census tracts that overlap the area within 1000 feet of the school.
- The PHMC survey data was calculated for 2010, 2012, and 2014 by measuring respondents within 4000 feet of a school (the larger buffer was chosen due to the survey's relatively low sample size.)
- Drug crimes were measured using public data released by the Philadelphia Police Department's part II narcotics offenses, and calculated by adding up the number of events within 1000 feet of each residence in the city. The average number of crimes per residence is then calculated within ½ mile of the school.
- Estimates from Get Healthy Philly (Philadelphia Department of Public Health) are used for areas of the city that have both high poverty (greater than 20% of the block is below the poverty line) and there is low or no access to healthy food within walking distance (half a mile).



*“Southwark School is deeply honored to be chosen as a participant in the first cohort of Community Schools. When I began my tenure as principal of Southwark, I immediately recognized the undiscovered treasure that we have in our staff, families, and very diverse community. Bringing these groups together and aligning them to our school mission to make our students successful has been my goal. I thank Mayor Kenney, Mr. Hackney, and their team for making this dream a reality.”* – Andrew Lukov, Principal



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THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
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**Otis Hackney**

Chief Education Officer  
City of Philadelphia

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**Susan Gobreski**

Director for Community Schools  
Mayor's Office of Education

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**Dr. William R. Hite**

Superintendent of the School  
District of Philadelphia

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