



George Washington
High School
(Grades 9-12)



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

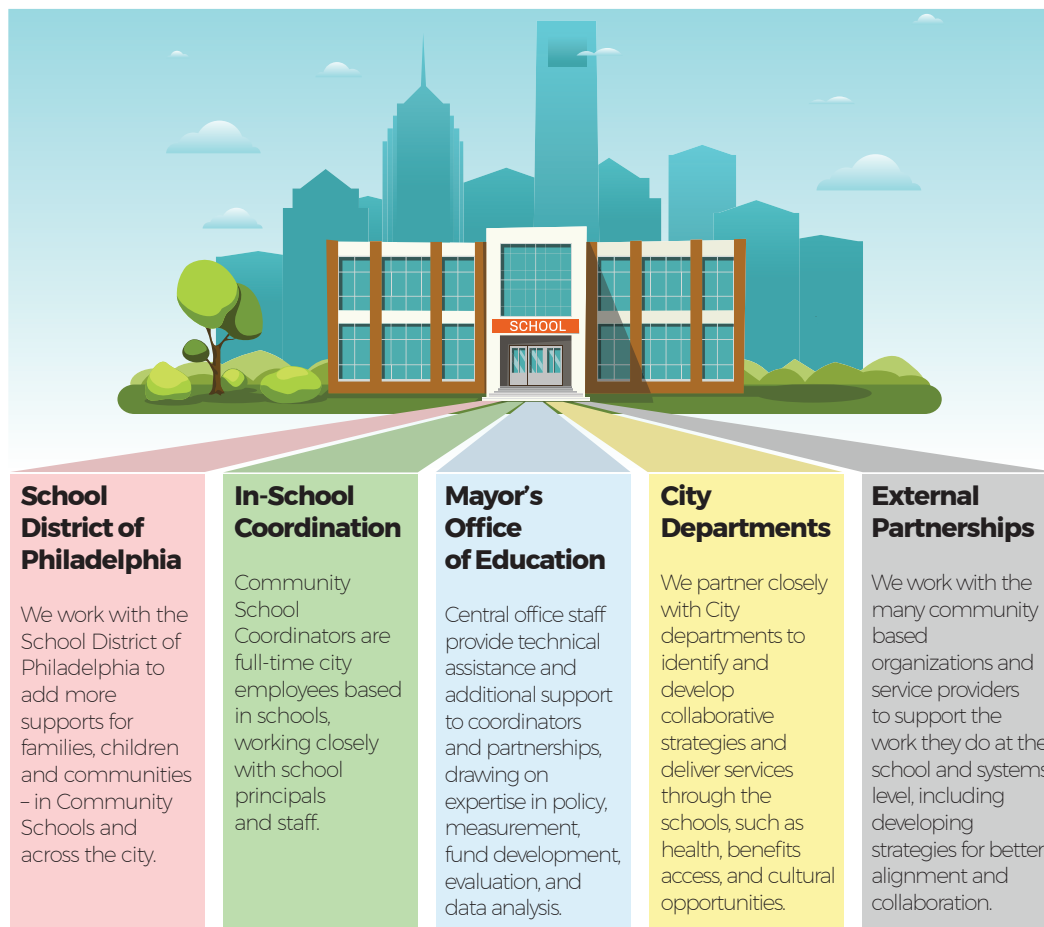
Community School Coordinators provide added capacity to neighborhood schools, allowing educators to focus primarily on academics. Coordinators organize community programs, connect and collaborate with community and service partners, conduct community outreach, and oversee new initiatives from planning 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 GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

George Washington High School (GWHS) is home to students from over 70 countries who speak over 30 languages, nestled in a neighborhood that now boasts the highest foreign-born population in Philadelphia. Nearly 75% of our 1,279 students live within the catchment, most of whom reside in the Bustleton and Somerton sections of the city, and over 18% are English Language Learners. In addition to the school building, there are several tennis courts, a baseball field, two soccer fields, and a football stadium. GWHS was selected for a school redesign in 2017, an initiative that implements evidence-based redesigns that will accelerate student academic performance and will entail adding dual enrollment and apprenticeship opportunities with local colleges and universities and trade programs in the coming years.

Current Offerings

- International Baccalaureate® Programme (IB) – one of only six participating high schools in the city
- CTE and STEAM programs², including Culinary Arts, Accounting and Sports Marketing
- Peer Group Connection (PGC) – conflict mediation and mentorship group for students

Partners

- YouthCor
- EAT.RIGHT.NOW. (provided by Drexel University)
- JEVS Human Services PASS
- ELECT (provided by Jewish Family and Children's Service)
- SPEAK (Supporting Preparing Empowering Aspiring Kids)
- Catholic Community Services

Total students¹ | **1279**

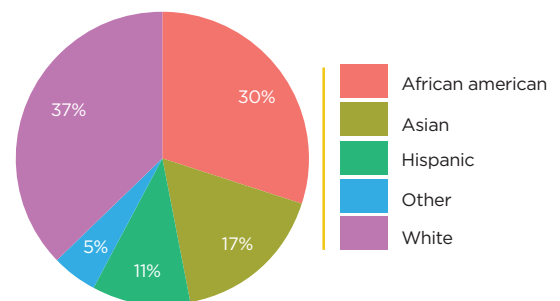
English Language Learners | **18.2%**
(District Average: 11%)

Special Education | **18.8%**
(District Average: 14%)

Economically Disadvantaged | **77%**
(District CEP rate: 100%)

Attendance
(percentage of students attending at least 95% of school days) | **24%**
(High School average: 31%)

George Washington High School Demographics



Community Data

Percentage of population born outside of the United States³:

49%

TOP percentile in city | City average: **10.7%**

Percentage of residents 16 or older who are unemployed⁴:

8.5%

27th percentile in city | City average: **11%**

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. Career and Technical Education and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics

³. American Community Survey 2010-2014.

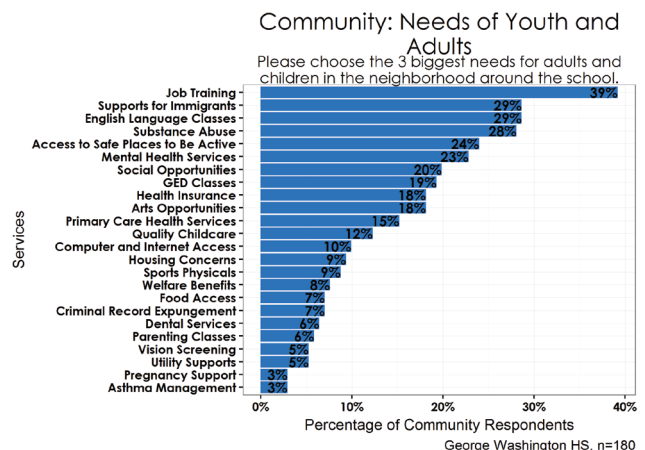
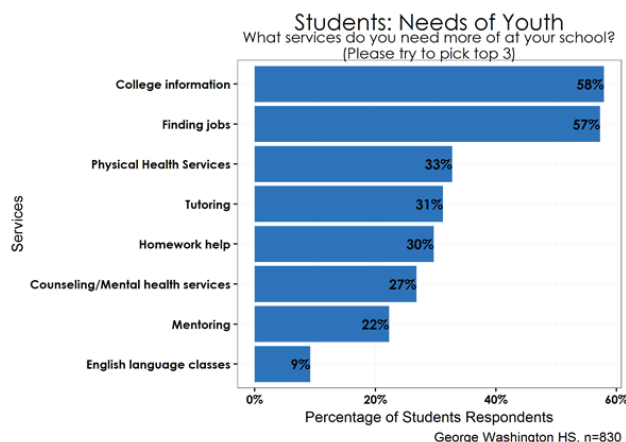
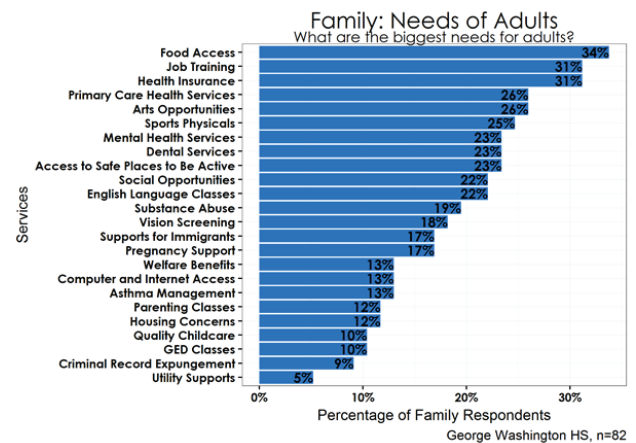
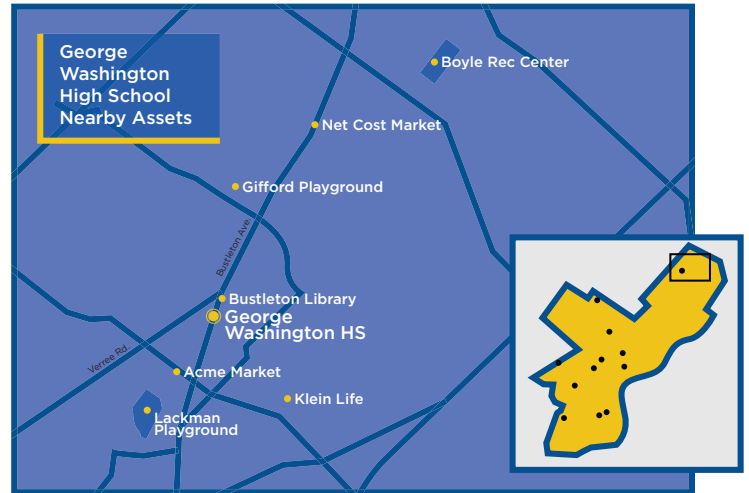
⁴. American Community Survey 2010-2014.

ABOUT GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

What MOE Learned through the Needs Assessment at George Washington High School

At George Washington High School (GWHS), over 1200 students, staff, families, community members and school partners completed surveys, participated in focus groups, or were interviewed.

- ✓ Job training, supports for immigrants and English language classes emerged as three of the highest needs for both adults and youth, especially from the perspective of staff, partners, and community members.
- ✓ According to students, college information and job training are the top two needs, which was also supported by discussion in focus groups.
- ✓ Substance abuse and mental health services also ranked highly in surveys and came up in several focus groups.
- ✓ Social opportunities, safe places to be active, and arts opportunities were broadly held as needs in survey results. Staff and student focus groups discussed that people in the community, both young and old, are looking for positive and productive things to do.



GWHS COMMUNITY SCHOOL PRIORITIES

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Employment Supports

Vision: More youth and adults are employed and on a path to financial stability

Students, families, staff and community members all agree that job and career preparation and access is a priority for both youth and adults. GWHS is currently undergoing a “School Redesign” process, which is led by the School District of Philadelphia, to create pathways to careers for students while still in school, which will include internships and apprenticeships. To serve adults in the community, the school and the Mayor’s Office of Education are actively pursuing partnerships with organizations such as the City’s Office of Adult Education to begin addressing adult literacy and job readiness through adult education, job training and general career support.

Provide opportunities for learning and exposure – The Mayor’s Office of Education will facilitate information sessions, workshops, and career fairs to support youth and adults as they explore options for jobs and careers. We will do this by identifying partners who can offer things like resume building and interview workshops and adult education, and we will arrange a series of information sessions with employers so they can connect directly with people in the GWHS community. This will mean that more students will have the knowledge and understanding to make informed decisions about their futures. Students and adults in the community will know what steps they need to take to access jobs available now, including an understanding of marketable skills and how to achieve those skills.

Increase access to employment opportunities – We will connect students and adults to internship, apprenticeship, and job opportunities both at GWHS and elsewhere in Philadelphia. We will do this by partnering with organizations who can offer such opportunities and by creating useful resources, like a job board, where job openings and relevant test dates are posted. We will assist students and adults in preparing for apprenticeship and civil service exams, both in terms of content and application procedures. Students and adults will know about available career opportunities and have better access to those opportunities.

Social and Cultural Opportunities

Vision: More youth and adults are engaged socially in the community and in the school

Students, families, and community members have all reported a need for more social and arts opportunities, as well as safe places to be active. There is ample space for outdoor and indoor community events at GWHS and stakeholders hope to make more use of that space. With more social options outside of school hours, more youth will engage in healthy, positive activities. Adults will also have access to more social and arts opportunities in and around the school, such as classes, workshops, and community events.

Increase extra-curricular options – There are nearly 1,300 students at GWHS with wonderfully diverse backgrounds and interests. We will survey students to assess their interests in social and arts opportunities and find ways to connect with partners who are offering those opportunities within the community. These opportunities can be either in school or in the community at large. With increased options for after-school activities, more students will develop meaningful connections with the school and community. We will find partners in the community who can offer meaningful after-school opportunities to increase engagement with students and other members of the community.

GWHS COMMUNITY SCHOOL PRIORITIES

Increase awareness of extra-curricular activities – We will ensure that students are aware of what is offered at school and in the community and how they can access those offerings. We will have designated places where students can go to view information and updates, such as an activities board, that will be maintained by the coordinator and other involved staff. We will also hold at least one activities fair per year, which will feature all the programs available at school as well as arts and culture opportunities in the surrounding community.

Increase events, programs and activities for the community – We will create events that are inclusive of the entire community and provide regular opportunities for social engagement. We will bring programs and activities to the school for the broader community to participate in, such as adult sports leagues, yoga classes, and various artistic and cultural activities. We will facilitate events, programs, and activities that are responsive to the interests of the community. This will increase the social engagement of the school and broader community, and deepen school and community pride.

Supports for Immigrants and Non-English Speakers

Vision: More Immigrant youth and adults are supported with programs tailored to their needs

Staff, service providers, and community members have stated that support for immigrants and English language learners (ELL) is a priority. Nearly 18% of students in the school are ELL and nearly 50% of residents living in census tracts within 1000 feet of the school were born outside of the United States. The wait list for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at the Bustleton Library is more than ten pages long, so we are working with the Office of Adult Education to address this pressing need.

Increase availability and accessibility of language classes – We will continue to work with the Office of Adult Education to provide more ESL classes for adults in the community. Many neighborhood residents want to enroll in ESL classes and the school can provide space on a weekly basis for partners to hold classes. Acquiring even basic English language skills will remove barriers for adults to access the programs and services they need to take care of their families.



Provide short-term classes and workshops

on school-related topics – We will work with providers who can offer English classes and workshops specifically designed to help parents navigate our school system, which is often very different from systems in other parts of the world. When this unfamiliarity is compounded by language barriers, it can be exceedingly difficult for families to navigate the system and advocate for their children. Offering targeted classes and workshops on specific topics, like our grading system and attendance, will give families the tools and understanding they need to set their children up for success.

Provide support for community members working toward citizenship – Through partnerships with elected officials and other organizations, we will assist with documentation, naturalization, and citizenship. These processes are lengthy and difficult to navigate, so we will work with providers who can offer workshops, classes, and direct expertise to assist families. This will help alleviate stress for families and students who are going through this cumbersome process.

GWHS COMMUNITY SCHOOL PRIORITIES

Support for Youth Learning and Development including Postsecondary Planning and Supports

Vision: Students will have greater access to a wider range of postsecondary planning and supports

With nearly 1,300 students and 3 counselors, it is exceptionally difficult to give all students the support and attention required to maximize their success. We will collaborate with current partners and work to find additional partners to help students explore college and career options and develop the necessary soft and hard skills along the way. As a result, more students will matriculate to postsecondary options and will have the skills necessary to be ready for work. This work will align with the expanded extra-curricular opportunities and connections detailed in the Social and Cultural Opportunities section.

Supports for Substance Abuse

Vision: Raise awareness of the impact of substance abuse on communities and schools

Families, community members, and staff indicated that the increasing prevalence of substance abuse is taking a toll on families in this community. We will work with partners and community leaders to get much-needed tools in the hands of students and families so that they are aware of and prepared for the dangers of controlled substances. We will explore other supports that can be made available in the school that can help reduce the stress created by substance abuse in families and the community.

Healthy Food Access

Vision: More adults and youth will have access to nutritious and satisfying meals

In our surveys, families rated food access as the highest need, and students made it clear that school lunch was a concern. At George Washington High School, 31% (234 out of 761) of students said that they have skipped lunch in the past because they don't like it. Access to healthy, enjoyable meals both in and out of school is critical for families to thrive. We will work with current partners and seek additional partnerships to ensure that our students and families are receiving the support they need.



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 George Washington High School Community School Coordinator, Caitlyn Boyle. Email: **Caitlyn.Boyle@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
George Washington H.S. Principal Susan Thompson

The members of George Washington's
Community School Committee:

Community School Committee:

Dr. Aja Carpenter, *Assistant Principal*

Tamara Olaniyan, *Teacher*

Carol Ciaccia, *Teacher*

Martin Applebaum, *Teacher*

Angela Leonard, *Teacher and PFT Representative*

Caitlyn Boyle, *Mayor's Office of Education*

Amyah Cotton, *Student and City-wide Student Government*

Dmitri McWarren, *Student*

Alexa Ortiz, *Parent*

Chris Bordelon, *Somerton Civic Association*

Pastor Gerald Waters, *Proclamation Community Church*

Andrew Broden, *Office of State Representative Kevin Boyle*

Patrick McCann, *Office of State Representative Martina White*

Zachary Sheppard, *College Possible*

Melissa Matsumura, *Drexel University EAT.RIGHT.NOW.*

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).



"The best part of the community school initiative has been watching all of our stakeholders come together as one team to address the needs of our students, families, and community members at large." - Sue Thompson, Principal



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OF EDUCATION

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

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