

The California Community School Fundamentals: Overarching Values



Value 1: Racially-Just, Relationship-Centered Spaces

Why racially-just, relationship-centered spaces matter:

Community schools aim to build trust by bringing people together and authentically valuing diverse cultures, perspectives and strengths. A focus on relationships builds a positive school climate and culture that is racially-just, caring, identity safe and nurtures a sense of belonging. Racially-just, relationship-centered spaces also focus on establishing and sustaining positive and trusting relationships among students, families, educators, and community partners to build collaborative, supportive and sustainable spaces where everyone learns and grows together.

How racially-just, relationship-centered spaces are represented in the CA Community Schools Framework:

Racially-just, relationship-centered spaces ensure the provision of integrated student supports, expanded learning time and opportunities, and family and community engagement-**pillars** of community schools; support the necessary **conditions for student learning** by providing a supportive learning environment and climate, social and emotional learning, and systems of support that enable healthy development and respond to student needs; demonstrate a **commitment** to creating, nourishing and sustaining school climates that are centered in the embrace and support of all students, and; provide the conditions that make **proven practices** such as shared-decision making councils possible.



Value 2: Shared Power

Why shared power matters: Community schools are grounded in the belief that schools belong to all of us—students, families, school staff and the community. They are democratic spaces. Recognizing and building towards shared ownership and deep engagement, through shared decision-making and collaborative strategies, is vital to building a democratic, inclusive and empowering environment where all interest-holders feel that their expertise and commitment to the community is recognized and valued.

How shared power is represented in the CA Community Schools Framework: Shared power engages the collaborative leadership **pillar** of community schools; supports the necessary **conditions for student learning** by developing a sense of student agency and productive action; demonstrates a **commitment** to shared decision-making and; **proven practices** such as shared decision-making councils make shared power possible and effective.



Value 3: Classroom-Community Connections

Why connecting the classroom and community matters: Community schools are continuously linking classroom instruction to the broader community. Instruction is engaging, providing real-world and project-based learning opportunities. It is interdisciplinary in nature and rooted in the assets of students, families, educators, and local community members. Curriculum is responsive to local history, knowledge, values, language, literature, institutions, culture, and environments. Community schools ground student learning in civic engagement and address real-world issues.

How classroom-community connections are represented in the CA Community Schools Framework:

Classroom-community connections highlight the extended learning time opportunities, and family and community engagement **pillar(s)** of community schools; they support the necessary **conditions for student learning** through instructional strategies that support motivation and take students' prior knowledge and experiences into account; demonstrate a **commitment(s)** to assets-driven and powerful, culturally rooted and sustaining instruction and; is made possible through **proven practices** such as the integration of education justice and equity initiatives at the school level.



Value 4: A Focus on Continuous Improvement

Why continuous improvement matters: Working together, community schools participate in an ongoing cycle of reflection, analysis, shared learning, and revision with a focus on student learning conditions, well-being and outcomes, and to ensure students, families, school staff and the community are valued, engaged and empowered. Community schools think beyond traditional metrics of educational success to reinvent systems of measurement rooted in asset-based, community-driven, and actionable data. Data becomes a tool for improvement that students, staff, families and community members can access, an instrument for reflection instead of an instrument of accountability – a flashlight, not a hammer.

How a focus on continuous improvement is represented in the CA Community Schools Framework:

Continuous improvement enables schools and districts to ensure that the appropriate supports and services are provided, in partnership with students, families and community, through collaborative leadership practices—**pillars** of community schools; strengthens the school instructional program that is responsive to students' development and learning needs (**conditions for student learning**); fortifies its **commitment** to community schools as an equity driven strategy and; is guided by asset mapping and gap analysis as a **proven practice**.