

Samuel Gompers School

City of Philadelphia Designated
Community School

City of Philadelphia

in partnership with

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Mayor James F. Kenney

Otis Hackney
Chief Education Officer
City of Philadelphia

Dr. William
Superintendent
The School District



Samuel Gompers Elementary School (Grades K-8)



MAYOR'S OFFICE
OF EDUCATION

A City of Philadelphia
Designated Community School
Cohort II



COMMUNITY
SCHOOL PRIORITIES
MARCH 2018

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



In September 2017, the City of Philadelphia and The School District of Philadelphia welcomed three more Philadelphia public schools into the Community Schools initiative. Community Schools are one of the key ways that the City and the School District are working together to strengthen schools and Philadelphia communities. We are proud to continue expanding this initiative into more neighborhoods across the city.

With the addition of new schools, Community Schools now serve over 6,500 students, their families, as well as thousands of neighbors living near each school. By providing services like job training, benefits access, and farmer's markets, we can remove barriers to student learning and improve economic opportunities for Philadelphians.

An important feature of this initiative is that it is community-led — from the initial application from schools interested in becoming a Community School, to the final set of priorities and strategies established for each school.

Building on lessons learned from the first cohort of nine schools, the Mayor's Office of Education conducted a needs analysis at each of the three new schools. Our dedicated team surveyed more than 1,800 community members, students, school staff, parents, and families to get a comprehensive understanding of the unique needs facing each school community.

We are committed to expanding the Community Schools initiative to 20 schools over the next five years. Litigation against the Philadelphia Beverage Tax constrained our expansion this year, but did not limit the impact we have had in each of the communities served. We look forward to building on our early success in the coming years.

This report dives into the strengths and challenges facing the new Community Schools as well as the City's plan to address those needs moving forward. We are grateful to the Community School Committees, Principals, and Community School Coordinators who have worked hard to support this process, and we invite you to join them as they implement the strategies and solutions outlined in this document.

Together, we will ensure that every student and every neighborhood can thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James F. Kenney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" being particularly prominent.

James F. Kenney
Mayor
City of Philadelphia

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ABOUT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

What are Community Schools?

Community Schools are School District of Philadelphia neighborhood schools designated by the City of Philadelphia to serve as community centers, improving access to resources and supports for students, families, and the neighborhood. Each school offers a unique set of services and programs based on feedback from the community. A City-employed Community School Coordinator manages the process at each school while working closely with the principal, community members, and service providers.

Community Schools Support:



Providing Capacity & Coordination

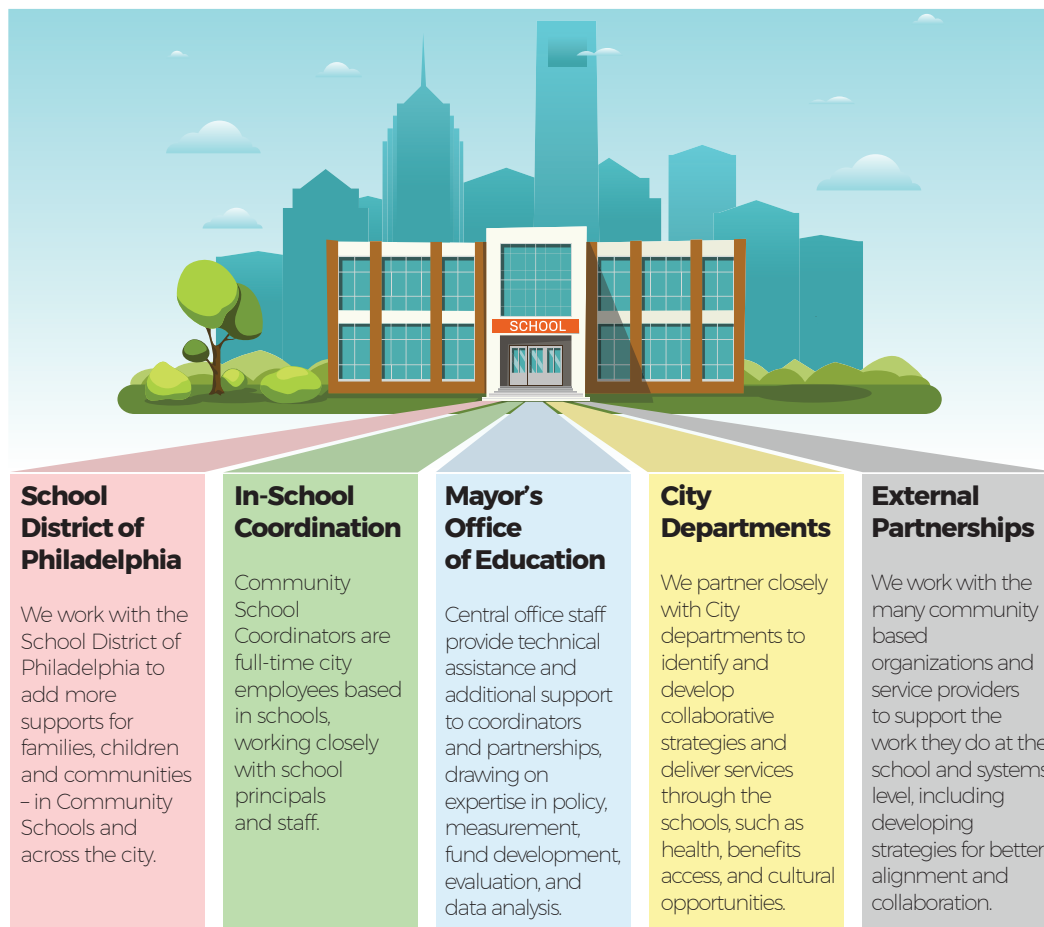
Community School Coordinators provide added capacity to neighborhood schools, allowing educators to focus primarily on academics. Coordinators organize community programs, connect and collaborate with community and service partners, conduct community outreach, and oversee new initiatives from planning through evaluation. Community input and regular program evaluation play important roles in process.

Aligning partners and resources

Community Schools are a product of collaboration between The School District of Philadelphia, the City, and community partners, who work together on intentional alignment of resources to meet pressing community needs. The work of the Mayor's Office of Education (MOE) is to facilitate collaboration and support implementation of community-driven plans.



ABOUT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



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, students, partners, 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.

Program highlights and successes from Year 1:

- In 2016-2017 The Mayor's Office of Education completed a data-informed needs assessment in nine schools, created a stress index, a tool that aggregates information from multiple data points including, but not limited to, rate of poverty, obesity, asthma, and diabetes to help provide community context, and developed community school plans to meet school and community needs.
- Community Schools have provided thousands of pounds of nutritious food to hundreds of students and their families through food backpack programs, pantries, and farmers' markets.
- Community Schools have hosted events and trainings for adults in the community.
- Community Schools have also hosted workforce development events, including a hospitality and food service training program that offered guaranteed employment.
- Community resource rooms in schools have provided free laundry and/or clothing and basic necessities to students and community members.

ABOUT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

- Coordinators have facilitated over 120 internships, work experiences, and career exploration opportunities for students.
- The Mayor's Office of Education selected three new schools from a pool of applicants to join the initiative in Year 2.
- The City and School District announced a partnership to create 22 new social worker positions in schools, including eight Community Schools.
- The Mayor's Office of Education partnered with education research firm Research for Action (RFA) to develop a Progress Report template, which tracks early implementation of the Community Schools model based on best practices.
- To assess implementation quality, short-term outcomes, and long-term outcomes, the Mayor's Office of Education hired RFA to conduct an independent evaluation. Now in the first year of the evaluation, RFA is measuring participation in and satisfaction of community school programming by conducting surveys, focus groups, and interviews. MOE also hired an independent researcher to study the social return on investment associated with Community Schools.

About our Community School Priorities

The Mayor's Office of Education staff work with each new school through the needs assessment and priority-setting process to ensure that the Community Schools' work reflects real community needs, has buy-in from stakeholders based in the school and surrounding neighborhood, and aligns with the school's academic goals. As no two schools are alike; neither are the plans.

These plans help to frame the work ahead in each school by establishing a set of priorities for new projects and services. Rather than spread resources too thin trying to address every possible issue, our approach seeks to target the highest-priority, non-academic issues facing a community, and identified by the community itself. After the implemented solutions have had some time to take effect, we will reassess community needs and adjust our plans as needed.



“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 SAMUEL GOMPERS SCHOOL

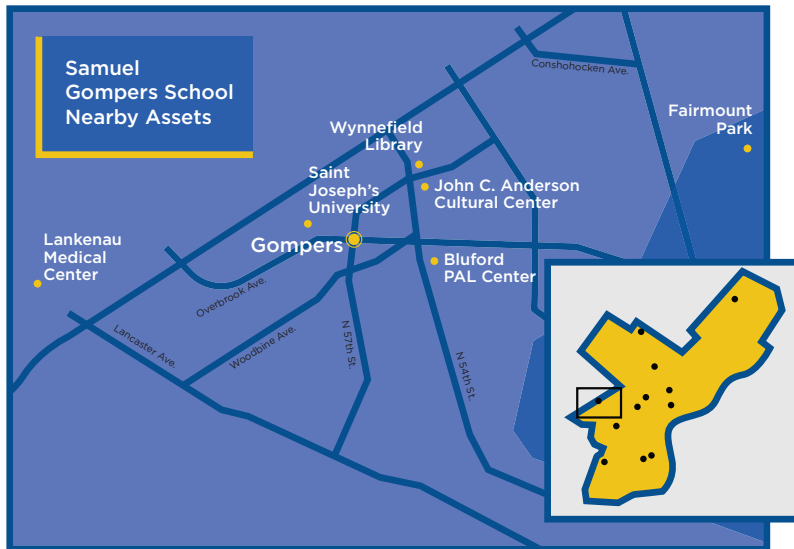
Samuel Gompers Elementary is located in Wynnefield, a diverse, middle-class neighborhood in West Philadelphia, and is home to 340 students. Between 2015 and 2017, Gompers grew from a K-5 to a K-8 school. The Wynnefield neighborhood is located in West Philadelphia, near both Fairmount Park and City Avenue, and is primarily residential.

Current Offerings

- On-site before and after care programming provided by United Parents for Successful Children (UPSC)
- Autistic Support Program

Partners

- Saint Joseph's University
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- United Parents for Successful Children (UPSC)
- West Philadelphia Alliance for Children (WePAC)
- EAT.RIGHT.NOW. (provided by Drexel University)
- Too Good for Drugs (provided by Jewish Family and Children's Services)



Total students¹ | **340**

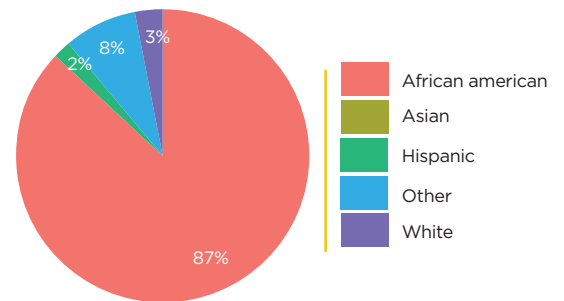
English Language Learners | **0.6%**
(District Average: 11%)

Special Education | **21%**
(District Average: 14%)

Economically Disadvantaged | **100%**
(District CEP rate: 100%)

Attendance
(percentage of students attending at least 95% of school days) | **41%**
(K-8 Average 46.2%)

Gompers Elementary School Demographics



Community Data

Percentage of residents 16 or older who are unemployed²:

10%

44th percentile in city

City average: **11%**

Percentage of population with obesity³:

40%

70th percentile in city

City average: **36.3%**

¹ Data in this table is from the 2016-2017 School Profiles on The School District of Philadelphia website, <https://dashboards.philasd.org/extensions/philadelphia/index.html>.

² American Community Survey 2010-2014.

³ Estimated by Policy Map using Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2013 data and Census American Community Survey 5-Year estimates.

ABOUT SAMUEL GOMPERS SCHOOL

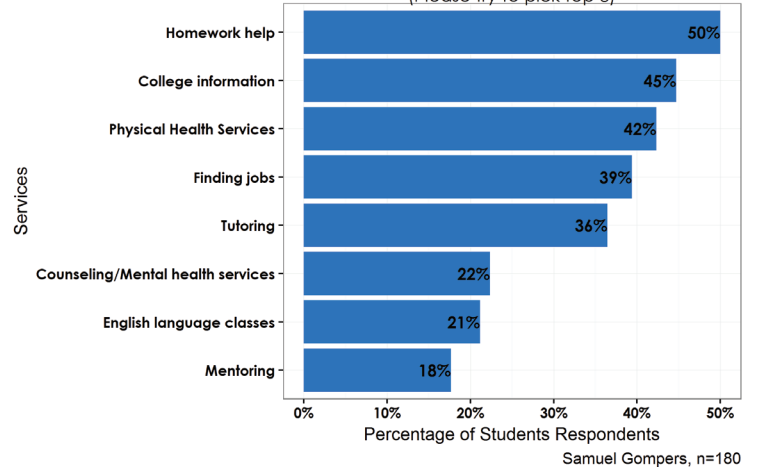
What MOE Learned through the Needs Assessment at Samuel Gompers School

At Samuel Gompers School, over 370 students, staff, families, community members and school partners completed surveys, participated in focus groups, or were interviewed.

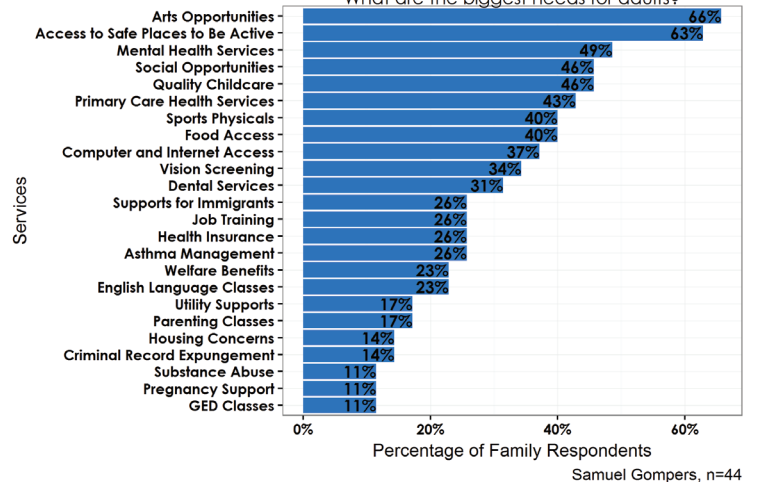
- ✓ According to several stakeholder groups in surveys and focus groups, primary needs for youth at Gompers included social and emotional well-being supports, academic supports, and after-school activities.
- ✓ Fifty-eight percent of students also identified physical activity as something they would like more of at their school.
- ✓ According to families and community members, primary needs for adults include arts/cultural opportunities, and safe places to play and be active.
- ✓ Staff and service providers also identified supports for parents and social and emotional well-being supports as needs for adults in the community.



Students: Needs of Youth
What services do you need more of at your school?
(Please try to pick top 3)

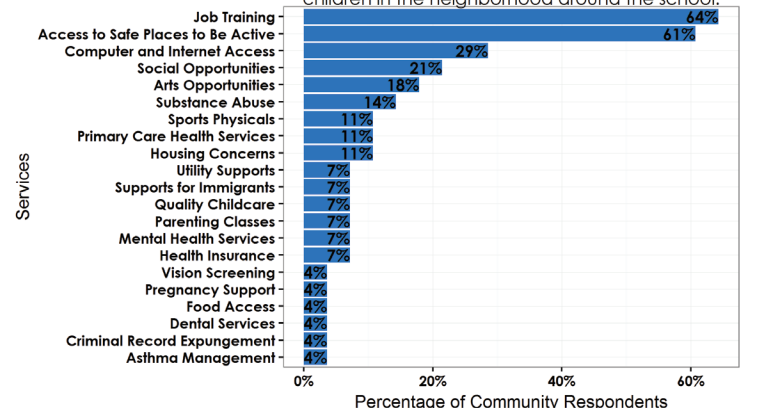


Family: Needs of Adults
What are the biggest needs for adults?



Community: Needs of Youth and Adults

Please choose the 3 biggest needs for adults and children in the neighborhood around the school.



GOMPERS COMMUNITY SCHOOL PRIORITIES

After-school Opportunities

Vision: Students have access to different types of after-school opportunities that encourage social and academic development

The Gompers Community School Committee identified a need for programs that will reduce student stress, help develop social skills, and provide activities with a focus on academics. The school's leadership team, School Advisory Council (SAC), and School Progress Report results have indicated a need to improve school academics, including PSSA scores. There are numerous supports and partnership available that we can draw on, including St. Joseph's University. Students need safe places to study, socialize with peers, play sports, explore the arts, and establish meaningful relationships with caring adults.

Provide a variety of programs that contribute to youth development – In conjunction with SDP, we plan to identify partners who can provide students with a variety of after-school activities that contribute to the social and academic development of students. We will start by asking what programs or activities students want to be provided after-school, since high participation in after-school programs are in part dependent upon how well those programs meets students' needs. Some programs we are interested in pursuing include drama club, intramurals, debate, tech club, sports, robotics, and student council. We will pursue programs that are semi-structured, led by adults, and designed to address specific goals and youth outcomes.

Facilitate logistics for new programming including space, time, and resources – To encourage new and expanded after-school options at Gompers, we will facilitate logistics of available space, time, and resources in partnership with SDP. We will do this by using the building space creatively and identifying potential inside and outside options for programming. After-school programs not only improve youth development, but they also provide a service to working parents and caregivers. Given that fact, we will identify days, hours, locations, and costs for afterschool programs that meet the needs of both youth and parents. Doing all this will help to eliminate some typical barriers to accessing well-functioning after-school options. We will also help identify resources for new after-school programming, which could involve identifying grants or coordinating funding with the Home and School Association and other school partners

Partner with other after-school opportunities for youth in the neighborhood – In addition to some current after-school offerings at the school, many students at Gompers attend after-school programs in other areas in the neighborhood. We will partner with those programs to understand what is available and how we can improve access to those programs for students that are interested. One barrier to increasing after-school program access is transportation, so we will learn how other programs have overcome that barrier. In addition, we will continue to enhance our partnership with St. Joseph's University by providing opportunities for students to volunteer for after-school programming.

Increased Physical Activity

Vision: Improve the physical, social, and emotional health of students through increased physical activity

Physical activity is critical for overall health at every age, and schools have an opportunity to build healthy physical activity habits for students at a young age. Additionally, the Community School Committee identified social and emotional well-being as a key driver of academic success, of which physical activity is an integral piece. 24% of students and 63% of community stakeholders emphasized the need for physical activity and safe spaces in which individuals could conduct said physical activity during the needs assessment process. 58% of students also identified physical activity as something they would like more of at their school. "Evidence suggests that increasing physical activity and physical fitness may improve academic performance and that time in the school day dedicated to recess, physical education class, and physical activity in the classroom may also facilitate academic performance."⁴

⁴. IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2013. Educating the student body: Taking physical activity and physical education to school. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

GOMPERS COMMUNITY SCHOOL PRIORITIES

Introduce new programs and expand existing programs that promote physical activity – When identifying after-school opportunities that meet the needs of students at Gompers, we will place special emphasis on opportunities that encourage increased physical activity. We will identify partners who are willing to facilitate and coordinate physical activity programs. We will also work with the school's Physical Education teacher to identify ways to enhance physical activity during rostered physical education classes.

Introduce movement breaks to the school – Another strategy we will pursue to increase student physical activity will be to implement movement breaks for all students. We will do this by identifying school staff who would like to champion movement breaks for students. The rostered Physical Education teacher—who also serves as the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) representative for Gompers—has also indicated an interest in the coordination of the movement breaks, and will serve as a faculty trainer. By providing opportunities for physical activity breaks during the day, we expect to help students build healthy physical activity habits while also decreasing stress and increasing student focus for other school-day activities.



Introduce socialized, structured recess to the school – We will encourage the development of organized, supervised, and fun activities during recess. We will do this by working with the school leadership team, the School Advisory Council (SAC), the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) representative, and school staff to provide appropriate training and resources to make socialized recess a reality. We think that making recess more productive and fun will further develop social skills of sharing, cooperation, communication, problem solving, conflict resolution, and self-discipline. We may explore programs that include rigorous physical activity in an afterschool program including competitive and non-competitive sports.

Social and Emotional Well-being

Vision: Improve social emotional well-being for youth and adults

The Community School Committee identified social and emotional well-being as a key driver of academic success. Staff and service providers recognized services to improve emotional well-being as a key need for students and adults in the community Gompers serves. In addition, our needs assessment found that 39% of families identified mental health services as a need for youth. In addition to improved social and emotional health, we hope that more supports will reduce disciplinary incidents, improve academics, raise awareness of the benefits of mental wellness, and contribute to a healthier, more positive school climate.



Increase awareness and education of social and emotional well-being resources – To reduce the stigma that comes with services that support positive mental health, we will identify supports that

GOMPERS COMMUNITY SCHOOL PRIORITIES

educate youth and adults about the benefits that come with those services. We will accomplish this by working with school staff, counselors, the leadership team, and in-school partners to identify the barriers to mental health awareness and access that exist among our student and community populations. Additionally, we will identify partners that understand and serve the community but are not currently in the school to potentially partner with us at Gompers. We will coordinate workshops or information sessions that cover the topic of social and emotional being.

Build relationships with mental health providers in the community – By building relationships with mental health providers in and around the community, we will be better equipped to reach out for supports. In addition, we will collaborate with SDP's Office of Student Support Services and Community Behavioral Health (CBH) to better understand available supports. This relationship-building may include participating in community-based mental and behavioral healthcare fairs, inviting behavioral health practitioners to develop appropriate extra-curricular programming, and hosting supportive sessions around mental and behavioral health for parents to increase awareness and facilitate the development of home-based supports. We will do this in close partnership with the school counselor and Special Education Liaison.

Identify strategies to provide social and emotional well-being supports in the school – We will identify best practices not currently in use at the school that have been shown to positively support the social and emotional well-being of students in the school. This may include identifying trainings for staff such as classroom management and deescalating negative interactions between students. We will ensure that trainings take a trauma-informed approach, and consider the important context of social concerns such as poverty, housing, unemployment, and foster care. We will also explore other programming such as mentoring for students and parenting workshops for adults.

Food Access and Nutrition

Vision: Healthier families and children who have better eating habits

Along with increased physical activity, approximately 40% of families at Gompers also indicated a need for increasing access to healthy foods. Students also indicated a need for improved school lunch options. In conjunction with increased access to physical activity, access to healthy, palatable meals is an essential part of maintaining a healthier lifestyle. We will collaborate with current and new partners to increase access and increase awareness around improved eating habits.

Academic Supports

Vision: Students have improved access to academic supports before and after school

In our surveys and focus groups, students indicated homework assistance as a primary need. Improving the access to academic supports both before and after school would not only assist students in the area of homework comprehension and completion, but could increase the level of academic success experienced by students overall.

Social and Cultural Opportunities

Vision: Students are exposed to new social and cultural opportunities

In the needs assessment, both students and adults expressed a need for opportunities for increased social and cultural opportunities, both at the school and in the community. Adults would like to see students take more field trips and have more access to arts and cultural opportunities outside of school. We will work with our partners to identify community based opportunities and to support the school community with increasing the number of school-led excursions.

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 schools' goals. The principal, staff, and Community School Coordinator will continue to work together with existing community partners to expand services and opportunities that meet the needs of students, families, and community members. Additionally, the Mayor's Office of Education will continue its evaluation process with Research for Action to define and measure key outcomes across the initiative over the coming years.

Get Involved

There are many ways to support your neighborhood Community Schools:

- 1. 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 School District of Philadelphia's volunteer guidelines and complete all required background checks.*
- 2. Partner** – Philadelphia is a city with many strong neighborhood, community and citywide organizations that are working with – 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.*
- 3. Contribute** – Community Schools are often looking for donations, including in-kind items such as winter coats or uniforms for clothing closets, as well as 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 Gompers Elementary School Community School Coordinator, Rennie Parker. Email: **Rennie.Parker@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
Gompers Principal Phillip Deluca

The members of Gompers' Community School Committee:

Chamaine O'Hanlon, *Teacher and PFT Representative*

Marcia Hill-Rivera, *Teacher*

Kaitlin Fox, *Teacher*

Rennie Parker, *Mayor's Office of Education*

Aimee Toresky, *St. Joseph's University*

Susan Ben, *Free Library of Philadelphia - Wynnefield Branch*

Rachel Robinson, *West Philadelphia Alliance for Children*

Carmen Hubbard, *Holcomb Mental Health Services*

Jarrold Grant, *Parent*

Tamisha Grant, *Parent*

Preston Elliott, *Student*

Mora Lee, *Student*

Dawn Fassett, *Home & School Association*

Kathy Hayes, *Home & School Association*

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.

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. Surveys were created for each key stakeholder group: students, families, school staff, community members, and service providers, and 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 were facilitated by community school coordinators, which provided them the opportunity to have deeper discussions with stakeholders about their concerns and priorities. Staff from the Mayor's Office of Education supported the process as note takers when necessary. Training on facilitation was provided to community school coordinators, 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), Public 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).



"I am very excited about being a Community School and am looking forward to many great things to come here at Gompers in the very near future. Rennie Parker, our Community School Coordinator, has been instrumental in bringing all of the community partners together so that we may work as one to make Gompers the school of choice for all families with school age children in our community." - Phillip DeLuca, Principal



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