

## **CCSI Participates in Community Schools Initiatives in Rochester**

A community school is a public school – the hub of its neighborhood. A community school brings together the strengths of students, families, teachers and the community for the common goal of improving the academic success of young people. Community partners possessing the resources to improve student and adult learning, strengthen families, and create healthy, engaged communities are integrated with school-based academic, social and health services. On-site mental health counseling, medical and dental services, restorative practices, and wrap-around supports are aligned to address barriers to learning and provide the highest quality instruction.

In Rochester, Coordinated Care Services, Inc. (CCSI) has been vital to Community Schools, serving both as lead agency for the Enrico Fermi School 17 community schools initiative and as the Site Coordinator for the Kodak Park School 41 community schools work. In these roles, CCSI works in partnership with students, families, teachers and the community to coordinate strategies for organizing the resources of the community around student success. Implementation of a community school requires transformation in the way that public schools function, and in the way that community partners interact with public schools. Community schools integrate all partners into a collaborative leadership model, with shared accountability for success.

As the community schools approach has grown, the Institute for Educational Leadership, Coalition for Community Schools has developed “Community Schools Standards” (2017), to engage and support this work as a standards-driven, evidenced-based strategy to reach the common goal of improving the academic success of young people. The community schools approach is guided by principles that provide the framework for the standards. These Guiding Principles include:

- Pursue Equity
- Invest in a Whole-Child Approach to Education
- Build on Community Strengths to Ensure Conditions
- Use Data and Community Wisdom to Guide Partnerships, Programs and Progress
- Commit to Interdependence and Shared Accountability
- Invest in Building Trusting Relationships
- Foster a Learning Organization

CCSI is working with its partners to implement the Community Schools Standards, in accordance with these principles. While work at School 41 has just begun and therefore too soon to have outcome data, our work as Lead Agency for School 17 has entered its second year and progress has been demonstrated both in establishing the operating framework delineated in the Standards, as well as progress in academic indicators. At School 17, a Community Engagement Team has been established to guide collaborative planning, implementation and oversight. The Team is comprised of diverse representation from families, agencies and community members, actively engaging partners, families, and students into the life and work of the school and nurturing collaborative leadership through shared accountability. The

leadership team meets regularly with the support of CCSI, and the team is comprised of seven workgroups which meet monthly. Additionally, in 2017, School 17 met 64% of the indicators set forth by New York State. The number of violent incidents per year have decreased over time. The number of students in ELA Level 2 and above, and Math Level 2 and above, both increased.

As CCSI continues its work with the Community Schools Initiatives, continuous quality improvement processes help to ensure that we continually strengthen the infrastructure to support collaborative leadership, family engagement, community engagement, student learning and health and social services supports. Data are collected and used to guide opportunities and supports for individual students, as well as for all in the community. Needs assessment, particularly identifying the assets and strengths of the school and community through asset mapping, is an on-going approach that informs all planning and implementation strategies.

To learn more about Community Schools, Contact Elizabeth Meeker, PsyD, Director of CCSI's Training and Practice Transformation team at [emeeker@ccsi.org](mailto:emeeker@ccsi.org). We will share the celebration of our successes in future newsletters as we move forward!