



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FUNDAMENTALS

Diving Deep into the California Community Schools Framework **Identifying Overarching Values**

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
STATE TRANSFORMATIONAL ASSISTANCE CENTER



This document was authored by the State Transformational Assistance Center (S-TAC) for Community Schools

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*This is a working document. The S-TAC will continue to update and revise this document to reflect the evolving needs of CCSPP grantees.

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Growing Community Schools in California

A community school is any school serving pre-kindergarten through high school students using a “whole-child” approach, with “an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement” (California Community Schools Framework & Coalition for Community Schools). As a strategy for school transformation, community schools enable local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools to position the individuals who know our children best—families, educators, trusted community partners and students themselves—in leadership roles where they work to meet the unique needs, assets and aspirations of the community (CA Community Schools Framework).

To support the whole child, community schools rethink and develop their own strategies, curricula and programs. This includes partnering with community-based organizations and local government agencies to support robust engagement of students, families and community members who are part of school communities, align resources and realize a shared vision for success (CA Community Schools Framework). Community schools meet the needs of children and young people by providing integrated student supports, building a positive school climate and trusting relationships, along with rich learning opportunities that prepare all students to succeed in college, career, civic and community life. The CCSPP provides an important opportunity to achieve this transformational whole child vision by strengthening and expanding community schools across the state.

Schools—their students, families, educators, school staff, and community members—are at the center of the work. Community schools are built on the strengths and needs of the school and local community, and developed with local community partners, students, families and educators. The LEA learns from and is guided by the work of each school site and develops and provides capacity-building opportunities that are tailored to the local community. LEAs have a key role to play in building and supporting an equitable, coherent, comprehensive, and sustainable community school effort across the district and community. They ensure that the highest needs schools, those that have been historically under-resourced and under-served, are receiving the necessary supports to participate meaningfully in the community schools strategy, including the distribution of integrated supports across school sites. In partnership with students, families and community organizations, they can assist in ensuring the strategy is responsive to the local community and assist in the development of school-level systems and practices that are foundational to the work of community schools. In order for transformation to occur, change must happen at both the school and LEA level, simultaneously.

California Community Schools Fundamentals: CA Community Schools Framework

The California Community Schools Fundamentals (CA CS Fundamentals) are a set of tools and resources (e.g., planning templates, curated guides, Capacity-Building Strategies, webinars, stories from the field) that the State Transformational Assistance Center (S-TAC) will be developing and curating over time. “Diving Deep into the California Community Schools Framework: Identifying Overarching Values” is one of these resources. “Diving Deep into the California Community Schools Framework: Identifying Overarching Values” provides an overview of the [CA Community Schools Framework](#) and introduces the overarching values as a means of operationalizing the Framework. The overarching values will be referenced in the resources and tools that comprise the CA CS Fundamentals. All tools and resources will aim to provide guidance and support to LEAs and/or school sites, as well as County Offices of Education, Regional Technical Assistance Centers, community-based partners and local government agencies, in their implementation of the community schools strategy and will be made available on the [S-TAC website](#) and Digital Commons (forthcoming).

The CA Community Schools Framework identifies the four pillars, core commitments, conditions for learning and proven practices that are fundamental to community schooling in California.

Four Pillars



Integrated Student Supports,

which can support student success by meeting their academic, physical, social-emotional, and mental health needs.



Family and Community Engagement,

which involves actively tapping the expertise and knowledge of family and community members to serve as true partners in supporting and educating students.



Collaborative Leadership and Practices for Educators and Administrators

that establish a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility for outcomes in a manner that includes students, families, and community members.



Extended Learning Time and Opportunities

that include academic support, enrichment, and real-world learning opportunities (e.g., internships, project-based learning).



Four Key Conditions for Learning



Supportive environmental conditions that foster strong relationships and community.



Productive instructional strategies that support motivation, competence, and self-directed learning.



Social and emotional learning (SEL) that fosters skills, habits, and mindsets that enable academic progress, efficacy, and productive behavior.



System of supports that enable healthy development, respond to student needs, and address learning barriers.

Four Cornerstone Commitments



Assets-Driven and Strength-Based Practice:

Community schools view students, their families and their community through the lens of their assets and strengths and value the collective wisdom derived from experience, family, history and culture and language.



Racially-Just and Restorative School Climates:

Community schools commit to creating, nourishing and sustaining school climates that are centered in the embrace of and support for all students in the totality of school interactions.



Powerful, Culturally Proficient and Relevant Instruction:

Community schools commit to be driven by teaching and learning that is relevant to, inclusive of and centered in the wisdom, history, culture and experience of students, families and communities.



Shared Decision Making and Participatory Practices:

Community schools all share a commitment to authentic and dynamic shared leadership in all aspects of school governance and operations.

Four Proven Practices



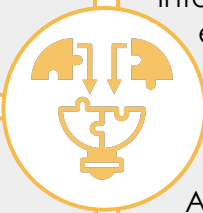
Community Asset Mapping and Gap Analysis:

An essential element for successful community school efforts are strategies to engage school and community interest holders in a coherent process of identifying and curating assets and wisdoms throughout the community.



Integrating and Aligning with other relevant Programs:

Community schools are intentionally situated in a suite of CA initiatives (e.g., Multi-tiered Systems of Support, mental health services, expanded learning time, universal TK, etc.) that stand to transform public education throughout the State. Practices also align, integrate and cross stitch with other education justice and equity initiatives at the district and school site level.



Site-Based and LEA-Based Advisory Councils:

School site-based and LEA-based advisory councils (often called shared decision-making councils or teams) engaged interest holders including students, staff, families, and community members in determining the focus and direction of the community school effort.



Community School Coordinator:

A coordinator who is responsible for the overall implementation of community school processes, programs, partnerships and strategies at the school site.

The CA CS Fundamentals weave together these pillars, commitments, conditions and practices through the identification of a set of overarching values: **racially-just, relationship-centered spaces, shared power, classroom-community connections**, and a **focus on continuous improvement**. The values aim to assist CCSPP grantees in operationalizing the pillars, commitments, conditions and practices that comprise the Framework—to help make sense of how they are interconnected and entwined to guide the work of community schools. The values are not to be viewed as separate from or in addition to the pillars, conditions for learning, core commitments and proven practices outlined in the Framework, but as representative of and integral to the Framework. When **racially-just, relationship-centered spaces, shared power, classroom-community connections**, and a **focus on continuous improvement** inspire and undergird activities and benchmarks, schools and districts can be certain that their efforts will make a difference for students, families, educators and the community. And, in the spirit of community schools, the values were developed and revised in partnership with the S-TAC Advisory Board—community school leaders, researchers, and advocates from across the country—statewide community partners and practitioners.

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

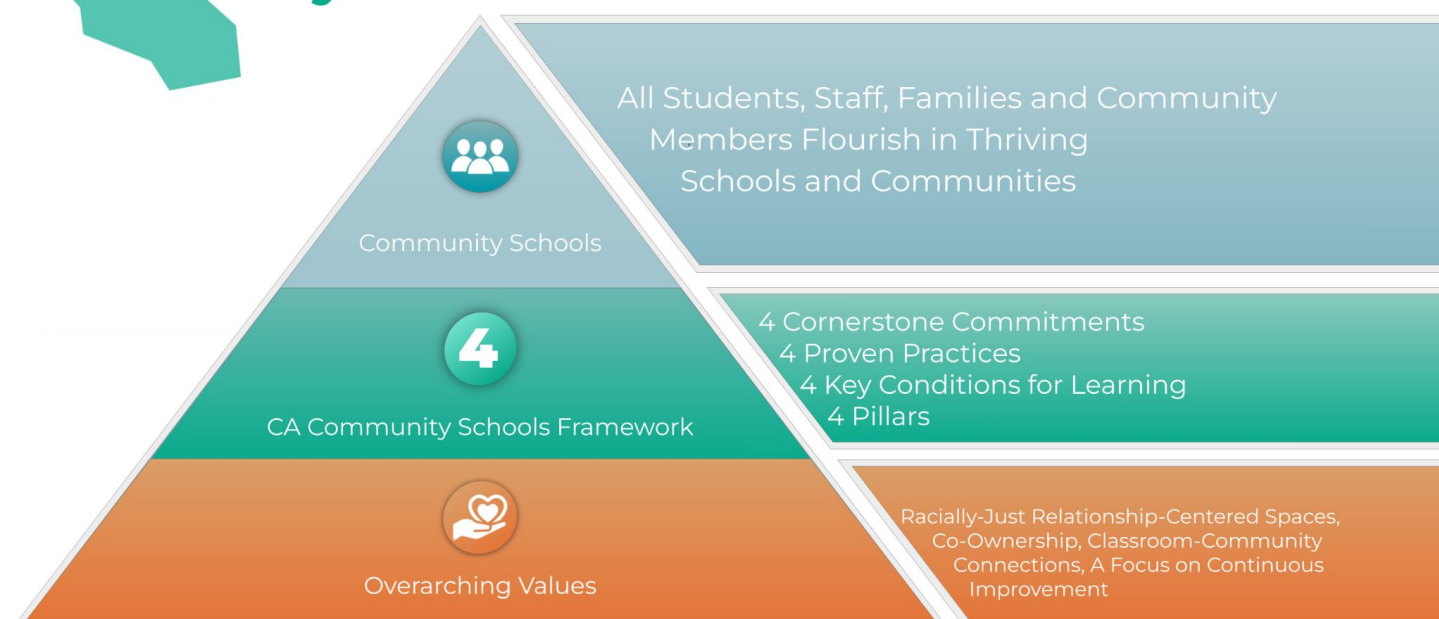
Why continuous improvement matters: Working together, community schools participate in an ongoing cycle of reflection, analysis, shared learning, and revision with a focus on student learning conditions, well-being and outcomes, and to ensure students, families, school staff and the community are valued, 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**.

California's vision for community schools, defined by the CA Community Schools Framework and brought to life through the overarching values, also align with a national conception of community schools. The [Community Schools Forward](#) task force—convened by national partners—has identified and developed a set of resources to align, build, and scale evidence-based, effective, and sustainable community schools nationwide. One of these resources is a [national framework](#) that defines the essentials for community schools transformation, including key practices for community school sites. The CA CS Fundamentals build on these resources to meet the needs of schools and districts across California as they work to support meaningful implementation and transformation.



Fundamentals for Community School Transformation



Full text description: This image is a triangular diagram illustrating the "Fundamentals for Community School Transformation" as part of "The California Way." The triangle is divided into three horizontal layers, each representing a foundational aspect, with text describing each layer and its associated outcomes or components.

The top layer, colored blue, features an icon of a group of three people (two adults and one child). This layer is titled "All Students, Staff, Families and Community Members Flourish in Thriving Schools and Communities," representing the ultimate goal or vision of the transformation.

The middle layer, colored teal, displays a large number "4" as its icon. This layer is titled "CA Community Schools Framework" and outlines the practical framework, which includes 4 Cornerstone Commitments, 4 Proven Practices, 4 Key Conditions for Learning, and 4 Pillars.

The bottom layer, colored orange, features an icon of a heart enclosed by hands. This layer is titled "Overarching Values" and details the core values guiding the transformation: Racially-Just Relationship-Centered Spaces, Co-Ownership, Classroom-Community Connections, and a Focus on Continuous Improvement.