May 1, 2024

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, and Education
266 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, and Education
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The Coalition for Community Schools thanks you for your continued support of Full-Service Community Schools in FY 2024 by funding the program at $150 million. As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 appropriations bill for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, on behalf of the Coalition for Community Schools, **we the undersigned organizations encourage you to fund the Full-Service Community Schools Program (Title IV Part F of the Every Student Succeeds Act) at $443 million to continue to meet the need across the country to develop community schools to reinvigorate education and economic efforts in urban and rural communities.**

During the FY 2023 Full-Service Community School request for proposals, over 400 communities submitted letters of intent to apply, continuing a three-year trend of a continuing increase in demand for this evidence-based strategy. This demonstrates that leaders from across the nation recognize the efficacy of Full-Service Community Schools in rural, tribal, and urban areas as a means by which to help students achieve academically.

Community Schools are an effective approach to coordinate and align school and community resources and increase family and community engagement for students' success. Doing so proves to be a wise investment: coordinating resources at the school and system levels translates to a return on investment of over $7 for every $1 invested in a Coordinator's salary. At Northeast Early College High School in Austin, Texas, school and district leaders partnered with 30 community non-profits and businesses to develop resources designed to keep students in school. Within five years of adopting a Community School strategy, Northeast decreased student mobility by 33%, doubled enrollment, and increased the graduation rate from 48% to 98%. Leslie Full-Service Community Schools in Berea, Kentucky, received a $2.5 million FSCS grant in 2020 to provide comprehensive services to 1,750 pre-K through 12th-grade students. By focusing on family and community engagement and cross-sector partnerships to create opportunities for parents to participate in cradle-to-career school-readiness programs, financial planning classes, and enriched afterschool programs, Berea Community Schools now boast a 97.4 % graduation rate, well above the state average of 91%, and 30% of high school students have taken at least one AP exam.

Community Schools effectively address urgent needs such as the growing mental health crisis in which 20 million children ages 3-17 report having at least one mental health concern, supporting the 12.5% of children experiencing food insecurity, and offering aid to the 81,000 families and youth experiencing homelessness.

We appreciate Congress' recognition of Full-Service Community Schools as a strategy to help children and families succeed by continuing to fund this vital program. **We believe funding Full-Service Community Schools at $443 million in FY 2025 will reach over 250,000 students in schools and communities that have shown a need for this program.**

Thank you for your continued support of Community Schools. We look forward to working with you to deliver increased investments in this effective strategy and federal program so that more students have all the conditions they need to thrive.

Sincerely,

National Organizations
State Organizations
Local Organizations