

EDWARD GIDEON... A COMMUNITY PART



**EDWARD
GIDEON
SCHOOL
(GRADES K-8)**



MAYOR'S OFFICE
OF EDUCATION



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 fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

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.

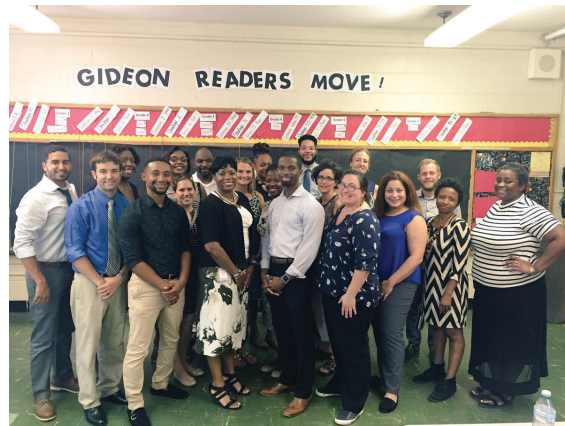
IDENTIFYING SCHOOL NEEDS

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.¹

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

¹ A detailed methodology description is available in Appendix A

IDENTIFYING SCHOOL NEEDS

students take home food monthly, establishing food pantries and/or fresh produce stands to bring healthy and 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 EDWARD GIDEON SCHOOL

Edward Gideon School is located at the intersection of 28th & West Glenwood Avenue in the Strawberry Mansion section of the city. The immediate neighborhood around the school is largely residential, and community members report high crime rates in the area. The school is in the 22nd police district, and the police chief is very supportive of the school. Many of the students at Gideon live in James W. Johnson Homes, a 522-unit PHA housing development nearby. There are also three other K-8 schools within a half mile of Gideon.

Current Offerings:

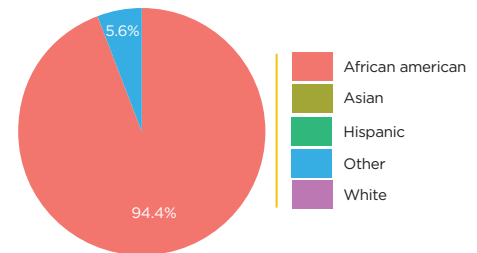
- A virtual Parent Teacher Organization provides paper for the school, Thanksgiving turkey baskets, and a staff appreciation day
- Staff run several extracurricular clubs including cheerleading, chess, math, tennis, and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports club
- Gideon is a Children's Literacy Initiative school and receives additional literacy supports from The School District of Philadelphia

Partners:

- Virtual PTO
- EducationWorks
- City Year
- Girl Scouts
- Philadelphia Youth Basketball
- Eat Right Now

Total students ²	289
English Language Learners	N/A
Special Education	19%
Economically Disadvantaged	100%

Gideon School Demographics



Percentage of households below the poverty line, Gideon ³ :	
46% 83rd percentile in the city	
City average:	30%

Percentage of residents 16 or older who are unemployed, Gideon ⁴ :	
18% 97th percentile in the city	
City average:	11%

Recreation Centers	The Hank Gathers Recreation Center is near the school, but focus groups of community members said they often avoid the area for safety reasons.
Libraries	The Cecil B. Moore library is the nearest to the school.
Green Space	The closest green space is Fairmount Park, which has an entrance at 33rd and Dauphin, a 15-minute walk from the school.
Health Resources	The closest hospital is Temple University at Broad and Ontario Streets. The Steven Klein Wellness Center is also nearby at 2144 Cecil B. Moore Avenue, and the Strawberry Mansion Health Clinic is located at 2840 Dauphin Avenue.
Grocery Stores	The closest grocery options are Aldi or Save-a-lot, each about a mile away.

² Data in this table is taken from the School Profiles on The School District of Philadelphia website, https://webapps1.philasd.org/school_profile/

³ American Community Survey 2010-2014

⁴ American Community Survey 2010-2014

ABOUT EDWARD GIDEON SCHOOL

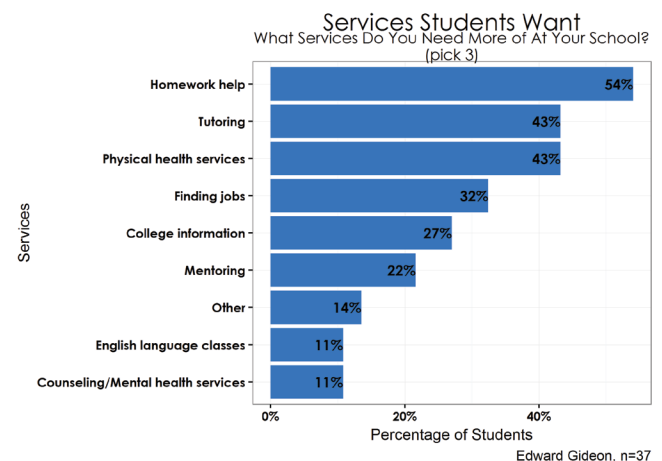
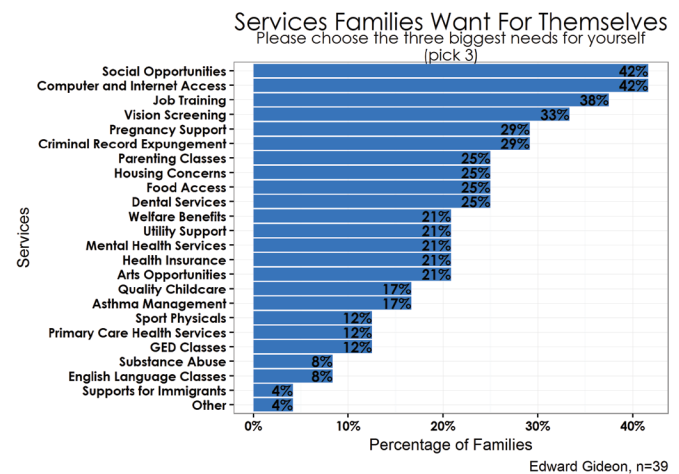
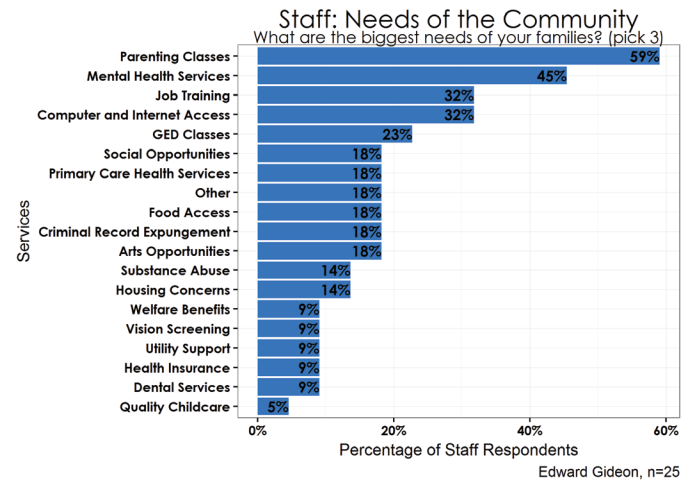
What We Learned at Gideon School

At Gideon, more than 200 students, staff, families, community members, and school partners completed surveys and/or participated in focus groups or interviews.

- ✓ Students, staff, families, and service providers agree that safety is a top concern for community members
- ✓ Community members identified a need for students to have more extracurricular opportunities
- ✓ The top service needs identified by students were homework help, tutoring and physical health services
- ✓ The top service needs for students identified by school staff included mental health services, physical activities, and bullying prevention

In addition to safety concerns and the need for more extracurricular offerings, both surveys and focus groups identified the need for job training and job search assistance. One-third of students said that help with finding jobs in the community is a need, and school staff and parents agreed that job opportunities and training were a key need (32% and 38% respectively).

Other concerns that came up during focus groups included trash and dumping, the need for parenting classes/involvement, more school communication with parents, schoolyard improvements, classroom sizes, pre-K, and increased access to health services in the neighborhood. About 1/3 of families reported seeing a doctor in their neighborhood for services or a hospital when they are sick.



GIDEON'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOCUS AREAS

PRIMARY PRIORITIES

- Increase safety in the school and surrounding environment
- Increase resources for families, including access to health services
- Increase extracurricular opportunities for students

Increase safety in the school and surrounding environment

The Gideon Code of Operation states that all students have the right to “feel socially and emotionally connected... and to be protected from harm in a safe and secure environment.” Increasing safety in the school and surrounding environment can help the school realize this goal. On surveys, over a quarter of students said they often worry about their personal safety. When teachers were asked to name the top three needs of students, 60% responded bullying prevention services. To address safety holistically, the school will focus on supporting social and emotional wellness, and include strategies to improve the school climate and peer relationships.

Initial action steps (3 months)

- Work with existing partners to identify a comprehensive restorative justice or conflict resolution training for school staff and families
- Identify times and areas during the school day with highest incidents of conflict

Short-term goals (6-12 months)

- Identify program partners to facilitate conflict resolution trainings for families
- Conduct peace circles for students when conflict or safety issues occur
- Identify potential partners to offer mobile therapeutic services such as counseling

Long-term goals (2 years)

- Provide restorative justice trainings to all partners and staff
- Provide conflict resolution training to students and families
- Provide on-site counseling at the school through community partnerships

Increase resources for families, including access to health services

Increasing available health services, adult education and job supports are targeted priorities of the community schools strategy and a focus at Gideon specifically. On surveys, when asked to name three services parents want for themselves, 42% want access to the internet and computers, 38% want access to job opportunities/training, and 33% want access to vision screenings.

Initial action steps (3 month):

- Convene a work group that includes the City's health department and area community leaders to make recommendations on health services
- Identify a space in the school to help families access health services
- Meet with families to determine additional resources they want and create a plan for a family resource center
- Work with MOE to identify parent resources and adult education opportunities available through City agencies and non-profit organizations
- Contact local faith-based organizations and universities to assist in connecting parents to existing resources in the community

GIDEON'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOCUS AREAS

Short-term goals (6-12 months)

- Finalize workgroup recommendations for health services action plan
- Identify financial resources to improve and expand health services for the school community
- Identify partners to provide support and programming in family resource room
- Recruit and train volunteers to help in the family resource room
- Identify materials for a family resource center
- Hold initial resource events including résumé workshop and health screenings

Long-term goals (2 year goals)

- Ensure health services onsite and other existing health resources in the school community are utilized at high rates
- Provide access to education and resources that will support student success
- Ensure the family resource center and workshops are run by family volunteers

Increase extracurricular opportunities for students

Since the start of the school year, Gideon has introduced six extracurricular activities including chess and basketball. These afterschool activities allow students to socialize with their peers and be exposed to new activities. On surveys, 74% of families reported arts opportunities as a priority for their students, 48% of staff selected afterschool opportunities as a need for students, and 54% of students selected homework help and tutoring as top priorities. Community School Committee members also identified STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) activities as a priority. Funding for afterschool programs can be a challenge. The Community School Coordinator in partnership with the Community School Committee and MOE will work to identify opportunities and resources for rigorous and engaging extracurricular activities.

Initial action steps (3 months):

- Determine the types of afterschool programs students and parents would like to participate in
- Work with school staff, students, and families to identify standard information to be shared with all extracurricular partners (e.g. overview of the school's PBIS program, classroom management tips, neighborhood history, etc.)
- Ensure there is a communication system in place between the school and its afterschool partners

Short-term goals (6-12 months):

- Host provider fair for students to learn about current extracurricular activities available to them
- Increase enrollment in current afterschool programs
- Create standard trainings on partner expectations, school norms, and community information for all youth development and extracurricular partners
- Ensure that there is sufficient homework help, tutoring and mentoring to meet demand

Long-term goals (2 year goals):

- Ensure there are extracurricular opportunities for all students and families who want them, including tutoring and non-academic offerings
- Align all extracurricular programs with the school's goals

GIDEON'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOCUS AREAS

SECONDARY PRIORITIES

Increase physical activity. Sixty percent of staff responded that students needed more opportunities for physical activity. During focus groups students indicated a strong desire to have playground renovations, including a football field, swings, and more. A comprehensive plan, which includes trained staff to coordinate structured recess, in-class movement breaks, and playground renovations will be explored to increase physical activity at Gideon Elementary. The initial step in addressing this need is an assessment of the daily minutes of physical activity allotted to students of Gideon Elementary/Middle School.

Providing job opportunities and training for parents and community members. Family and community surveys identified a need for more job training/workforce development services in the community. As a first step, the coordinator is identifying and connecting with local partners that currently offer these services.

Increase social opportunities. Increasing social opportunities within the Gideon community was the top priority for parents, as reported on surveys. Also, during individual interviews, many staff mentioned that they wanted to provide more social opportunities for families. The inclusion of these opportunities can create a sense of community as well as foster positive relationships between parents, children, and teachers. Currently, members of the Gideon community are meeting to discuss possible activities.



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**

To find out more about the Community School Committee or specific opportunities at this community school contact the Gideon Community School Coordinator, Gregory Wright. **Email: Gregory.wright@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
Gideon Principal Shauneille Taylor

The members of Gideon's
Community School Committee:
James Wilson, *Service provider*
Thomas Young, *Government*
Zenobia Harris, *Government*
Henry Hunter, *Government*
Suzette Wright, *Service provider*
Aja Hunter, *School staff*
Kevin McCoy, *Student*
Anya Chenault-Epps, *Student*
Shauneille Taylor, *Principal*
Tasha Brunson, *Parent*
Julie Cox, *Teacher*
Robert Billa, *Parent*

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).



“Families and community agencies are key resources for school improvement, and in return schools become key resources for families, service professionals, and community leaders. Families and children, in effect, become the key partners and joint leaders of this comprehensive process.” – Shauneille Taylor, Principal



MAYOR'S OFFICE
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