



Shared Commitment, Understanding, and Priorities

When interest-holders unite in a shared understanding of and commitment to the community school strategy, it drives democratic collaboration and transparency. Deep listening and authentic relationship-building (via a robust Needs and Assets Assessment process) are critical to identifying collective priorities and for monitoring progress towards meeting shared goals.

SITE-LEVEL

Visioning

- Develop clear and consistent messaging and talking points in languages that reflect your school population. Answer the question, “why become a community school?”
- Engage interest-holders through one-on-one interviews, listening and learning tours, focus groups, community forums, etc. to begin learning about the hopes and dreams of the community and to create a shared understanding of the community school strategy. Use democratic efforts such as petitions, staff voting, surveys, and other consensus building techniques to gauge interest and commitment to the community school process.
- Co-develop (via a collaborative leadership structure) a plan for conducting a Needs and Assets Assessment that deeply engages interest-holders. Develop specific strategies to reach historically and presently marginalized/excluded students and families.

Engaging

- Create ongoing opportunities to listen to community feedback, questions, ideas, and concerns and collaboratively shape/refine messaging. Formalize shared commitment to the community school strategy.
- Conduct the Needs and Assets Assessment by employing a range of listening methods—including surveys, focus groups, and empathy interviews—to successfully engage 75 to 100% of students, educators (inclusive of all school staff members), families (parents as well as other caregivers, guardians, and chosen family members that extend beyond traditional and legal definitions), and community members in identifying a shared vision and top community school priorities. Produce a findings report and publicly share results.
- As part of the Needs and Assets Assessment, analyze baseline data and map resources using the Whole Child and Family Supports Inventory to explore critical access to a range of supports and services spanning the full scope of the CA CS Framework.
- Via a shared leadership structure, collaboratively set goals and develop an initial community school implementation plan that aligns with collective priorities identified through the Needs and Assets Assessment, and statewide CCSPP reporting requirements. Implementation plan should integrate various school-wide efforts and initiatives (e.g., Expanded Learning Opportunities, Golden State Pathways, Universal Transitional Kindergarten) to support alignment and streamline efforts.
- Review school’s data collection strategy specific to the identified collective priorities. Actively engage with data, and use data analysis protocols during goal setting sessions. Engage in possibility thinking to find opportunity in complex issues emerging from data analysis.
- Assess emerging needs to determine which—when addressed—could create the greatest impact with the least effort. Engage interest-holders to take action on these needs and create small successes to further fuel interest and investment in the community school strategy while working towards long-term goals.

Transforming

- Continuously re-ground the community in a shared vision of success and systematically orient and onboard newcomers, such as new hires, to maintain a shared commitment to and understanding of the strategy.
- Form or expand priority teams/working groups that are diverse and representative of your school’s interest-holders to take action on identified priority topics that emerge from the Needs and Assets Assessment process. Together, explore root causes, identify indicators of success, continuously monitor progress, and develop and test strategies to achieve collective priority goals.
- Priority teams/working groups implement and take ownership of harnessing diverse perspectives in order to generate new ideas and innovative solutions.
- Deliver public presentations and annual reports detailing engagement efforts along with the resulting community school plan/updates, including goals, data, and outcomes. Presentations are made by the school’s decision-making team/council which includes students, families, and community partners.
- Keep dreaming!

Visioning

- Collaborate with schools to raise awareness of the community school strategy across the broader community, creating shared understanding. Support schools through modeling, listening, coaching, highlighting examples, and developing tools so that sites implement democratic processes that gauge and formalize commitment to the community school strategy.
- Engage LEA leaders, school board members, union leaders, community partners, and others to garner support and commitment. Answer the question, “why community schools for our LEA?”
- Leverage existing system-wide structures (e.g. vertical articulation teams, Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Parent Advisory Committees, student leadership groups, and other LEA-wide teams and groups) for peer-to-peer learning about the community schools strategy.
- Disaggregate LEA-wide data by school, and share it with individual community school site teams to inform baseline understanding and needs and assets assessments.

Engaging

- Collect and use initiative-wide data to assess and inform progress, including performance measures (e.g., implementation plan updates), school-level outcomes (e.g., attendance rates), and program outcomes as defined by CCSPP reporting requirements. Disaggregate data by site and by student subgroups to identify and address potential disparities in outcomes.
- Co-construct, through the LEA-level steering committee, a LEA-wide strategic plan for rolling out the community school strategy that includes how community schools will be selected, monitored, and supported. Ensure this plan is aligned to and integrated with the LCAP.
- Provide ongoing and differentiated support (via coaching on engagement strategies, tools, templates, modeling, and listening) that empowers schools to meaningfully collaborate with interest-holders in conducting a robust Needs and Assets Assessment.

Transforming

- Share accountability and responsibility for community school success between board members, superintendents, principals, educators, families, students, and community members. Collectively advocate and work towards continued system-level changes that aim to disrupt systemic inequities.
- Refine habits of listening to accelerate collective learning and improvements. Routinely convene school-level working groups focused on similar priority goals to celebrate successes, exchange best practices, and distill lessons learned to inform LEA goals, systems, and processes and vice versa.
- Regularly update the public on progress of the system-wide community schools initiative through annual reports and public presentations.

Progress Monitoring Measures

Needs and Assets Assessment engagement rates; community school implementation plans and/or School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) that is focused on community school implementation; school climate surveys; analysis of system-level data including access and utilization rates related to [Whole Child and Family Supports Inventory](#) (e.g., health and wellness services; mental health services; afterschool and summer programming; nutrition services, etc.); and school-level outcome measures as defined by CCSPP reporting requirements that include school attendance rates, chronic absenteeism rates, dropout rates, proficiency scores, high school graduation rates, and suspension/expulsion rates.

RESOURCES

- [Needs and Assets Assessment Guide](#)
- [Whole Child and Family Supports Inventory](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)