



California Community Schools Implementation: **Assessing Initial Growth and Progress** **2022-2024**

State Transformational Assistance Center (STAC) Data Team
UCLA Center for Community Schooling
Research Brief

December 12, 2024



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) was envisioned as a transformational whole-child reform that would help integrate several other multi-billion dollar state initiatives. Based on implementation data from the CCSPP's first two years, this research brief presents six key findings:

1. Responsive grant distribution advances equity;
2. Grantees are developing and expanding whole child supports and services;
3. Grantees are developing the infrastructure to support strategic community; partnerships;
4. Collaborative leadership is key to implementation;
5. Staffing and sustainability remain top concerns for grantees;
6. Centering teaching and learning provides an opportunity for growth.

Grantees are in the process of creating infrastructure to collect, analyze and use data with the school community to improve outcomes for students and families. The research brief concludes with resources for framing multiple measures of community school success and tools for tracking implementation to promote learning statewide.

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INTRODUCTION

The historic COVID recovery investments in California public schools are starting to pay off. Students and families hardest hit by the pandemic are receiving supports and services to help them re-engage in schooling. And while the investments, such as behavioral health supports, after-school programs, and universal pre-kindergarten, are helping Californians recover from the pandemic, state leaders hoped that the investments would also provide an unprecedented opportunity for a reset¹. Anchoring this hope, the \$4.1B CCSPP was envisioned as a transformational whole-child reform that would help integrate several other multi-billion dollar initiatives. Data from the CCSPP's first two years show promise and underscore the enormity of the challenge.

This brief synthesizes statewide learning about CCSPP implementation over the past two years based on three data sources:

- [Cohort 1-3 grantee award data](#): A landscape analysis² that includes grantee information (e.g., geographic location, rurality, demographics, etc.), and other state-level data to provide a better understanding of who is served by the CCSPP and the response of statewide agencies to ensure equitable access to funding.
- [CCSPP Annual Progress Report \(APR\)](#): Analysis of statewide implementation data via the APR which serves as a tool to gauge implementation progress and to encourage reflection. This analysis includes the Year 1 APR, with 450 schools and 76 Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) from Cohort 1 and the Year 2 APR, with 968 schools and 192 LEAs from Cohorts 1 and 2.
- [Cross-site case study of "Deep Dive Partnerships"](#): Quantitative and qualitative data collected through "deep dive partnerships" to foster a better understanding of critical implementation elements and challenges.

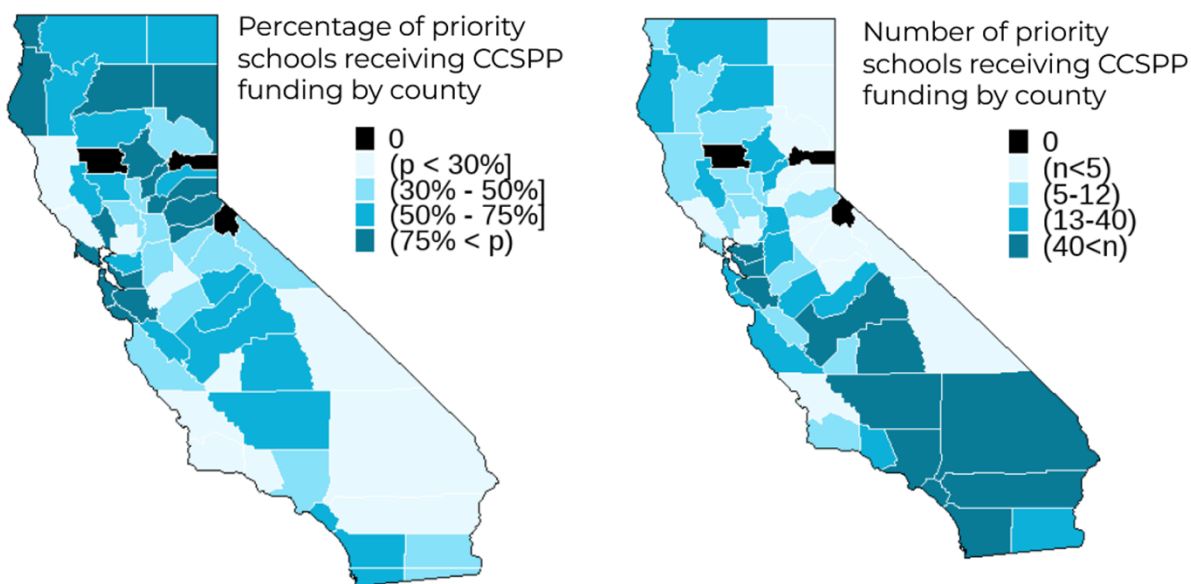
Each of these data sources have been thoroughly analyzed, with the exception of the recently collected Year 2 APR data, which are preliminary. Insights are captured in detailed reports³ to guide learning and technical assistance (TA) moving forward. The six key findings shared below provide a high-level summary of the CCSPP's implementation progress to date for a broad audience.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Responsive grant distribution advances equity

A landscape analysis of Cohort 1 to Cohort 3 grantees provides critical data for understanding how the state has responded to the field to ensure equity-oriented policy making. To date, 2,018 schools (cohorts 1-3) have received funding, which represents 40% of priority schools in the state and we know this will increase with the final round of funding to Cohort 4. As Figure 1 shows, grantees are distributed across the state, in every county except three. The map on the left focuses on the percentage of priority schools served and the map on the right displays the number of priority schools served.

Figure 1: Map of Percentage (left) and Number (right) of Priority schools Funded by CCSPP, by County



*Note. Priority signifies > 80% UPC or > 70% Rural/Town. Counties with no CCSPP funded schools are Alpine, Glenn, and Sierra Counties.

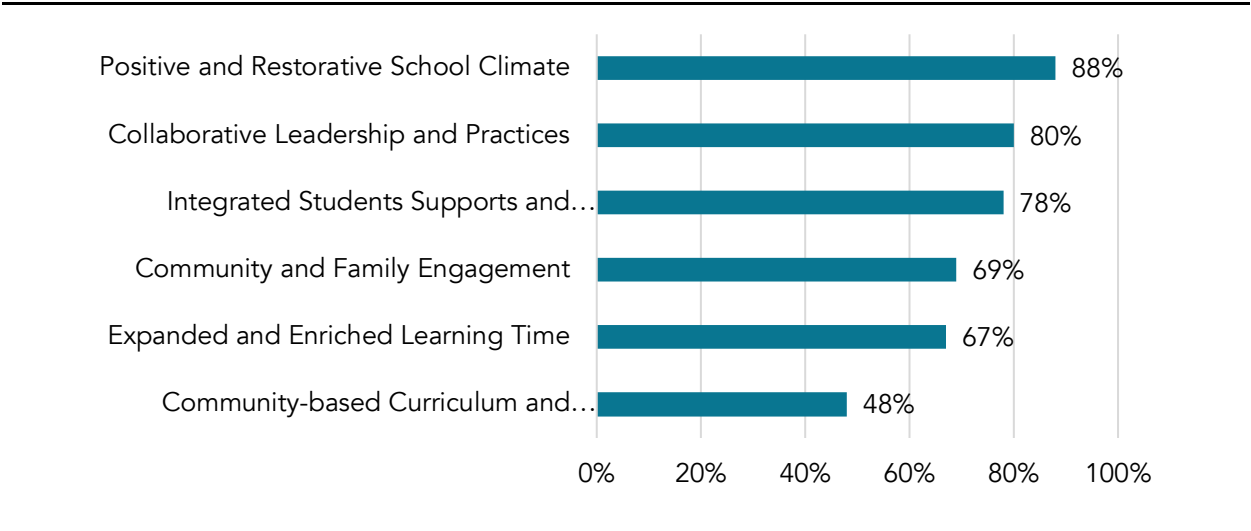
On the left, you can see that many of the northern counties are shaded a darker blue which means that they have higher proportions of priority schools that are grantees than counties in the south. The second map on the right tells a different story – the number of grantees is higher in the southern counties because they have more priority

schools. Looking at the maps together, along with data on school level, charter status, rurality and other variables, can inform future planning and support.

2. Grantees are developing and expanding whole child supports and services

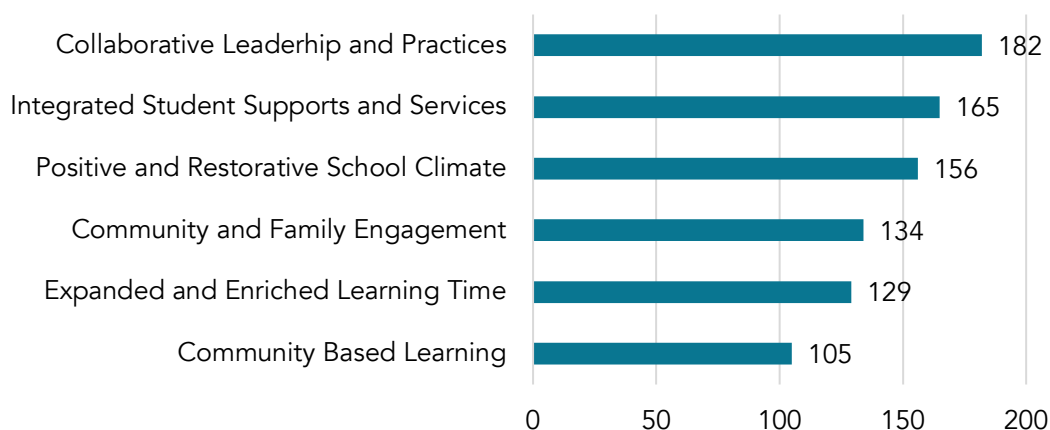
Based on the emerging science of learning and development, California community schools strive to provide a range of whole child supports and services that enable students to better engage in learning and cognitive processes. The APR divides these supports into the 6 categories displayed in Figure 2. At the top the chart, you can see that 88% of grantees are prioritizing positive and restorative school climate supports, 80% are focusing on collaborative leadership practices, and so on.

Figure 2: Percent of Site-Level Implementation Grantees that Indicated Supports/Services are Part of Implementation Plan or Needs and Assets Assessment (Cohorts 1 and 2)



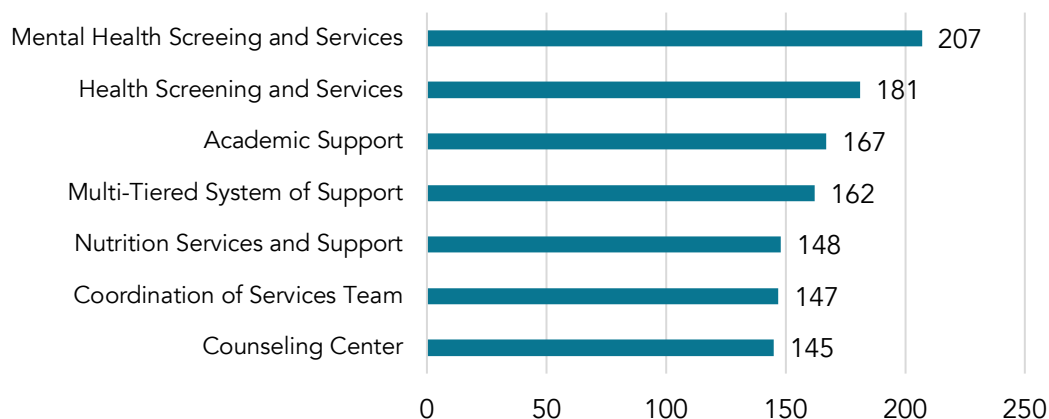
To capture the impact of the CCSPP funding, Figure 3 reports the number of Cohort 1 and 2 schools that prioritized a specific support as part of their community school plan or Needs and Assets Assessment (NAA) in their first year of implementation and were not implementing this support in the years before. As such, the two figures below reflect data from the 2022-2023 APR for Cohort 1 and the 2023-2024 APR for Cohort 2.

Figure 3: Number of Site-Level Implementation Grantees that Added New Whole Child and Family Supports (Cohorts 1 and 2)



Each of the bars in Figure 3 is an average of several supports. For example, Integrated Supports and Services (ISS) include: Academic Support (tutoring, specialist, etc.); Coordination of Services Team (e.g., COST team); Counseling Center; Health Screening and Services (vision, dental, hearing, neurological, physical health); Mental health Screening and Services; Multi-Tiered System of Support; and Nutrition Services and Support. Seven hundred and fifty-two schools prioritized one or more of these supports in their community school plans in their first year of implementation. One hundred and sixty-five of these schools planned to add new supports. As displayed in Figure 4, for example, 207 schools were adding mental health screening and services.

Figure 4: Number of Site-Level Grantees that Added New Integrated Student Supports/Services (Cohorts 1 and 2)



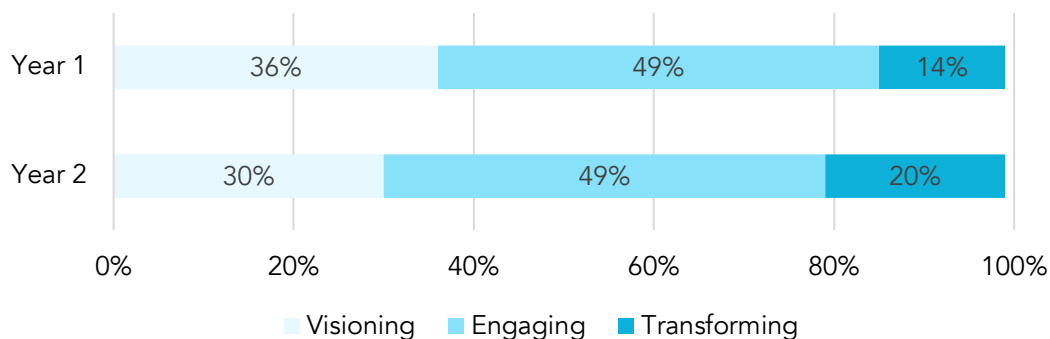
Across priority areas, variability was found in how the CCSPP supported the enhancement of implementation, whether through the provision of training and professional development, expanding partnerships, and/or expanding capacity.

While many grantees are prioritizing the provision of whole child supports and services, data gathered through the Deep Dive work fostered understanding of how the delivery of critical whole child supports and services can be coordinated and expanded through county level support. Findings demonstrate that county offices of education (COEs), either as Regional Technical Assistance Centers (R-TACs), or as Coordination Grantees, are re-imagining their role in supporting community schools. Deep Dive findings also recognize that some COEs are cohering allied initiatives, such as the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), among others, to broaden their support for students and their families. In addition, some COEs are leveraging initiatives to support the workforce needed in community schools by implementing regional teacher development networks or cascading mentorship structures for social workers and other clinicians. These findings have inspired the development of a resource for COEs to enhance use of coordination funds to directly influence delivery of whole child and family supports.

3. Grantees are developing the infrastructure to support strategic community partnerships

In their first and second years of implementation, school sites set in place some of the key building blocks of community school infrastructure, including strategic community partnerships. As displayed in Figure 5, 63% of Cohort 1 grantees indicated they were in the “engaging” or “transforming” phase of growth and development in Year 1, enabling them to strengthen their network of support and culturally responsive programming and resources for students, educators and families, and to build a more inclusive, and democratic learning environment. Sixty-nine percent of Cohort 1 grantees indicated that they were in these phases of growth and development in Year 2. In Year 1, grantees most often identified contract agreements and MOUs (82%), feedback data from existing partners (46%), and direct reports from students and families about the partnerships’ impact (36%) as evidence of bolstering their partnerships as a result of the CCSPP.

Figure 5: Percent of Site-level Implementation Grantees in Visioning, Engaging and Transforming Phases of Growth and Development for Strategic Community Partnerships in Year 1 and Year 2 (Cohort 1)



In Year 1, 30% of site-level CCSPP grantees indicated that they had engaged over one half of their community partners in developing their community schools' vision. In particular, grantees noted that they had strengthened and expanded partnerships with healthcare providers, after-school programs, and other partners with the goal of enhancing students' educational experiences and responding to students' and families' holistic assets and needs. Few grantees, however, discussed strategies of engagement that highlighted how partners are shaping and developing their community schools work. Rather, deepening relationships with partners corresponded to schools' prioritization of whole-child supports including a range of integrated supports and services (e.g., provision of health care, mental health screenings, academic supports, nutritional services, a multi-tiered system of support) and expanded learning time opportunities.

Deep Dive sites followed this trend as they engaged with a variety of partners to provide a range of integrated student supports and services for students, families and the community, such as mobile health and dental clinics, and extended learning opportunities. Less common were collaborations with community partners wherein the partnership supports the district in establishing the community school's vision and implementation. One district established a partnership with its local municipality that supports the district with significant funding and leadership in their community schools collaborative. The partnership also provides robust opportunities for students to become civically engaged or take part in internships. Another Deep Dive site established a collaborative of local colleges and universities, aimed to bring community

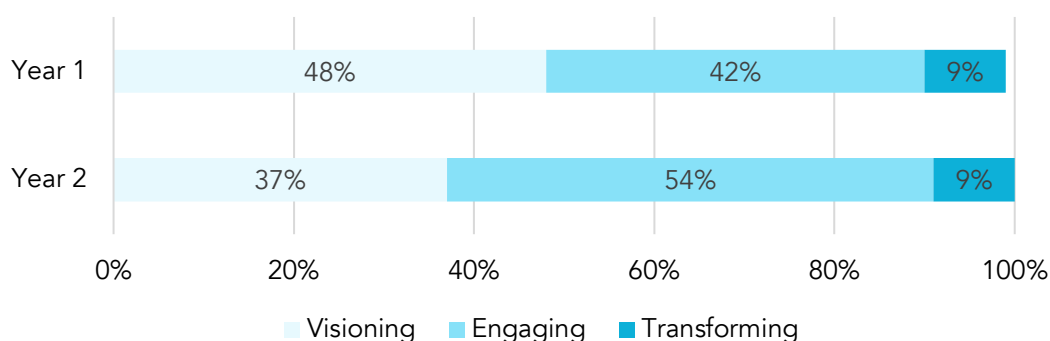
partners together to inform instruction and support students' future pursuits in college and career.

4. Collaborative leadership is key to implementation

Recognizing collaborative leadership as a cornerstone of community school implementation, 79% of Cohort 1 schools included supports related to collaborative leadership and practices as part of their NAA processes and community schools plans in Year 1. They also acknowledged the need for additional technical assistance in this area, with 42% of schools identifying it as a priority for further support. In Year 2, 84% of Cohort 1 included collaborative leadership support in their NAA or plan, indicating growth in this area.

As visualized in Figure 6 below, when assessing their progress in building the capacity of interest-holders to lead collaboratively, 51% of Cohort 1 schools in Year 1 indicated that they had established or reimagined existing site-level shared leadership structure(s) to facilitate democratic participation and decision-making. Cohort 1 schools are demonstrating growth in this area, with 63% of grantees in Year 2 indicating that they are at the “engaging” or “transforming” phase of growth and development for this strategy and revamping decision-making processes at their school sites.

Figure 6: Percent of Site-level Implementation Grantees in Visioning, Engaging and Transforming Phases of Growth and Development for Collaborative Leadership in Year 1 and Year 2 (Cohort 1)



In concert with key learnings from the APR, experiences with Deep Dive sites demonstrated the importance of shared leadership. Two deep dive sites, in partnership with their local unions, developed and implemented a community school teacher lead

role. By contributing to shared decision-making processes, this role shaped school practices and priorities by working collaboratively with administrators, other staff, students, parents, and community partners to shape instructional practices and curriculum choices that support the whole-child approach. At the district level, Deep Dive learning exchanges highlighted the importance of superintendent and LEA leadership directly involved with classroom-based instruction and professional learning in effective community schools implementation. Sites with invested leadership tended to have superintendents who shared power with LEA leaders (Assistant Superintendents, Executive Directors, Directors) across divisions to create interdisciplinary teams. These district-level leaders, in turn, created spaces for school site and classroom level leaders to work across teams and uplift talent. Deep Dive work also shed light on the struggles experienced by districts whose superintendent was not as directly engaged with community schools implementation, resulting in limited shared understanding and ownership. These findings were leveraged to pilot a superintendent learning session in coordination with the California Community Engagement Initiative.

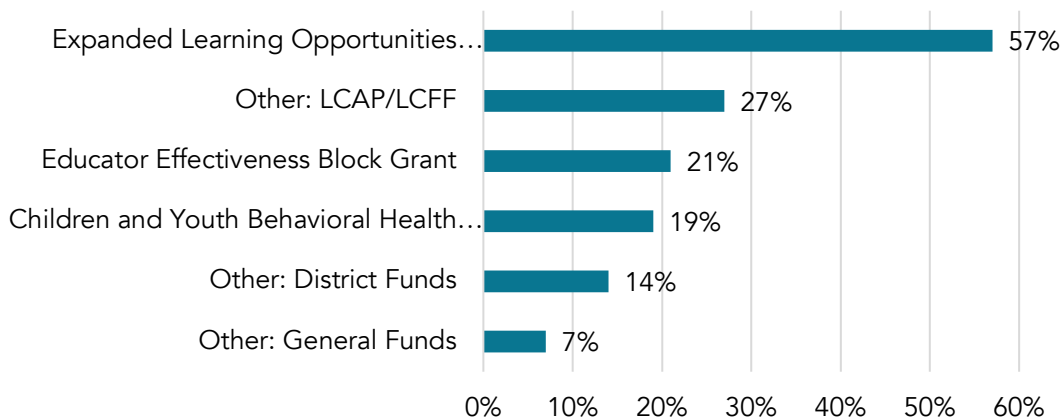
5. Staffing and sustainability remain top concerns for grantees

Schools are establishing the necessary human and financial resources to maintain the community school strategy over time. Fifty-seven percent of Cohort 1 school sites indicated they were in the “engaging” or “transforming” phase of growth and development for the Staffing and Sustainability strategy in Year 1. Hiring and establishing a team were identified as common school-specific goals. Relatedly, in their APR reflections, LEAs celebrated the hiring of student support staff such as social workers, case managers, therapists, student service coordinators, student advocates and counselors, etc. A few LEAs indicated, however, that high turnover in the community schools coordinator role at some schools was hampering implementation efforts. In Year 2, Cohort 1 grantees demonstrated progress in this area, with 66% of schools indicating that they are in the “engaging” or “transforming” phase of growth and development for the Staffing and Sustainability strategy.

Year 2 APR data provide additional evidence that grantees are working to create stable work environments and to braid financial resources to sustain the strategy. For

example, as displayed in Figure 7, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 grantees are exploring the use of multiple state funding sources to ensure the sustainability of their community schools vision including: Expanding Learning Opportunities Program (57%); Educator Effectiveness Block Grant (21%); and CYBHI (19%).

Figure 7: Percent of Site-level Implementation Grantees that Explored the Following Primary Funding Sources to Ensure Sustainability (Cohort 1 & 2)



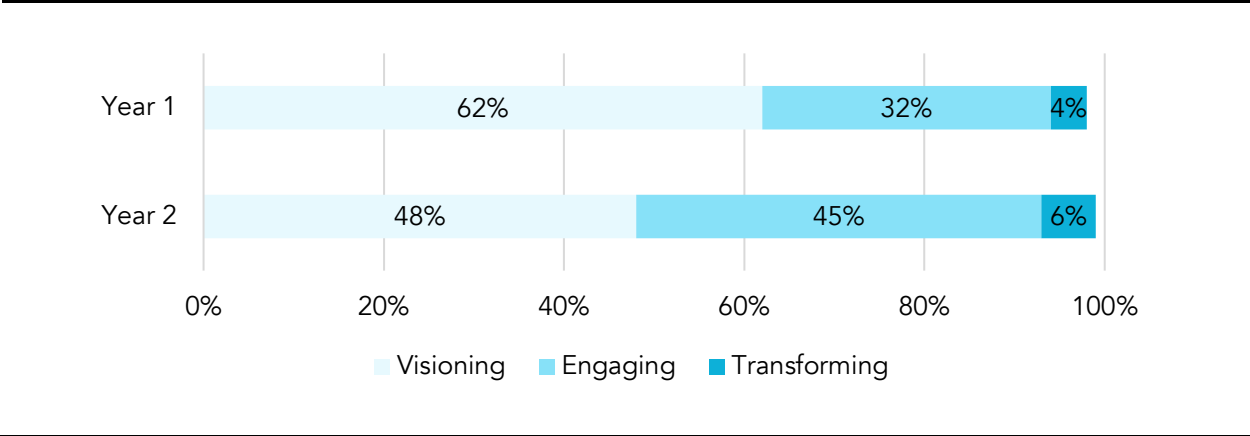
Deep Dive partners were no exception in strategizing how to braid funding to sustain community schools. The challenge is ensuring a standardization of how to access funding in a way that is not too cumbersome for busy school sites. A promising practice among Deep Dive partners was their collaboration with higher education institutions to build and sustain their sites' workforce and foster partnerships that support students' transition to colleges and universities. Working with university partners, as stable anchor institutions, can bridge the disconnect between research and practice to improve community school implementation.

6. Centering teaching and learning provides an opportunity for growth

Centering the role of teaching and learning in community schools continues to be a challenge across the state, reflecting a common misconception that community schools are solely defined by wraparound services coordinated outside the classroom. As Figure 8 shows, almost two-thirds (63%) of Cohort 1 schools noted that they were in

the visioning phase of community-based learning strategies in Year 1, and just under half included improving teaching and learning in their NAA. In Year 2, just less than half of Cohort 1 grantees (48%) indicated that they were in the planning phase, demonstrating growth and progress in this critical capacity. Fifty-four percent of Cohort 1 grantees in Year 2 included community-based learning as part of their NAA or implementation plan. (Given the complex nature of implementation, it is not reasonable to expect that all schools will get to the "transforming" stage of implementation within the grant period.)

Figure 8: Percent of Site-level Implementation Grantees in Visioning, Engaging and Transforming Phases of Growth and Development for Centering Teaching and Learning in Year 1 and Year 2 (Cohort 1)



These findings came to life in two Deep Dive sites where teams were trying to more fully incorporate teaching and learning into the core work around community schools. We witnessed concerted efforts to bring on board staff members who directly support curriculum and instruction at the district level. One of these teams was working closely with the teachers’ union to codify the role of community school teacher leads. The other site was the exception, with strong support for community school teacher leads, project-based learning, performance assessment, and collaboration with the local teacher’s union.

To support grantees to center the role of teaching and learning in community schools, a community of practice with 30 educators from Cohort 1 and 2 Deep Dive sites is currently being piloted. In 2024-25, this group will engage LEA, COE, R-TAC, and community leaders to develop a shared understanding of community-based learning and whole child education, culminating in a community school teaching guide,

community-based learning curriculum repository, and set of capacity building opportunities. In addition, the S-TAC continues to engage experts in community-based learning to build a suite of resources for the state.

CONCLUSION

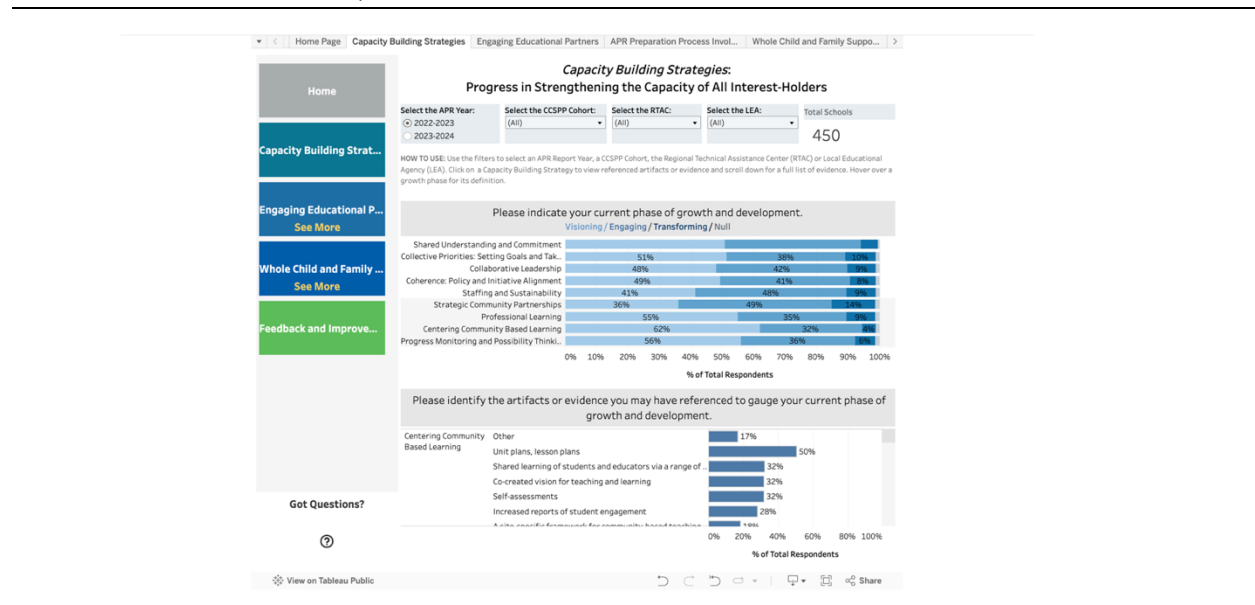
Grantees are in the process of creating infrastructure to collect, analyze and use data with the school community to improve outcomes for students and families. In Year 1, 56% of Cohort 1 grantees indicated that they were in the “planning” phase for progress monitoring and possibility thinking, indicating that they were still developing the infrastructure to monitor progress towards a set of goals. While a large proportion of grantees are focused primarily on California dashboard indicators as part of their community school goals and metrics, the importance of considering school climate, family engagement and a myriad of other areas of whole child development is clear from the variety of goals and metrics submitted in the APR. Cohort 1 grantees reported using multiple forms of evidence to gauge their progress, including annual reports (68%), data portfolios with locally determined measures (42%), as well as community stories (37%). A fifth of grantees cited other types of evidence including: School Plan for Student Achievement data and Local Control and Accountability Plan alignment, data dashboards and conferences with teachers, climate surveys and other student surveys, staff meetings, needs and asset assessments, among other measures.

Solidifying the progress monitoring work requires intentional efforts to collect and share data with the school community. The following quote from a grantee succinctly explains the expected progression in this particular capacity building strategy as the grant is implemented in the following years.

“We strive to be data driven when it comes to decision making and plan setting, particularly in existing collaborative efforts like School Site Council (SSC) and Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). To transition into the engaging phase and further, we must now shift our focus towards extending collaboration efforts with community members, build shared leadership cohorts, establish and implement needs and asset assessment to gather the data that will ultimately guide [us] into transforming.”

What this grantee brings to light is the use of data as a flashlight, not a hammer. To advance this aim, the S-TAC convenes R-TAC data leads monthly in a Multiple Measures Working Group to put in motion a measurement framework that is tethered to the Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) principles, which are integral to the California Community Schools' Framework. In addition, UCLA-CCS piloted an online course this fall for grantees entitled "Using Multiple Measures to Strengthen Community Schools." Teams of grantees developed their own capacity to design and use measures and street data tied closely to their daily work, to gauge for example the quality of family engagement in parent conferences. In addition, to further support the public use of the APR data to inform implementation, UCLA-CCS created a visualization in Tableau Public⁴ and is supporting its use for learning purposes (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Annual Progress Report Data Visualization



California's accountability system is based on a multiple measures system that assesses how LEAs and schools are meeting the needs of their students. Local measures are an important component of the state's system and "progress in local indicators can inform technical assistance"⁵. The multiple process and opportunity measures described above are informing the S-TAC's work with R-TACs, COEs, LEAs, and schools and provide promising evidence that the CCSPP implementation is underway. As the initiative deepens its reach into the classroom, we expect multiple indicators of student learning and well-being to also improve.

ENDNOTES

1. Learning Policy Institute Blog, “Better, Broader Learning: California Education Policymakers Prioritize Bolder Expanded Learning Opportunities”
 - <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/better-broader-learning-california-education-policymakers-prioritize-bolder-expanded-learning>
2. *Community Schools in Action* Blog: A Vision for Equity
 - <https://communityschooling.gseis.ucla.edu/?p=9635&preview=true>
3. S-TAC Reports from the UCLA Center for Community Schooling
 - <https://communityschooling.gseis.ucla.edu/s-tac-reports/>
4. Annual Progress Report Data Visualization
 - https://public.tableau.com/views/CCSPPAPRYear1andYear22/HomePage?:language=en-US&:sid=&:redirect=auth&:display_count=n&:origin=viz_share_link
5. CDE Local Indicators
 - <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/localindicators.asp>