

Support Community Schools in Illinois!



WeGo Together for Kids

Connecting our Community... Strengthening our Families

Out-of-School Barriers to Learning

Students in areas of concentrated poverty face many obstacles that prevent them from success in their careers and life, such as access to health care, violence, and poor housing conditions.

Chronic stress from these and other harms of poverty cause student to lose out on important learning opportunities.

What are Community Schools?

Community schools are public schools that partner with families and community organizations to provide well-rounded educational opportunities and supports for students' school success. The most comprehensive community schools address the impacts of poverty, racism, and violence, which can undermine the effectiveness of in-school opportunities.

Because each community school is a reflection of local needs no two look exactly alike. What they do share, however, is a commitment to a strong foundation of trust and respect, and partners who work together to create and implement a shared vision of student and school success.



Community schools inspire children to learn and connect with each other, provide parents with opportunities for support and leadership, and gives students the skills they need to land the successful jobs of tomorrow and lead healthy lives.

Community Schools Work!¹

Community schools meet the needs of high-poverty, underserved schools and help to provide more opportunities for learning and growing for students from low-income families, students of color, English learners and students with disabilities, according to a comprehensive review of 140 studies.

Community school practices lead to improved student attendance, behavior, and academic achievement as well as improving relationships within and beyond the school's walls.

Studies also suggest that community schools promote positive outcomes for everyone by contributing to collective social and economic benefits. This includes an excellent **return in social value on investments for these schools of up to \$15 for every dollar invested.**

¹ Oakes, J., Maier, A., & Daniel, J. (2017). *Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.



The Four Pillars of Community Schools

What makes community schools unique is the combination of four key pillars (or features) that together create the conditions necessary for students to thrive, which is consistent across the field. The pillars are:

1. **Integrated Student Supports:** Community schools pay attention to the whole needs of their students. Common services and supports offered are medical and mental health care services; tutoring and academic supports; and resources for families, such as parent education classes, job training and placement services, housing assistance, and nutrition programs.
2. **Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities:** In high-quality community schools, educators collaborate with community partners to provide well-structured learning activities during out-of-school time and summer.
3. **Active Family and Community Engagement:** Community schools prioritize meaningful and ongoing engagement of families and community members and establish the systems, structures, and supports to make it happen.
4. **Collaborative Leadership and Practices:** This is the relational “glue” that connects and reinforces the other pillars. By developing a shared vision and goals and creating participatory practices for distributing responsibilities, a community school leverages the collective expertise of all of its stakeholders.

WeGo Together for Kids supports families with children Birth-12th grade. Our mission is to support and enhance the health, safety, and well-being of children and families through a collaborative, coordinated, and comprehensive approach for West Chicago schools and community. Here are highlights of several of our programs:



The WeGo Together Community Market is a school-based food pantry located in Lemay Middle School. Families with children Birth-12th grade are welcome to attend the market weekly. On average, 469 individuals visit the market a month.

Power Fitness is a once a week afterschool club where 25 students learn life-long skills around healthy lifestyles and different ways to engage in physical activity. Students learn proper use of exercise equipment such as kettlebells and ropes.



The DREAM afterschool program is funded through 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) funding. 360 students at four schools engage in extended learning, social and emotional skill development, and enrichment activities such as art, music, nutrition, and physical activity.



Support Funding for Community Schools

- Community schools currently have to braid together their funding from a variety of sources, and these funds are extremely limited.
- The Illinois State Board of Education proposed \$15 million for community schools in Illinois.
- We are asking that legislators include funding for community schools in a FY2020 budget.

Contact Us



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