



THE PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE: YEAR 1 REPORT

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About Research for Action

Research for Action (RFA) is a Philadelphia-based nonprofit education research organization. RFA seeks to use research as the basis for the improvement of educational opportunities and outcomes for traditionally underserved students. Our work is designed to strengthen public schools and postsecondary institutions; provide research-based recommendations to policymakers, practitioners and the public at the local, state and national levels; and enrich the civic and community dialogue about public education. Learn more at www.researchforaction.org.

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The Philadelphia Community Schools Initiative

Year 1 Evaluation Report • Executive Summary

RESEARCH FOR ACTION • OCTOBER 2018

Introduction

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney's education agenda includes developing and implementing a Community Schools initiative that provides a comprehensive set of social services and supports for schoolchildren and communities. Each community school has a full-time coordinator responsible for a wide range of duties focused on sustained community involvement, coordination of services, and collaboration with school principals and staff.

The Community Schools initiative is funded through the Philadelphia Beverage Tax, levied by the City on the distributors of sweetened beverages at 1.5 cents per ounce. Due in part to ongoing litigation and adjusted revenue projections after a full year of collection, the Mayor's Office scaled back the proposed total number of community schools from 25 to 20 and slowed the overall pace of community school selection to date. In August 2018, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in favor of the tax, upholding the decisions of two lower courts and resolving the litigation conclusively in the City's favor.

About this Report

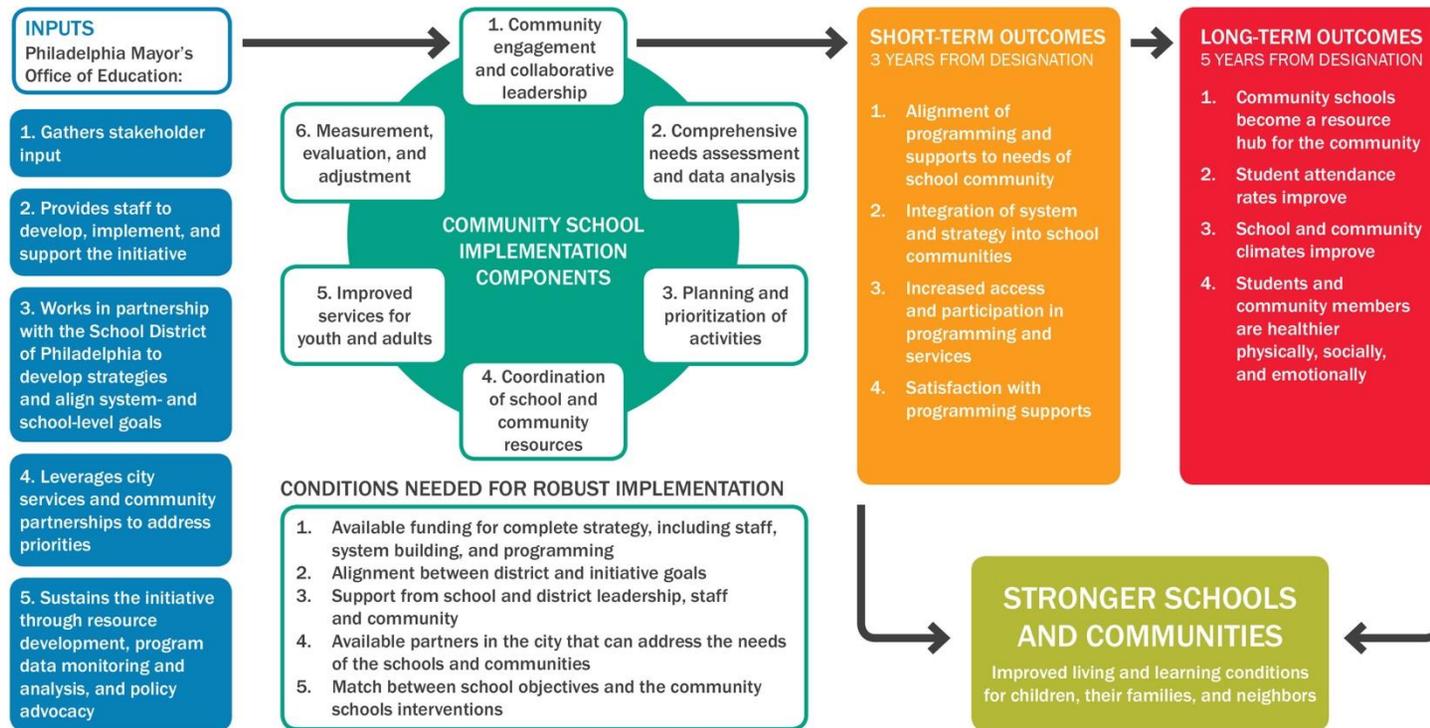
In this report, Research for Action presents findings and associated recommendations from the first-year evaluation of Philadelphia's Community Schools initiative. RFA assessed the initiative during the 2017-2018 school year at two levels. First, we examined whether **system-wide conditions and supports** for the initiative were in place. Second, we assessed how the initiative was playing out on the ground by closely examining **implementation and early outcomes at the school level**. RFA evaluated the initiative against a suite of best practices developed in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Education (MOE) and grounded in rigorous research on community schools. We based our analysis on a wide range of data, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and document review.

Our findings suggest that the strength of system-level implementation could be improved with stronger leadership from the Mayor's Office of Education and more extensive cross-sector collaboration. Our school-level findings are more positive, documenting progress in multiple areas due to the work of school administrators, school staff, MOE community school coordinators, and external partners.

Figure ES1. Philadelphia Community Schools Initiative Theory of Action, 2017-18

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS THEORY OF ACTION

The City of Philadelphia establishes Community Schools to improve living and learning conditions for children, families, and neighbors. As community hubs, these schools address basic needs, facilitate access to health and wellness services, improve economic stability, support youth learning and development, and strengthen the Philadelphia community. The Mayor's Office of Education works with the School District of Philadelphia to identify and designate schools and provides staff to support the development and implementation of school-specific plans to increase access to city and community services.



EXISTING CONTEXT

The Community Schools initiative is one of Mayor Kenney's top priorities • The City of Philadelphia has the highest rate of deep poverty in the U.S. • The School District of Philadelphia has been historically underfunded and is experiencing decreasing enrollment • Governance of the School District of Philadelphia is transitioning from a state School Reform Commission to a Board of Education appointed by the Mayor • Philadelphia has a strong human services and non-profit sector that runs programs and services in schools • There have been previous efforts to integrate services into schools in Philadelphia

MOE's Theory of Action

In fall 2017, MOE developed a Theory of Action (TOA) to describe its vision of the Community Schools initiative inputs, activities, and short- and long-term outcomes, as well as the context in which the initiative operates (see Figure ES1). Notably, the model varies significantly from research-based best practices in several ways that are discussed in more detail in the full report. High-level results of the evaluation are organized by major elements of the TOA that describe Philadelphia's Community Schools initiative and are summarized below.

The Status of System-Level Conditions that Support Robust Implementation Varies Considerably

Community school initiatives are remarkably complex endeavors, and success depends on the presence of an unusually comprehensive set of conditions. MOE's TOA identifies five specific, necessary conditions to support robust implementation. RFA's analysis suggests that the status of these conditions varies considerably, as summarized in Table ES1.

Table ES1. System-level conditions that support robust implementation

Key	 Area of Strength	 Mixed Status
	Implementation Condition 1. Available funding for a complete strategy, including staff, system building, and programming	
<p>Philadelphia identified a dedicated funding stream for community schools. Although it is now firmly in place, challenges during the first two years of the initiative slowed down the pace of implementation. A first-in-the-nation sweetened beverage tax was designated as the primary funding source for the Community Schools initiative. Challenges from the outset delayed the implementation of the initiative. A recent Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision settled the dispute by establishing the legality of the tax. In addition, stakeholders report that community school coordinators are stretched too thin, suggesting that more school-level resources may be needed to ensure robust implementation.</p>		
	Implementation Condition 2. Alignment between district and initiative goals	
<p>District and initiative goals could be more closely aligned. The Community Schools initiative was designed to address poverty-related conditions that create barriers to successful student outcomes. However, the initiative was not designed to coordinate with School District of Philadelphia (SDP) efforts to improve academic outcomes.</p>		
	Implementation Condition 3. System-wide support for the initiative	
<p>Support for the initiative has been uneven across the system, as reflected in limited coordination between MOE and the SDP. The partnership between MOE and SDP was limited during the first two years of the Community Schools initiative, and the involvement of other agencies and service providers has been uneven.</p>		



Implementation Condition 4. Available partners in the City that can address the needs of schools and communities

Overall, partners are available to meet some local needs, but others remain unmet. Most community school coordinators described moderate levels of partner availability but noted that there is room to scale up services or achieve greater alignment between services and priority needs.



Implementation Condition 5. Match between school objectives and community school interventions

School expectations for the initiative align with the current community school model. Principals appeared to have a clear sense of the focus of the Community Schools initiative and did not have expectations for the work beyond its scope.

The Status of Community School Inputs from the Mayor’s Office of Education is Mixed

The long-term success of Philadelphia’s Community Schools initiative is considerably dependent upon strong and consistent system-level leadership and cross-sector collaboration. During the first two years of the initiative, MOE aimed to support the initiative at the school level via the five system-level inputs detailed in the Theory of Action. RFA’s analysis of MOE inputs suggests that the status of the inputs is mixed, with some progress evident but key elements remaining underdeveloped, as summarized in Table ES2.

Table ES2. Status of MOE Community School initiative inputs

Key	 Area of Strength	 Mixed Status
	Input 1. Gather stakeholder input	

The Mayor’s Office of Education gathered considerable public feedback prior to the start of the initiative. Yet structures for ongoing and inclusive citywide leadership have yet to be developed. In January 2016, MOE launched a public outreach effort to gather input on the forthcoming initiative. However, best practices point to the need for an ongoing “representative cross-sector community-wide leadership group, including representatives from the school district, system-level partners, and under-represented groups” to oversee the initiative.¹ While MOE has discussed developing such a group, it has yet to be put in place.

¹ Initiative Standard 1, from Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. (2017) *Standards for Community School Initiatives*. Washington, D.C.



Input 2. Develop staff capacity

While MOE hired coordinators for every school and supported them in multiple ways, school-based coordinators are still stretched thin. A dedicated full-time coordinator in each school is essential to strong community schools.² Coordinators were hired for each community school. However, there is broad agreement across key stakeholders that the responsibilities of a coordinator are a heavy load for a single person.



Input 3. Work in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia

The Community Schools initiative has yet to become a collaborative partnership with SDP. By their very nature, community schools require strategic planning and partnership with school districts.³ MOE and SDP worked jointly to develop a memorandum of understanding for the initiative, as well as the needs assessment and planning process. However, MOE and SDP have had limited collaboration and coordination in developing an aligned, strategic direction for the initiative.



Input 4. Leverage City of Philadelphia services

The development of partnerships with City departments and resources is still a work in progress. Successful community school efforts align assets with needs.⁴ Since Philadelphia's model is driven by the City, there is opportunity for the initiative to leverage city services. MOE worked with several city departments to support and maximize existing resources in each school. However, some potential collaborations between MOE and city resources have remained in the development phase or have provided services on a small scale, either in a subset of schools or at a single point in time.



Input 5. Sustain the initiative

Beverage Tax revenue funds the Community Schools initiative, despite early challenges that delayed implementation. Now that the litigation against the Philadelphia Beverage Tax has been resolved, the initiative can resume expansion and long-term planning. **MOE, the School District of Philadelphia, and other City departments should strengthen partnerships and coordination to sustain support for the initiative.** Effective dissemination of emerging evidence of success can also bolster support among key stakeholders, including the public.

² School Standard 3.1, from Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. (2017) *Community School Standards*. Washington, D.C.

³ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards*: Standard 3.3

⁴ Ibid. *Standards for Community School Initiatives*: Standard 3

A Work in Progress: The Status of Implementation on the Ground

After a full year of planning and another year of implementation, Philadelphia's first cohort of nine community schools can be expected to have made significant progress against each of the six major components of robust implementation in MOE's Theory of Action. Evidence of robust implementation at the school level should occur before we can expect changes in short- and long-term outcomes.

Signs of Promise: School-Level Implementation

While system-level progress of the Community Schools initiative was mixed, schools made progress in a number of areas. Highlights include the following:

- Teachers and staff reported high levels of integration of the Community Schools initiative into the culture of school buildings;
- All community schools conducted needs assessments and asset mapping;
- Community schools worked to encourage students, families, and community members to participate in services and sponsored special events;
- Coordinators and principals developed strong working relationships in most schools;
- Community school coordinators were accessible to school staff and beneficiaries;
- Student participation in programs and services was high;
- New external partners were introduced to community school buildings; and
- The overall quality of coordination in community schools improved.

School-level progress in the 2017-18 school year provides a strong foundation for continued improvement as the initiative matures. Table ES3 summarizes in more detail how community schools are faring after one year of implementation as assessed against standards of community school best practices.

Table ES3. Summary of implementation status and recommendations

Key	 Area of Strength	 Area for Growth
	Implementation Best Practice Component 1. Community Engagement and Collaborative Leadership	

Best Practice: Community schools should actively encourage participation in and support for the programs and services provided by developing a shared vision based on cross-sector input.

Summary of Best Practice Status: Overall, community schools consistently encouraged students, families, and community members to participate in services. However, many feedback and volunteer opportunities were informal and could be further developed. While community schools have begun to provide evening and weekend activities, staffing and funding barriers still exist. Community school committees were in place at each school and provided input and feedback to the coordinator, but the frequency and inclusivity of meetings varied. A strong working relationship existed between most coordinators and principals, and external partners perceived coordinators as accessible, but the quality of communication between coordinators and school staff varied.

Recommendations:

- *Community Engagement:* Develop formal feedback mechanisms and more structured opportunities for leadership development beyond volunteering. Policy and funding barriers that curtail evening and weekend services also need to be addressed.
- *Collaborative Leadership:* Site-based leadership could be strengthened by ensuring that committees meet monthly and include representation from all stakeholders. Additional tools could also be developed to standardize communication strategies with school staff.

	Implementation Best Practice Component 2. Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Data Analysis	
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Best Practice: Research indicates that in strong community school efforts, data and information are collected and analyzed on the needs of the school and community, as well as on the assets already available in the school and community to help address those needs.⁵

Summary of Best Practice Status: MOE’s central office staff planned and coordinated much of the needs assessment data collection, including surveys and focus groups with staff, students, community members, and partners. All nine community schools also collected information on school, community, and partner resources. Yet student-level data collection has not occurred (which is a departure from other national community school models).

Recommendations: While needs assessment and data analysis were areas of strength, collection and analysis of academic data could be more extensive and include the disaggregation of indicators to better align students to services according to their learning needs. Further, every community school needs to ensure that all stakeholders are included in the needs assessment process.

⁵ Ibid. *Community School Standards: Standard 2.3*



Implementation Best Practice Component 3. Planning and Prioritization of Activities

Best Practice: School-level planning is a central component of best practice.⁶ Based on the needs assessment and asset mapping processes, the community school should develop a plan, aligned with the school building's goals, that clearly indicates the priorities of the community school, the activities and strategies involved, measures of progress, and the roles of stakeholders.

Summary of Best Practice Status: Each school developed a plan that supported building goals and, in most cases, developed priorities aligned with needs. However, community school plans did not outline how identified resources would address priorities, progress measures, or stakeholder responsibilities and performance standards.

Recommendations: The roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders need to be defined in the community school plan, including how each stakeholder will help to address priority areas. Further, measurable results and indicators for each goal should also be specified in the plan, as well as a process to track progress against those goals.



Implementation Best Practice Component 4. Coordination of School and Community Resources

Best Practice: Community schools provide services to students, families, and community members primarily through the development and coordination of external partnerships.⁷ The community school should coordinate program partners, facilitate the use of school and community resources, and align services to meet the needs of students, families, and community members.

Summary of Best Practice Status: While the coordination of community schools improved overall, schools varied significantly in the depth and process of existing partnership review, the level of support through partner meetings, partner feedback, and professional development. Further, while school staff and facilities were utilized, the coordination and leveraging of City resources was limited.

Recommendations: The documentation of partners and the services they provide can be strengthened, along with standardized processes for reviewing the alignment of existing partners with community school priorities. Coordinators can also meet with all partners more regularly and provide additional professional development opportunities. Further, collaboration with City resources can be expanded and deepened.



Implementation Best Practice Component 5. Improved Services for Youth and Adults

Best Practice: An effective community school ensures that a broad set of services is delivered to meet the needs of students, their families, and communities.⁸

Summary of Best Practice Status: Because Philadelphia's community schools already had a long history of partnerships prior to the initiative, the Community Schools initiative focused on providing additional resources to address the needs of students, families, and community members. All but one individual community school priority area was addressed by external partners or direct services provided by the school. However, MOE does

⁶ Ibid. *Community School Standards*: Standard 2

⁷ Jeannie Oakes, Anna Maier, and Julia Daniel. (2017). *Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center.

⁸ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Standards for Community School Initiatives*: Standard 8.

not have a standard process in place to vet potential partners to ensure alignment of new services to needs. In addition, MOE has not conducted a formal gap analysis on existing partners.

Recommendations: Formal templates and processes to vet potential partners and conduct a gap analysis of existing partners could be developed by MOE central office staff so that individual coordinators do not have to develop systems on their own.



Implementation Best Practice Component 6. Measurement, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Best Practice: Evidence-based decision-making is centrally important to complex reforms like community schools.⁹

Summary of Best Practice Status: MOE commissioned an independent third-party evaluation, which resulted in this public report and the provision of formative feedback to key stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the initiative. Internally, while broad outcomes have been specified, measures and processes to systematically track progress across community schools have yet to be developed. MOE central office staff are still developing data collection, analysis, and continuous improvement processes for community schools.

Recommendations: Recognizing that work to understand fidelity and quality of implementation should guide appropriate measures, MOE central office staff should engage with relevant partners to determine common measurable outcomes, expected results, and indicators at the individual school and initiative levels. They should also develop metrics to gauge the quality of partner services and the degree to which student, family, and community needs are being met. This will require that data systems and protocols are developed to ensure access to relevant data at the individual and aggregate levels.

An Early Look: Short-Term Outcomes of the Community Schools Initiative

MOE's Theory of Action designates four short-term outcomes based on best practices and prior community school evaluations. Results for each are summarized below.

Short-Term Outcome 1. Stakeholders had mixed perceptions of the alignment of programming and supports to school and community needs.

Most teachers and school staff reported strong alignment of programming to student needs during 2017-18, an improvement over the past year. In contrast, most students reported that programming and supports were only somewhat aligned with their needs, and that alignment was either the same or worse compared to the prior year. Compared to over 80% of surveyed teachers and school staff, less than 20% of surveyed students reported that programming and supports offered in 2017-18 were strongly aligned to student needs.

⁹ Ibid. *Standards for Community School Initiatives*: Standard 5.1

Short-Term Outcome 2. Stakeholders had mixed perceptions of the integration of system and strategy into school communities.

The perspectives of teachers, school staff, and external partners suggest high levels of integration of the Community Schools initiative into school communities. Yet student perspectives suggest room for improvement in student outreach about the overall initiative.

Short-Term Outcome 3. Student access and participation in programming and services was high, while challenges remain in engaging the community.

Student participation in community school programs, activities, and services was relatively high: About 85% of surveyed students reported attending at least one type of program in 2017-18. Community events and afterschool programs were the most common type of program students attended. In addition, school staff reported more resources for the community because of the initiative. However, outreach to families and community members has not generated high levels of participation and engagement due to a history of fear, mistrust, and lack of involvement with the school among community members.

Short-Term Outcome 4. Satisfaction with programming and supports is improving.

While many teachers and school staff were very satisfied that the initiative is serving students and community members, there is some room for improvement. External partners reported high levels of satisfaction with their partnerships with community schools. More work can be done to understand student and community member satisfaction with programming and supports.

Conclusion and Next Steps

After two years of implementation, MOE has taken important foundational steps in establishing a foundation for its Community Schools initiative, but much of the work remains in process.

Areas of continued challenge

Philadelphia's Community Schools initiative has encountered a series of system-level challenges that must be addressed to ensure the long-term success of the initiative. Threats to the initiative's beverage tax funding stream slowed momentum, although this challenge should be resolved now that the legality of the tax has been established. In addition, high-level collaboration between MOE, SDP, and City departments has not yet been firmly established. Further, school-level implementation was hampered, to some degree, by a lack of standardized systems, a common set of outcomes, and data agreements that would allow the initiative to track individual students. Student familiarity with services offered could be improved, and high levels of mistrust of public schools among families and community members remains a challenge to both participation and buy-in.



The Philadelphia Community Schools Initiative

Year 1 Evaluation Report

RESEARCH FOR ACTION • OCTOBER 2018

Introduction

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney’s education agenda includes developing and implementing a Community Schools initiative that provides a comprehensive set of social services and supports for schoolchildren and communities. Shortly after Mayor Kenney took office in 2016, the Mayor’s Office of Education (MOE) met with a broad range of stakeholders to more fully gauge interest in community schools, determine the range of community needs, and develop the community school selection criteria. During the first round of applications, nearly 40 schools expressed interest in becoming a community school, and the Mayor’s Office received over 30 applications. The first nine schools—referred to in this report as Cohort 1—were selected in June 2016. In spring 2017, over 20 applications were received during a second-round community schools selection process. The second cohort of three schools was announced summer 2017.

The Community Schools initiative is funded through the Philadelphia Beverage Tax, levied by the City on the distributors of sweetened beverages at 1.5 cents per ounce. There has been fierce opposition to the tax from the beverage industry and some policymakers, leading to multiple court challenges and proposed state legislation to restrict the City from levying such a tax. Due in part to the ongoing litigation and adjusted revenue projections after a full year of collection, the Mayor’s Office scaled back the proposed total number of community schools from 25 to 20 and slowed the overall pace of community school selection to date. In August 2018, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in favor of the tax, upholding the decisions of two lower courts and resolving the litigation conclusively in the City’s favor.

About This Report

In this report, Research for Action presents findings and associated recommendations from the first-year evaluation of the Community Schools initiative in Philadelphia. Our evaluation is focused on an assessment of system-level implementation of the initiative and school-level implementation and early outcomes of the nine Cohort 1 community schools, which were announced in July 2016. Characteristics of the Cohort 1 community schools are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Cohort 1 Community Schools in Philadelphia, 2017-18

Cohort 1 Community Schools	Grade Level(s)	Enrollment	% Economically Disadvantaged	% English Language Learners
Cramp Elementary School	Elementary	505	100%	26%
F.S. Edmonds Elementary School	Elementary	601	100%	<1%
James Logan Elementary School	Elementary	330	100%	<1%
Edward Gideon Elementary & Middle School	Elementary and Middle	285	100%	<1%
Southwark Elementary & Middle School	Elementary and Middle	800	100%	43%
William T. Tilden Middle School	Middle	380	100%	16%
Murrell Dobbins CTE High School	High	613	100%	2%
Kensington Health Sciences Academy	High	432	100%	20%
South Philadelphia High School	High	564	100%	20%

Source: School District of Philadelphia School Profiles, 2017-18

The structure of this report is based on the Theory of Action (TOA) for the Community Schools initiative in Philadelphia (see Figure 3), which was developed by MOE and made public in spring 2018. A brief description of each section of the report is as follows:

- **Section 1. Philadelphia’s Community Schools Initiative** provides an overview of how MOE defined community schools and created a model unique to the Philadelphia context;
- **Section 2. System-Level Conditions that Support Robust Implementation** evaluates city- and system-wide conditions necessary for successful community schools;
- **Section 3. Community School Inputs from the Mayor’s Office of Education** describes the degree to which MOE has executed and supported the City’s Community Schools initiative;
- **Section 4. Status of Community School Implementation on the Ground** provides a school-level analysis of the initiative based on the level of implementation at each community school; and
- **Section 5. Short-Term Outcomes of the Community Schools Initiative** draws primarily on surveys of teachers, school staff, external partners, and students to report on early indicators of progress.

Study Design and Approach

Research for Action (RFA) was selected to serve as a third-party, independent evaluator of the Community Schools initiative during the 2017-18 school year. RFA designed a mixed-methods study informed by extant research on community schools, best practices on community school implementation, and MOE’s Theory of Action (TOA), presented in Figure 3.

Mixed-methods data sources

Findings presented in this report are based on analyses of multiple sources of data, described in Table 2. Appendix C provides technical details of the study and data sources.

Table 2. RFA evaluation of Philadelphia Community Schools initiative: Data sources

Data Sources	Number of Documents or Respondents
Documents	60 Documents
• Community Schools Plans and Logic Models	18
• Community Schools At-a-Glance Documents	9
• Needs Assessment Survey Instruments and Analyses	14
• Community Schools Stress Index	1
• Community Schools Committee and Partner Lists	18
Interviews and Focus Group Respondents	153 Respondents
• Community School Coordinator Interviews	9
• Principals and/or Assistant Principal Interviews	10
• Mayor’s Office of Education Interviews	5
• School District of Philadelphia Interviews	3
• Community School Committee Focus Groups	33
• External Partner Focus Groups	48
• Teacher and Staff Focus Groups	45
Survey Respondents	890 Respondents
• Student Surveys	498
• Teacher and Staff Surveys	311
• Partner Surveys	81

Analytic approach

A. System- and school-level implementation

RFA evaluated the initiative against a suite of best-practice implementation components and elements based on two sources:

1. Coalition for Community Schools (which will be referred to in this report as “the Coalition”) initiative- and school-level standards developed by leaders and practitioners in the field and that define best practice.¹⁰
2. The National Education Policy Center (NEPC) and Learning Policy Institute (LPI) Community School Pillars, which reflect the research base on effective community school practices.¹¹

¹⁰ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. (2017) *Standards for Community School Initiatives and Community School Standards*. Washington, D.C.

¹¹ Jeannie Oakes, Anna Maier, and Julia Daniel. (2017). *Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center.

RFA assessed the implementation of the Philadelphia’s Community Schools initiative at two levels. First, we examined whether system-wide conditions and supports for the initiative were in place. Second, we evaluated how the initiative was playing out on the ground by closely examining implementation and early outcomes in schools.

System-level status of implementation

Research has identified several system-level conditions and supports that provide a strong foundation for successful community schools (see Figure 3). Using the icons provided in Figure 1, RFA assessed the degree to which these conditions—both external to MOE and within MOE—were present as the Community Schools initiative unfolded.

Figure 1. System-level status of implementation: Icons and definitions

Icon	Definition
	<p>Area of Strength: System-level implementation condition or MOE input was evaluated to be in place after the first full year of implementation.</p>
	<p>Mixed Status: System-level implementation condition or MOE input was evaluated as strong in some ways and in need of improvement in other ways.</p>

School-level status of implementation

RFA also assessed implementation at the school-level, including whether the initiative was implemented consistently across the nine Cohort 1 community schools. Our evaluation of implementation at the ground level is based on implementation components, elements, and indicators. Each component is made up of several elements, and each element is made up of several indicators, defined and operationalized by RFA based on best practice and in consultation with MOE. See Appendix A for school-level assessments and Appendix B for specific definitions.

In the following sections, RFA presents our assessment of six major **school-level implementation components**, which are evaluated as either “Areas of Strength” or “Areas of Growth” as defined in Figure 2 and displayed in the Theory of Action (Figure 3). In addition, we summarize the consistency of **implementation elements** across schools as “Consistently Strong,” “Varied,” or “Consistently Limited.” School-level **implementation indicator** assessments can be found in Appendix A.

Figure 2. School-level status of implementation: Icons and definitions for components and elements

Icon	Definition
Implementation Component Summary	
	Area of Strength: School-level implementation component was evaluated to be in place after the first full year of implementation.
	Area of Growth: School-level implementation component was evaluated to be an area still under development.
Implementation Element Summary	
	Consistently strong implementation of the element across schools suggests that the initiative is meeting goals for implementation.
	Variation in implementation of the element across schools suggests that certain school-level factors are not being implemented consistently across schools.
	Consistently limited implementation of the element across schools suggests that the initiative is falling short of its goals.

B. School- and student-level short-term outcomes

RFA also tracked and analyzed four short-term outcomes for the same Cohort 1 schools, based on best practices and prior community school evaluations. MOE’s Theory of Action specifies that these short-term outcomes are expected to emerge after three years:

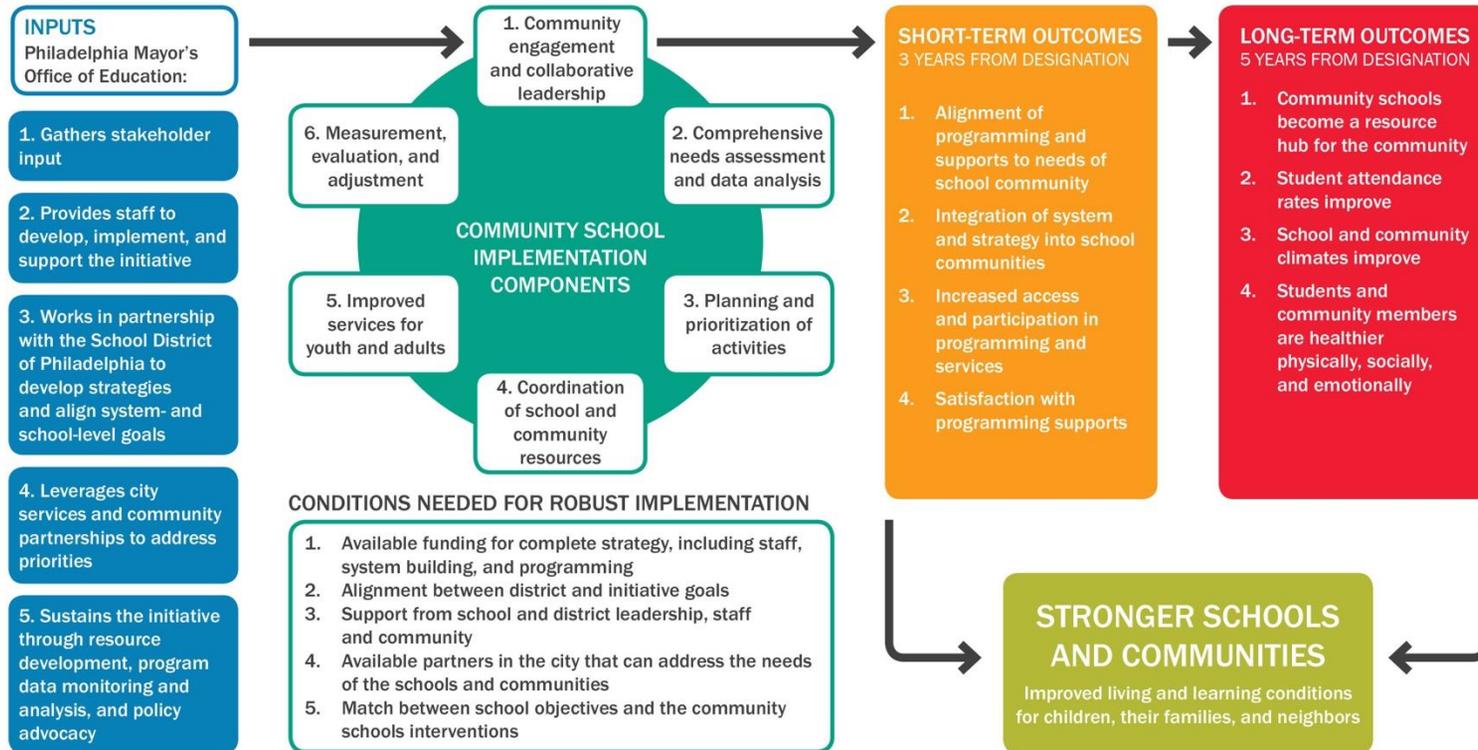
1. Alignment of programming and supports to needs of school community;
2. Integration of system and strategy into each school site and community;
3. Access to and participation in services; and
4. Satisfaction with programs and supports.

These short-term outcomes are expected to set the stage for longer-term outcomes, such as improvements in student attendance, school and community climate, and the health and well-being of students and their families (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Philadelphia Community Schools initiative theory of action, 2017-18

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS THEORY OF ACTION

The City of Philadelphia establishes Community Schools to improve living and learning conditions for children, families, and neighbors. As community hubs, these schools address basic needs, facilitate access to health and wellness services, improve economic stability, support youth learning and development, and strengthen the Philadelphia community. The Mayor's Office of Education works with the School District of Philadelphia to identify and designate schools and provides staff to support the development and implementation of school-specific plans to increase access to city and community services.



EXISTING CONTEXT

The Community Schools initiative is one of Mayor Kenney's top priorities • The City of Philadelphia has the highest rate of deep poverty in the U.S. • The School District of Philadelphia has been historically underfunded and is experiencing decreasing enrollment • Governance of the School District of Philadelphia is transitioning from a state School Reform Commission to a Board of Education appointed by the Mayor • Philadelphia has a strong human services and non-profit sector that runs programs and services in schools • There have been previous efforts to integrate services into schools in Philadelphia

Section 1. Philadelphia's Community Schools Initiative: A Unique Model of Community Schools

The Mayor's Office of Education (MOE) defines community schools as follows:

Community schools are public schools where a full-time coordinator works with the entire school community—students, parents, teachers, administrators, service providers, and neighbors—to identify the community's most pressing needs, such as expanded medical services, after-school programming, and job training. The coordinator then works with service providers and city agencies to bring these resources directly into the school. Community schools become neighborhood centers, improving access to programs and services for students, families, and neighbors.

Each community school has a full-time coordinator who is responsible for the development of a community school plan based on a needs assessment, community outreach, and the coordination of community partnerships to address the identified needs. This work of the coordinator is intended to be guided by a community school committee comprised of school staff, family and community members, and partners. The committee is designed to advise the coordinator on planning and implementation of the model.

Mayor's Office of Education Community Schools initiative theory of action

A theory of action (TOA) provides both internal and external audiences with a clear description of how implementation of an initiative is designed to result in desired outcomes. In the fall of 2017, MOE developed a TOA for the Community Schools initiative to describe the inputs, activities, and short- and long-term outcomes of the initiative, as well as the context in which the initiative operates (see Figure 3).

As described above, the components of this TOA blend best-practice Coalition Standards and Community School Pillars with MOE's expectations of the Philadelphia Community Schools initiative. The TOA includes the following:

- **Conditions needed for robust implementation.** To implement the initiative as conceived, MOE identified the following conditions as necessary: 1) available funding for the complete strategy, 2) alignment between district and initiative goals, 3) support for stakeholder groups, 4) available partners to provide services, and 5) a match between the Community Schools initiative and the expectations at each school site.
- **Inputs.** At an initiative level, the role of the Mayor's Office of Education (MOE) was to provide a set of inputs to support overall implementation of the model: 1) gather stakeholder input, 2) provide staff to implement and support the initiative, 3) work in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, 4) leverage city resources, and 5) sustain the initiative.
- **Community school implementation components.** Six implementation components aligned with national best practices were identified: 1) community engagement and collaborative leadership, 2) comprehensive needs assessment and data analysis, 3) planning and prioritization of activities, 4) coordination of school and community resources, 5) improved services for youth and adults, and 6) measurement, evaluation, and adjustment.

- **Short-term outcomes.** Three years after a site is designated as a community school, the following outcomes are expected: 1) alignment of programs and supports to the health and social services needs of the school and community, 2) integration of the system and strategy into the school and community, 3) increased access to and participation in services, and 4) increased satisfaction with services.

Figure 4. Variation Between Philadelphia and other national models

While successful community school models can vary to some degree, the Philadelphia model differs from national models and standards in several important ways:

- **The initiative focuses primarily on addressing barriers to student learning without requiring expanded learning opportunities.** The Coalition for Community Schools argues that, along with providing the integrated student supports included in the Philadelphia model, “successful community schools put high-quality learning opportunities at the core of their approach. They focus on ways to support learning during the typical school day and during times for expanded learning opportunities.” While most Philadelphia community schools offer learning supports, such as tutoring and homework help, those services are not a required focus of the model or coordinated with school instructional staff.
- **The initiative focuses on supporting external partners without a mechanism to hold organizations accountable for services or outcomes.** The first Coalition for Community Schools Standard recommends that “partners share responsibility and accountability for student and school success.” The Community Schools initiative has not developed a partner accountability system or developed goals and outcomes for individual partners.
- **The initiative focuses on the needs of the school and community as a whole, rather than on individual beneficiaries.** The Coalition for Community Schools standards call for the development of individualized learning plans for students. Communities In Schools (CIS) and Cincinnati Public Schools models provide examples of nationally recognized community school initiatives that have adopted an approach to identifying and addressing individual student needs.
- **Short- and long-term outcomes can be expected to emerge earlier than the timeline specified in Philadelphia’s TOA.** MOE’s current TOA expects short-term outcomes to emerge after three years and long-term outcomes, such as improved attendance, to occur after five years of implementation. However, similar outcomes have been found earlier in the lives of community school initiatives elsewhere. For instance, evaluations of the CIS and Baltimore initiatives found improved attendance rates after three years.

Section 2. The Status of System-Level Conditions that Support Robust Implementation Varies Considerably

Community school initiatives are remarkably complex endeavors whose success depends upon the presence of an unusually comprehensive set of conditions. The Theory of Action identifies five specific, necessary conditions to support robust implementation of the initiative. Notably, these system-level

conditions are not all under the direct control of the Mayor’s Office of Education; several are dependent upon the involvement and cooperation of a wide array of other entities, including the School District of Philadelphia, city departments, and community partners. Drawing on document review, survey, and interview data, RFA’s analysis suggests that the status of these conditions varies considerably. Table 3 summarizes our findings for system-level conditions that support robust school-level implementation.

Table 3. System-level conditions that support robust implementation

	Implementation Condition 1. Available funding for a complete strategy, including staff, system building, and programming
	Implementation Condition 2. Alignment between district and initiative goals
	Implementation Condition 3. System-wide support for the initiative
	Implementation Condition 4. Available partners in the City that can address the needs of schools and communities
	Implementation Condition 5. Match between school objectives and community school interventions

 **Implementation Condition 1. Available funding for complete strategy, including staff, system building, and programming**

Philadelphia identified a dedicated funding stream for the Community Schools initiative. Although it is now firmly in place, challenges during the first two years of the initiative slowed down implementation. The Coalition calls for financing and resource development that “diversifies funding, sustains and grows community schools, and supports coordination of the community school initiative.”¹² As noted in the introduction, Mayor Jim Kenney identified Philadelphia’s Beverage Tax as the primary source of funding for the city’s Community Schools initiative. While the beverage industry challenged the tax from the outset of the initiative, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in the City’s favor in July 2018. Following the court decision, the funds are no longer being held in reserve, and the initiative plans to expand. However, because court challenges delayed the release of funds for the Community Schools initiative during its first two years, the City lowered the four-year target number of community schools from 25 to 20. Furthermore, additional funding sources have not yet been identified, and stakeholders report that community school coordinators are stretched too thin, suggesting that more resources may be needed at the school level to ensure robust implementation.

¹² Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Standards for Community School Initiatives*: Standard 8



Implementation Condition 2. Alignment between district and initiative goals

District and initiative goals could be more closely aligned. The Community Schools initiative has been designed to address poverty-related conditions that create barriers to successful student outcomes. However, the initiative was not designed to coordinate these efforts with those of the School District of Philadelphia to improve academic outcomes.



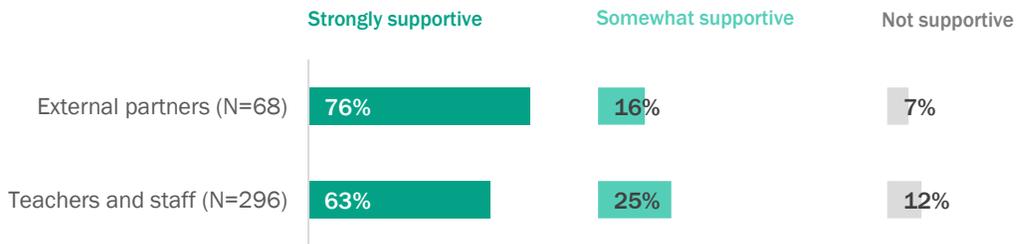
Implementation Condition 3. System-wide support for the initiative

Support for the initiative has been uneven across the system as reflected in limited coordination between MOE and the School District of Philadelphia. Yet school-level support is high. The partnership between SDP and MOE was limited during the first two years of the Community Schools initiative. Interview and focus group respondents at the school, district, and City levels suggested that there was mutual distrust that interfered with collaboration on the initiative. However, data from interviews and surveys suggest that many stakeholders at the school level support the initiative. One district official stated:

My honest perception is that at the school level there is huge support for the initiative... a lot of the schools [in which] community school program has [been implemented] have really been searching for a program like this. (School District Official)

Data from surveys of teachers, staff, and community partners across all community schools support this assertion. As shown in Figure 5, more than 60% of surveyed teachers, school staff, and community partners reported strong support for the initiative. Still, 15% of community partners and nearly a quarter of teachers and school staff reported being only “somewhat” supportive, suggesting the degree of support could be improved.

Figure 5. Teachers and school staff are supportive of the initiative across community schools, but degree of support could be improved



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18



Implementation Condition 4. Available partners in the City that can address the needs of the schools and communities

Overall, partners are available to meet some local needs, but other needs remain unmet. Most community schools coordinators (7 of 9) described moderate levels of partner availability but noted that there is room to scale up services or achieve greater alignment between services and priority needs. For instance, coordinators described a lack of partners that provide training in anger management or support

families that do not speak English. Only one coordinator reported an abundance of partners, yet she noted that this high level of availability caused some challenges related to space in the school to provide services. In contrast, another coordinator reported limited partner availability to address trauma and the “massive amounts” of social and emotional needs of students, families, and community members.



Implementation Condition 5. Match between school objectives and community school interventions

School expectations for the initiative align with the current community school model. Principals appeared to have a clear sense of the focus of the Community Schools initiative and did not have expectations for the work beyond its scope. For example, one principal explained that “part of what our mission and our vision at [the school] is to increase parental involvement and to be that locus in the community”; this directly aligns with the work of the community school.

Section 3. The Status of Community School Inputs from the Mayor’s Office of Education is Mixed

The long-term success of Philadelphia’s Community Schools initiative is considerably dependent upon strong and consistent system-level leadership and cross-sector collaboration. During the first two years of the initiative, the Mayor’s Office of Education (MOE) aimed to support the initiative’s implementation at the school level via the five system-level inputs detailed in the Theory of Action. RFA’s analysis of MOE inputs suggest that the status of the inputs is mixed, with some progress evident but key elements remaining underdeveloped. Table 4 summarizes our assessment.

Table 4. Status of MOE Community Schools initiative inputs

↑↓	Input 1. Gather stakeholder input
↑↓	Input 2. Develop staff capacity
↑↓	Input 3. Work in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia
↑↓	Input 4. Leverage City of Philadelphia services
↑↓	Input 5. Sustain the initiative

Input 1. Gather stakeholder input



The Mayor’s Office of Education gathered considerable public feedback prior to the start of the initiative. Yet structures for ongoing and inclusive citywide leadership have yet to be developed.

In January 2016, MOE launched a public outreach effort to learn more about how the City of Philadelphia should develop the Community Schools initiative. More than 750 people from across the City participated in individual and group meetings, small roundtable discussions, and large town hall forums. More than 260 people completed a survey, sharing their feedback on what factors should be prioritized when selecting community schools.

However, initiative-level standards of the Coalition for Community Schools call for the development of an ongoing “representative cross-sector community-wide leadership group, including representatives from the school district, system-level partners, and under-represented groups” to oversee the initiative.¹³ While MOE has discussed developing such an advisory group, it has yet to be put in place. Such a system-level advisory group would nurture shared ownership and accountability for the initiative across stakeholders.



Input 2. Develop staff capacity

While the Mayor’s Office of Education hired coordinators for every school and supported them in multiple ways, school-based coordinators are still stretched thin. A dedicated full-time community school coordinator in each school is essential to the model, according to Coalition standards.¹⁴ In addition to full-time coordinators for each community school, MOE also hired central office staff, including coordinator supervisors and technical assistance and capacity coordinators.

The coordination of initiative efforts at each school site is largely the responsibility of Community School Coordinators in the MOE model. Yet coordinators, administrators, committee members, and partners broadly agreed that the responsibilities of a coordinator are a heavy load for a single person. One coordinator explained that:

Each [coordinator] is doing three people’s jobs. It would be fantastic if you had someone who was just a partner coordinator and someone who was the outreach person ... because when you go in the school you’re just one person to do all the work and the school’s needs ... they are so broad. You can’t do it all alone. (Coordinator)

One community school committee member summed it up by saying “[the coordinator] is a single person...it’s a challenge. It’s a lot for one person.”



Input 3. Work in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia

The Community Schools initiative has yet to become a collaborative partnership with the School District of Philadelphia. Coalition standards call for the integration of the school district in strategic planning.¹⁵ MOE and SDP worked jointly to develop a memorandum of understanding for the Community

¹³ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Standards for Community School Initiatives*: Standard 1

¹⁴ Ibid. *Community School Standards*: Standard 3.1

¹⁵ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Standards for Community School Initiatives*: Standard 3.3

Schools initiative, as well as the needs assessment and planning process. However, MOE and SDP have had limited collaboration in developing an aligned, strategic direction for the initiative due the following factors:

- **A strong relationship at the highest levels of the Mayor’s Office of Education and the School District of Philadelphia did not develop during the first two years of the initiative.** While MOE and SDP have been in regular communication about the Community Schools initiative and have worked together in several ways, district officials reported that there was still some confusion regarding the parameters of the initiative.
- **Limited interaction between MOE’s Community Schools initiative leadership and SDP senior cabinet members.** Top members of the district’s leadership were involved at the beginning of the work, but continuing district collaboration on community schools was managed by a single point person who did not sit on the senior cabinet.

Input 4. Leverage city services

The development of partnerships with city departments and resources is still a work in progress. Successful community school efforts align assets with needs.¹⁶ Since Philadelphia’s model is driven by the City, there is opportunity for the initiative to leverage city services. MOE worked with several city departments to implement complementary strategies to support and maximize existing resources in each school. The Department of Public Health, the Office of Adult Education, and the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy are examples of city departments that have provided services in community schools. However, some potential collaborations between MOE and city resources have remained in the development phase or have provided services on a small scale, either in a subset of schools or at a single point in time.

Input 5. Sustain the initiative

Revenue from the Beverage Tax funds the Community Schools initiative; however, early challenges to this revenue source delayed implementation. Many community school initiatives advocate for district or city funding streams for their work, which is already a part of the Philadelphia model under the current administration. Now that the litigation against the Philadelphia Beverage Tax has been resolved, the initiative can resume expansion and long-term planning. However, continued development of corporate and other philanthropic partnerships¹⁷, as well as long-term commitments with new and existing service partners working the community schools, could also help to sustain operations.

MOE and other city departments also need to continue to work on aligning policies to support the community school model, build or expand long-term commitments with new and existing service partners, and use evidence of outcomes to jointly advocate for its continued implementation. While MOE has begun to work with SDP to explore related policies, ensuring that SDP and broader city policies support the Community Schools initiative will help to strengthen the work across and within organizations.

¹⁶ Ibid. Standard 3

¹⁷ For example, the City leveraged beverage tax funding and in-kind supports to match a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education through Drexel University and the Promise Neighborhood initiative to create and fund one fully-formed community school in West Philadelphia.

Once more outcomes data are available, any evidence of success can be used to build additional support to sustain the initiative as well.

Section 4. A Work in Progress: The Status of Community Schools Implementation on the Ground

In this section, we examine implementation of the Community Schools initiative across Philadelphia’s first cohort of nine community schools. After a full year of planning and another year of implementation, Cohort 1 schools can be expected to have made significant progress against each of the six major components of robust implementation. Evidence of robust implementation at the school level should occur before we can expect changes in short- and long-term outcomes to emerge.

RFA used a wide array of data from the nine Cohort 1 schools to evaluate the status of the Community Schools implementation at the school level. Specifically, we analyzed consistency of full implementation across schools according to the six Implementation Best Practice Components in the Theory of Action, as defined by the literature on community schools. Table 5 summarizes our findings.

Table 5. Quality of school-level implementation best-practice components

	Implementation Best Practice Component 1. Community Engagement and Collaborative Leadership
	Implementation Best Practice Component 2. Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Data Analysis
	Implementation Best Practice Component 3. Planning and Prioritization of Activities
	Implementation Best Practice Component 4. Coordination of School and Community Resources
	Implementation Best Component Practice 5. Improved Services for Youth and Adults
	Implementation Best Practice Component 6. Measurement, Evaluation, and Adjustment

Implementation Best Practice Component 1. Community Engagement and Collaborative Leadership

Best Practice: The community school should actively encourage participation and support for programs and services by developing a shared vision based on cross-sector input and practices, including NEPC pillars and Coalition standards.

Summary of Best Practice Status: Overall, community schools consistently encouraged students, families, and community members to participate in programs and services. However, feedback and volunteer opportunities were informal and could be further developed to give families and community members greater ownership in the work. While community schools have begun to provide evening and weekend activities, staffing and funding barriers still exist. Community school committees were in place at each

school and provided input and feedback to the coordinator, but the frequency of meetings and inclusion of all stakeholder types varied. A strong working relationship existed between the coordinator and the principal in most schools, and staff viewed coordinators as accessible. However, the quality of communication between coordinators and school staff varied.

A. Community engagement

Family and community engagement is central to a successful community school model.¹⁸ Table 6 summarizes the status of several important elements of community engagement across the community schools.

Table 6. Component 1-1: Community Engagement implementation levels

	Element 1a. The community school encourages participation in the services provided using ongoing, multilingual materials and strategies.
	Element 1b. The community school encourages family and community involvement and leadership in support of the initiative at the school level.
	Element 1c. Community programs and special events are sponsored by the community school.

 *Element 1a. The community school should encourage participation in the services provided using ongoing, multilingual materials and strategies.*

Best Practice: The Coalition standards call for “two-way, culturally and linguistically relevant communication between school and families [that] is proactive and consistent.”¹⁹

Summary of Best Practice Status: Overall, the community schools consistently employed strategies to encourage students, families, and community members to participate in services, including outreach in languages other than English when needed.

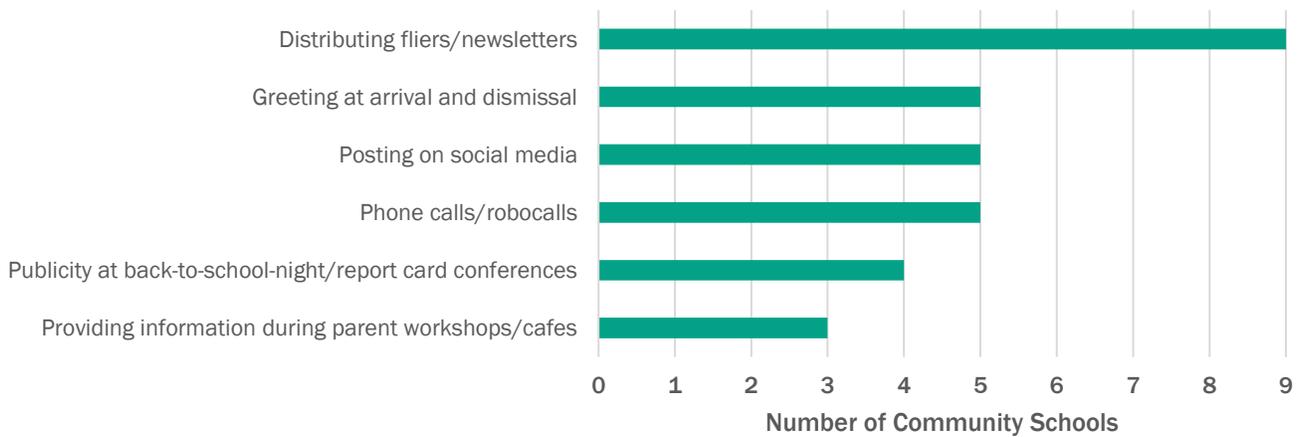
All community schools had an outreach strategy to encourage students to participate in services, though only five included direct outreach. Five of the nine Cohort 1 schools described outreach strategies that included direct communication with students. Student outreach at the remaining four schools primarily involved indirect strategies, including communication with students through teachers and family members.

All but one community school reported using multiple outreach strategies to communicate with families and community members about the available services. The most common strategies for reaching out to families are listed in Figure 6.

¹⁸ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standards 9 and 10*; see also, Oakes, Maier, and Daniel (2017).

¹⁹ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 9.3*

Figure 6. Community schools implemented multiple strategies for outreach to families and community members



Source: Community school coordinator interviews

Coordinators across all nine schools distributed fliers or newsletters as an outreach strategy. A principal described a community school coordinator’s strategy as follows:

[The coordinator] canvases, usually bi-weekly, within the community, and just puts up flyers and informational pamphlets in the doors. [The coordinator] also frequents churches and some of the religious organizations in the area to post things there. Those things, I feel like, have really been helpful. Those are things that certainly were not happening before the Mayor brought on the Community Schools into play. (Principal)

Outreach was conducted in languages other than English as needed. In five of the nine community schools, at least 10 percent of students are English language learners. In all five of those schools, coordinators used robocall translation services provided by the School District of Philadelphia, as well as other resources, to communicate to the community in languages other than English. At one community school where many languages are spoken, the coordinator worked closely with multiple bilingual counseling assistants (BCAs) to translate every community school flier into Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Burmese, and Indonesian.



Element 1b. The community school should encourage family and community involvement and leadership in support of the initiative at the school level.

Best Practice: Leadership development opportunities should be regularly available to families and community residents.²⁰ Further, community schools and their partners need to have a formal plan and set of data collection tools to collect feedback from stakeholders.²¹

Summary of Best Practice Status: Implementation levels in this area varied across community schools, which primarily offered families and community members informal opportunities for leadership, volunteering, and sharing feedback.

²⁰ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 9.6*

²¹ Ibid. Standard 5.1

Only six of the nine community school committees included families and community members.

Community school committee and partner meetings provided a venue for those stakeholder groups to provide input and feedback. According to community school committee rosters provided by MOE, six community school committees included parents and community members. However, two schools reported parents but not community members on the committee, and one reported neither parents nor community members on the committee.

Families and community members at most community schools had opportunities to volunteer.

Nearly all community schools reported ongoing or occasional opportunities for family and community members to volunteer. Volunteers from the community have been involved in community service days and other special events at the community schools.

Families and community members had ongoing opportunities to provide informal input and/or feedback about most community schools, but more formal feedback mechanisms could be developed.

Six community schools reported that they either *informally* or *formally* encouraged and received ongoing input and feedback about the services and programs provided. In four schools, this feedback was gathered **informally**, in most cases by word of mouth. For example, one principal explained that “people always tell us everything. If they like something they let us know, if they don’t, they let us know.” Two community schools developed more **formal** processes for gathering feedback through questionnaires and focus groups with service beneficiaries. At one community school, at the “mid-point last year and this year at the beginning of this year” the coordinator administered a questionnaire “about our entire group of services” and “what types of services they would like for us to include at [school].” At the other, the principal explained that “we have asked for parents to come in to offer their feedback [about what] we can do to make our school programs better.”



Element 1c. Community programs and special events should be sponsored by the community school.

Best Practice: Community school buildings should be open and accessible beyond the school day, including evenings and weekends.²²

Summary of Best Practice Status: While most schools offered at least some activities beyond the regular school day, the degree to which they did so varied.

Most community schools sponsored special events and services. These events took place during the school day, after school, in the evenings, or on weekends, and they were typically arranged by coordinators. Six community schools provided ongoing events, while three provided events occasionally during the year. Examples of ongoing events at community schools included:

- Weekly *Get Fit Saturdays* that included physical activities for students and adults;
- Resource fairs the first Monday of each month that offered free clothing, benefits access, constituent services, adult education, and job opportunities; and
- Physical activities, health services, tutoring, and other services, one Saturday each month.

Community schools have begun to provide evening and weekend activities. Many schools offered regularly scheduled evening classes, including adult education, financial literacy meetings, and yoga.

²² Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards*: Standard 10.2; see also, Oakes, Maier, and Daniel (2017).

Several schools also hosted occasional special events in the evening. Only one school reported that it did not stay open in the evenings. Weekend programming was more variable. Three schools reported holding regular weekend events, and another three schools reported doing so occasionally. The remaining three schools did not offer any weekend programs or services.

However, the need for staff after traditional school hours creates barriers. In some cases, the Mayor’s Office of Education has assisted in providing funding to pay for these extended hours. One principal explained that “our Saturdays would not be possible without the Mayor’s Office. [They] are helping us open up our building...by helping pay for... hiring our maintenance teams.”

However, concerns still exist about issues such as security and staffing, and these concerns limit the use of some school buildings during evenings and weekends. As one coordinator explained, the principal has expressed “concern about doing something after school” without security. A district representative explained that the district is in the process of looking at their policies around the use of facilities by partners.

Recommendations for Improving Community Engagement

- ***Develop more structured volunteer and community leadership opportunities.*** While volunteer opportunities exist at most community schools, most have not established formal parent and community volunteer roles outside of the committee. It is important that parents and community members have opportunities to take on leadership roles and ownership in the work, and so the development of more formal volunteer roles and responsibilities related to community school programs and services could be an objective moving forward.
- ***Develop ongoing input and feedback processes.*** While each community school committee provides a venue for multiple stakeholders to provide feedback, it is important that the Mayor’s Office of Education and individual partners have a plan for collecting feedback on services from beneficiaries. Currently, MOE has developed survey instruments for adult education class participants, and satisfaction surveys are included in the current evaluation. Still, most of the feedback received by coordinators is collected informally, via word of mouth. More formal, systematic feedback processes could be developed and implemented, and the data could be used to ensure continuous improvement.
- ***Continue to address funding and security concerns to expand programs to evenings and weekends.*** While some schools offer evening and weekend programs and services, hurdles still exist around security and funding. MOE and SDP could continue to work together to remove policy and funding barriers to providing evening and weekend services.

B. Collaborative leadership at the school site

Best Practice: Collaborative leadership is a pillar of effective community schools.²³ Indicators for collaborative leadership include the development of a site-based leadership team and a strong working relationship between the coordinator and the principal.

²³ Oakes, Maier, and Daniel (2017).

Summary of Best Practice Status: Each school had a community school committee in place to provide input and feedback to the coordinator. A strong working relationship between the coordinator and the principal existed at most sites, and staff reported that coordinators were accessible resources. However, there was some variation in communication between coordinators and school staff. Table 7 displays the implementation level for each of the elements of collaborative leadership.

Table 7. Component 1-2: Collaborative Leadership implementation levels

	Element 1d. A community school committee is in place at the school and regularly works as an advisory group to the initiative.
	Element 1e. The school administration is encouraged to play a central role in the Community Schools initiative in the building.
	Element 1f. The coordinator communicates with teachers and staff about the Community Schools initiative.

 *Element 1d. A community school committee should be in place at the school and regularly work as an advisory group to the initiative.*

Best Practice: A “representative site-based leadership team... that guides collaborative planning, implementation, and oversight” is a standard of community schools best practice.²⁴

Summary of Best Practice Status: With one exception, community school committees were in place during the 2017-18 school year to help guide the initiative at their sites. However, only some schools’ committee members included most or all stakeholder groups and provided regular guidance to the coordinator. Attendance at school committee meetings was low in most schools.

Community school committee members at each school reported being involved in the development of the community school plan priorities during the 2016-17 school year. One committee member described the process as follows:

We came up with a list of ideas and then everybody voted on which ones were the most important ones. After discussion on each one of those ideas, we took a vote and we came up with the three ideas that are the focus. (Committee member)

The frequency of community school meetings varied by school. Despite the expectation that committees meet monthly, only six community school coordinators held community school committee meetings once a month during 2017-18; one committee met every other month and two met sporadically during the year or not at all.

Six of the nine community school committees included all stakeholder types. According to committee rosters provided by MOE and interviews with coordinators, principals, school staff, partners, families, and community members were all represented on six community school committees. Students were also included on the committee in all three high schools. However, in three of the schools, community members who are not family members were not included.

²⁴ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 1.2*

Attendance at community school committee meetings appeared to be low. When asked if “all, most, some, few, or no members” typically attended committee meetings, nearly half (45%) of committee focus group questionnaire respondents reported that only “some” or “few” members attended. When attending portions of committee meetings during March and April 2018 to conduct focus groups, RFA researchers observed how many members were in attendance, excluding the principal, the coordinator, and other MOE staff. We found that the number of committee members was typically fewer than five people—far fewer than in the committee rosters provided.

In most community schools, the coordinator regularly asked for committee input and feedback during meetings, when they were held. One of the roles of the community school committee is to advise the coordinator on the implementation of the community school plan. Based on data provided in the questionnaire completed by committee members across schools, 75% of committee members reported that the coordinator asked for feedback on the community school at all or most meetings. Further, in six of the nine community schools, committee members reported during focus groups that they advised the coordinator regularly at meetings as well. When asked if they had opportunities to provide the coordinator with feedback, committee members said that “we are always giving [the coordinator] feedback,” “every time, all the time,” and “honestly, [the coordinator] does all the time.” In two of the three schools where feedback was not requested as often, the committees also met less frequently during the year.



Element 1e. The school administration should be encouraged to play a central role in the Community Schools initiative in the building.

Best Practice: The Coalition standards call on principals to “work with the community school coordinator, partners, and staff.”²⁵

Summary of Best Practice Status: In all but one school, principals and coordinators were in frequent communication and shared decision-making around community school activities; this indicates that this element was implemented at a consistently high level across most schools.

All but one of the principals attended community school committee meetings regularly. One indicator included by the Coalition is whether the principal meets regularly with the site-based leadership team. Not surprisingly, due to their demanding schedule, principals are often not able to attend the entire meeting but stop in for a portion of the meeting.

Coordinators and principals are in frequent communication in all but one school. The Coalition standards also suggest that principals meet regularly with community school coordinators. Coordinators and principals typically had weekly scheduled meetings, but were often also in frequent, almost daily communication. One coordinator said:

We have a set time that we meet weekly, but for the most part we meet every day. There's times when we sit down and make sure we have different things in order and make sure...we're on the same page. Whether it's face-to-face, text messaging, on the telephone. Very seldom do I not talk to [the principal] multiple times throughout the day. (Coordinator)

²⁵ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 1.3*

A principal said:

[People] call [the coordinator] the “community school principal.” We communicate probably too much... email, text, phone calls. I schedule a time for [the coordinator] once a week where we do sit down and look at our calendars to see what we need to do. (Principal)

In the school where the principal and coordinator were not in frequent contact, the assistant principal was closely involved with the coordinator.

In all but one school, the principal was consistently involved in decision-making around the Community Schools initiative. Coordinators explained that they made sure to include the principal in the work. One coordinator said, “I don’t make any decisions without first sending them to [the]principal... she’s the type that trusts me to make sure I’m keeping the school’s vision at heart.”



Element 1f. The coordinator should communicate with teachers and staff about the Community Schools initiative.

Best Practice: The Coalition advocates for close communication between not just the coordinator and the principal, but also other school staff.²⁶

Summary of Best Practice Status: Community school coordinators were accessible to teachers and staff, though the level of communication about services varied across schools.

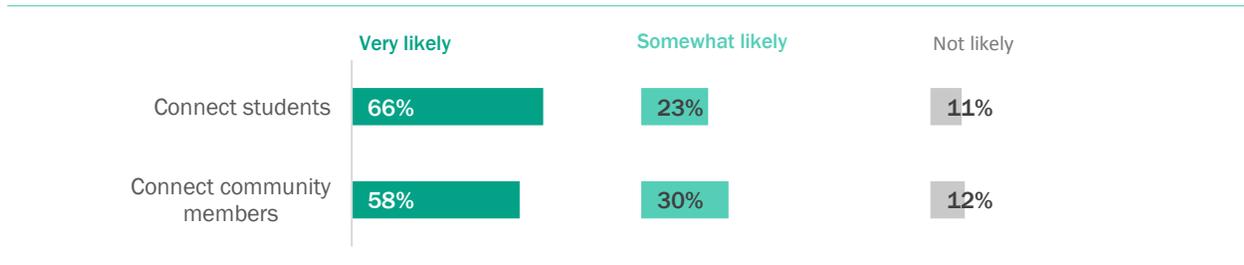
The level of communication about services between coordinators and staff was mixed across schools. In five schools, teachers and staff reported that the coordinator communicated regularly about community school activities through email, fliers, phone calls, text messages, in-person communication at staff meetings, and day-to-day interactions to share information. In one school, the coordinator “made sure to talk to every single staff member and built a relationship with everyone in the building.” At another, a teacher explained that, “I’m very much aware of the initiatives... [the coordinator] makes sure... to involve the teachers.” However, responses at two schools were mixed, and at the other two, staff reported communication to be limited.

Across all community schools, teachers and staff reported that the coordinator was accessible and responsive. One teacher explained that most staff had the coordinator’s cell phone number and received an immediate response to any texts they sent. Another staff member described the coordinator as “a fairy godmother; if you say, ‘we really need to have this,’ [the coordinator] finds a way.”

Over half of teachers and school staff reported that they talked to the coordinator for suggestions on how to connect students, families, and community members to programs, activities, or services. Figure 7 outlines evidence of this finding. However, it is important to note that referrals for services still primarily came through the school counselor, who often collaborated with the coordinator.

²⁶ Ibid. Standard 3.3

Figure 7. Over half of teachers and school staff were very likely to talk to the coordinator about how to connect students, families, and community members to programming and supports



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Most schools (six) included the coordinator as a member of the school leadership team. The Coalition recommends this practice.²⁷ In one school the coordinator was involved, but not a member, and in two s/he was not a member.

Recommendations for Improving Collaborative Leadership

- Reestablish and strengthen the importance of school-based leadership.** Across all schools, the community school committees played a central role in setting the priorities of the community schools last year. Yet, in some cases, the role of the committee diminished as the initiative moved forward, and committees met less frequently. School-based leadership is an essential component of the initiative, providing an opportunity to develop strong community leadership and a chance for the coordinator to delegate some of his/her many responsibilities to members, helping leadership team members share ownership of the work.
- Ensure that all stakeholder types are represented on the community school committee and attend regularly.** In three community schools, no community members outside of family were represented. At the same time, attendance at committee meetings was reported and observed to be modest. While securing and maintaining volunteer involvement is always a challenge, school-based leadership needs to include representatives of all beneficiaries and stakeholders to meet community school standards.
- Develop communication strategies with teachers and staff.** While some coordinators kept teachers and staff well informed, others did not. MOE may want to establish a set of strategies or tools, such as email updates or newsletters, that coordinators can use to communicate to school staff about available services and events.

²⁷ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 1.3*



Implementation Best Practice Component 2. Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Data Analysis

Best Practice: Research indicates that strong community schools collect and analyze data on school and community needs, as well as the assets already available to address them.

Status of Best Practice Summary: MOE's central office staff planned and coordinated much of the needs assessment data collection, including surveys and focus groups with staff, students, community members, and partners. All community schools also collected information on school, community, and partner resources available to address identified needs. As noted previously, data collection was not designed to include individual-level student data in Philadelphia (a departure from other national community school models). Table 8 summarizes our evaluation of implementation for specific components of this best practice.

Table 8. Component 2: Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Data Analysis implementation levels

	Element 2a. Data was collected on student, school, and community needs.
	Element 2b. The needs assessment included input from stakeholders including teachers/staff, community partners, students, families, and community members.
	Element 2c. The needs assessment included multiple sources of information for identifying the needs of students, families, and the community.
	Element 2d. The community school collects information on resources that can be used to address identified needs.



Element 2a. Data on student, school, and community needs should be collected.

Best Practice: A “needs and assets assessment of the school, student, families, and neighboring community” should inform each community school’s plan.²⁸

Summary of Best Practice Status: MOE’s central office staff planned and coordinated much of the needs assessment data collection, leading to consistent implementation across schools.

MOE collected aggregate data on student engagement and academic development, school climate, and physical, social, and emotional health. Table 9 outlines the data collected.

²⁸ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards*: Standard 2.3

Table 9. Needs assessment data collected

Categories	Data Collected	Sources
Student engagement and academic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School progress report ratings, which include achievement, progress and college-career readiness index scores • Student attendance rate • Dropout rate • Percentage of students with an IEP 	Publicly Available School District Data
School Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension rate • Serious incident rate • Teacher attendance rate • Student and staff perceptions on the prevalence of bullying at school • Student perceptions of personal safety 	Publicly Available School District Data MOE Needs Assessment Surveys
Physical, social, and emotional health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical health: healthy food access, chronic health conditions (obesity, diabetes, asthma), heat levels (temperature departure from county average on hottest days) • Social and emotional health: poverty levels, unemployment, median household income, drug crimes within 1,000 feet of residence, distance to parks, and limited educational attainment (no school completed, high school diploma only) 	MOE Needs Assessment Surveys American Community Survey Public Health Management Corporation Philadelphia Police Department Get Healthy Philly

MOE collected physical, social, and emotional health data from multiple sources and combined them to create a [geographic stress index](#), available online. The surveys also asked respondents to select the types of services they would like to receive.



Elements 2b/2c. The needs assessment process should include multiple data sources (2b) and input from multiple stakeholders (2c).

Best Practice: A “needs and assets assessment of the school, student, families, and neighboring community” that informs the community school plan.²⁹

Summary of Best Practice Status: MOE central office staff drove the needs assessment process by designing surveys and focus group protocols, leading to high levels of implementation overall.

The Mayor’s Office of Education designed and administered surveys and conducted focus groups in each community school. In many cases, coordinators already had experience in the neighborhoods they served, which helped orient them to available resources as well as the needs of the school. In addition to neighborhood observations conducted by coordinators, MOE conducted surveys and focus groups of school staff, partners, community members, families, and students to gather information on student, family, and community needs. Table 10 outlines the average number of needs assessment participants across schools.

²⁹ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards*: Standard 2.3

Table 10. Average number of needs assessment participants across community schools, excluding students

Data Sources	Average Number in Each School
Focus Group Participants	
• School Staff Focus Groups	16
• Partner Focus Groups	8
• Family Focus Groups	17
• Community Focus Groups	8
• Student Focus Groups	24
Survey Respondents	
• School Staff Surveys	26
• Partner Surveys	7
• Family Surveys	30
• Community Surveys	23
• Student Surveys	210



Element 2d. Community schools should collect information on resources that can be used to address identified needs.

Best Practice: Data on the available community assets that can be leveraged to address needs should be collected.³⁰

Summary of Best Practice Status: All community schools conducted asset mapping. Community schools collected information on school resources, community resources, and partner resources, as shown in Table 11, below.

Table 11. Asset mapping data collection

Asset Types	Data Collection Method	Number of Schools
School Resources (e.g., staff, facilities)	Informal observations and Interviews	8
Community Resources (e.g., recreation center, library)	MOE Needs Assessment Surveys, Neighborhood Observations	9
Partner Resources	Partner Documentation	9

³⁰ Ibid. Standard 2.3

Recommendations for Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Data Analysis

- **Expand the collection and analysis of data on academic outcomes.** While some academic outcomes were included in the needs assessment, data collection and analysis could have been more extensive. Analyses could include the disaggregation of indicators by race, gender, income, and other factors to better understand the learning needs of students and align learning support services with those needs.
- **Update the needs assessment and asset mapping.** The Coalition for Community schools recommends updating the needs and asset assessment every three years. Schools and communities are organic and ever-changing; as new services are brought in through the Community Schools initiative, the needs and existing resources can be expected to change as well.
- **Ensure that all stakeholders, including community members, are represented in the needs assessment process.** While it can be difficult to obtain the participation of community members in surveys and focus groups, it is essential to include their voices in the needs assessment process. In instances where this is not the case, the identified needs and corresponding priorities will not accurately reflect the needs of the community.



Implementation Best Practice Component 3. Planning and Prioritization of Activities

Best Practice: School-level planning is a central component of best practices.³¹ Based on the needs assessment and asset mapping processes, the community school should develop a plan that aligns with the school building's goals and clearly indicates the priorities of the community school, the activities and strategies involved, measures of progress, and the roles of stakeholders in the work.

Summary of Best Practice Status: Each site developed a community school plan that supported building goals and, in most cases, developed priorities that align with the identified needs. However, community school plans did not outline the ways in which identified resources would address priorities, measures used to gauge progress on priorities, or responsibilities of stakeholders in the work. Table 12 lists the implementation levels for each recommended element of school-level planning and prioritization.

Table 12. Component 3: Planning and Prioritization of Activities implementation levels

	Element 3a. The community school priorities are based on the needs and resources of the school and community.
	Element 3b. The community school plan supports school building goals.
	Element 3c. The community school plan and logic model support student learning (academic).

³¹ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Standards for Community School Initiatives: Standard 2*

	Element 3d. The community school plan and logic model address barriers to student learning (non-academic).
	Element 3e. The community school plan and/or logic model defines a process for measuring progress on short- and long-term goals.
	Element 3f. The community school plan defines the roles of the principal, teachers, school staff, partners, and the committee.



Element 3a. The community school priorities should be based on the needs and resources of the school and community.

Best Practice: The community school plan should be based on the needs of the school and community.³²

Summary of Best Practice Status: While, in most cases, each school’s priorities aligned with the needs identified, this was not always the case. Further, community school plans did not outline the ways in which identified resources would address priorities.

In most but not all cases, the primary and secondary priorities of each community school aligned with the analysis of needs. MOE conducted extensive analysis of the data and identified areas of need for each school and community. At seven of the nine schools, all primary priorities aligned with the needs identified through MOE’s internal analyses. However, in two schools, some primary priorities and needs did not align. In these cases, the community school committee decided to identify additional priorities outside of those identified in the needs assessment. Similarly, three community schools identified secondary priority areas based on the determinations of the committee but without supporting needs assessment data.

Community school plans and logic models do not identify how community resources will be utilized. The Coalition for Community Schools recommends that a community school illustrates how programs and services align with desired results. While the community school plans included community assets and some existing partners, the lists of existing partners were not comprehensive, and the plans did not include a discussion of how these existing resources could be utilized to begin to meet needs outlined in the community school’s priorities.



Element 3b. The community school plan should support school building goals.

Best Practice: The community school plan priorities and the larger goals of the school itself need to support one another.

Summary of Best Practice Status: Each site developed a community school plan that supported building goals.

In nearly all community schools, school administrators reported that the priorities outlined in the community school plan supported overall school goals. While recognizing that schools focus on student

³² Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 2.3*

academic outcomes, principals also perceived the community school priorities as supporting overall school goals. For example, one principal explained that:

When we talk about poor health, if our students are not healthy, they're not in school. They're not in school, they're not achieving, then [they do not] pass to graduate. If they're not eating healthy, their emotional balance is not in order and so instead of thinking through a situation, they're inclined to do something that'll get them in trouble and then that would elevate our suspension and serious incident rate. All that plays together. I think also, as far as the job training, that ties in, when... we find that our parents are better equipped to be better parents, they're able to run their houses, that would bring forth better children. (Principal)

In only one case did the principal say that the community school plan priorities are “separate” and “align with the initiative, but not necessarily our school goals.”



Elements 3c/3d. The community school plan and logic model should support student learning (academic) (3c) and address barriers to student learning (non-academic) (3d).

Best Practice: Coalition standards call for the inclusion of both academic and non-academic goals in the community school plan.³³

Summary of Best Practice Status: The initiative does not focus on academic outcomes outside of attendance, a departure from other national models (as discussed previously). Nonetheless, most community school plans included priorities or goals that support student learning.

All but one of the community school plans included at least one priority or goal that supports student learning. Plans included the following priorities or goals to support student learning:

- Increase homework help and supports for students;
- Create an array of academic enrichment activities and opportunities for students (e.g., media activities, tutoring, etc.);
- Ensure that there is sufficient homework help, tutoring and mentoring to meet demand; and
- Increase community supports and programs for academics (with a literacy emphasis).

All community school plans addressed barriers to student learning. As the primary focus of the work, all community schools addressed the barriers to student learning by supplying basic needs, offering mental and physical health care services, improving school climate, and providing job training, as well as other services.



Element 3e. The community school plan and/or logic model should define a process for measuring progress on short- and long-term goals.

Best Practice: Each community school plan should include a mechanism and indicators for measuring progress toward desired results.³⁴

³³ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards*: Standard 2.5

³⁴ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards*: Standard 2.8

Summary of Best Practice Status: While each school identified short- and long-term goals, they did not specify indicators of success in their school plans. Further, a method for tracking progress against goals has yet to be developed.

Short- and long-term goals have been identified. Each primary priority outlined in the community school plans included short- and long-term goals. These goals were broad statements about what the community school wanted to accomplish, such as providing additional healthy food options for students and their families or increasing access to public health services. In addition, coordinators developed logic models for each primary priority area that include inputs and outputs to achieve their goals.

Measures for the goals, and a method for tracking progress toward those goals, have not been specified. Community school plans did not specify which indicators (such as student attendance rates or number of counselor visits) should be used to determine if the goals identified had been achieved. Further, a method for tracking progress against goals has yet to be developed.



Element 3f. The community school plan should define the roles of the principal, teachers, school staff, partners, and the committee.

Best Practice: Community school plans should “explicitly outline the role of school staff, families, community partners, and the community school coordinator in helping to achieve specific results” with defined goals.³⁵

Summary of Best Practice Status: **Community school plans do not define all stakeholder roles.** In Philadelphia’s community schools, roles and responsibilities in community schools have only been defined for the community school committee; even in this case, the roles are not related to specific goals.

Recommendations for Planning and Prioritization of Activities

- **Define the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and describe how each will help to address priority areas, in the community school plan.** Coordinators, administrators, staff, partners, and volunteers all need to understand their role in the work and their responsibilities to achieve specific goals within the priority areas. Whether in revised community school plans or in supplemental planning documents, those roles and responsibilities need to be clearly communicated and explained to the appropriate stakeholders.
- **Specify measurable results and indicators for each goal and a process to track progress against those goals.** While the priorities and goals provide the overall focus for the work, specific results (e.g., increase attendance by 20 percent) and measures or indicators (e.g., obesity rate) need to be identified and tracked.



Implementation Best Practice Component 4. Coordination of School and Community Resources

Best Practice: Community schools provide services to students, families, and community members primarily through the development and coordination of external partnerships. The community school

³⁵ Ibid. Standard 2.4

should coordinate program partners, facilitate the use of school and community resources, and align services to meet the needs of students, families, and community members.

Summary of Best Practice Status: While the coordination of community school resources improved overall, schools varied significantly in the depth and process of reviewing existing partnerships and the level of support provided through partner meetings, partner feedback, and professional development. While schools utilized their staff and facilities, more can be done to coordinate and leverage city resources. Table 13 lists the implementation status for each element of this best practice.

Table 13. Component 4: Coordination of School and Community Resources implementation levels

	Element 4a. The community school has reviewed existing external partnerships.
	Element 4b. The community school supports external partners.
	Element 4c. The community school utilizes available school and city resources to provide services.
	Element 4d. The coordinator is improving the coordination of services at the school.

 *Element 4a. The community school should review existing external partnerships.*

Best Practice: The Community School Pillars include the coordination of integrated student support partnerships.³⁶

Summary of Best Practice Status: Community schools varied significantly in the depth and process of existing partnership review.

The Community Schools initiative has not yet developed a complete list of all existing external partners and the services or resources they provide. Due to the long history of partnership work in Philadelphia public schools that predates the Community Schools initiative, the development of a comprehensive inventory of existing partners has been an ongoing process since the beginning of the initiative and varies by community school. Coordinators explained that the partnership landscape changes frequently. In addition, the decentralized nature of school partnerships created challenges. One coordinator explained that “every once in a while, I’ll find out about something that a teacher’s doing [with a community partner].” The fact that some partners were brought in by school staff other than the coordinator also created confusion around the ownership of partner coordination.

Most community schools did not formally review alignment between each existing partner’s services and the needs of the school and community. With so many existing partnerships at the start of the initiative, understanding the alignment between them and the priorities of each school was a critical step. While four coordinators described a process to conduct this review, four others explained that they were only aware of the alignment in a general sense. It is notable that even in community schools with a

³⁶ Oakes, Maier, and Daniel (2017).

more formal process in place, each process was developed by the coordinator individually; MOE has not put a standard process in place.



Element 4b. The community school should support external partners.

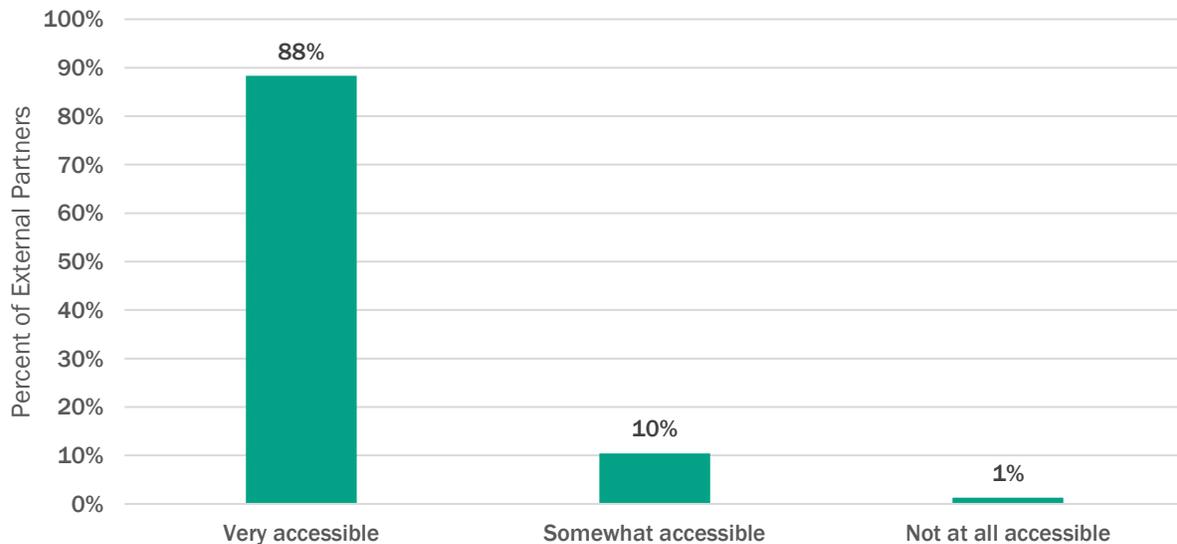
Best Practice: Coordinators should recruit, facilitate, and convene partners regularly.³⁷

Summary of Best Practice Status: In Philadelphia, MOE central office staff and coordinators have provided partner support in several ways, including hosting partner meetings, providing partner feedback, encouraging partner collaboration, and connecting partners to professional development. Partner meetings were one of the primary communication strategies between coordinators and partners. Yet community schools varied widely in the ways they provided support through partner meetings, feedback, professional development, and other mechanisms.

Five community schools consistently hosted monthly partner meetings. In the remaining four community schools, partner meetings were held inconsistently or not as often. In one case, the meetings did not occur until the end of the academic year. In another, the school climate manager met with partners in a group setting, and the coordinator was not always present. Individual meetings between the coordinators and partners were less common and often took place “whenever [the coordinator] saw the partner” or with partners “more active” in the school.

A strong majority of partners reported that coordinators were accessible to them. Figure 8 outlines partner views.

Figure 8. Nearly all surveyed partners perceived coordinators as “very” accessible (N=77)



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

³⁷ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 3.1*

During focus groups with partners, participants reported that the coordinator was accessible in all but one school. One partner explained:

I shoot an email to [the coordinator] and he responds right back. If I have a question about anything, I can reach out to him by text and I'll get that information back...I would say he communicates effectively, [the coordinator is] fast about it. (Partner 1)

Another partner said:

If there's ever an issue, [the coordinator is] always available by email and punctual with getting back to us and basically, anything we need. If there's ever been an issue or something that we're trying to put together, or we need her help with communicating with the school, [the coordinator has] been great with making everything happen. (Partner 2)

Building Capacity for Change: The Value of Community School Coordinators

School staff were very positive overall about the community school coordinators and the value they bring to their schools. Teachers and staff in seven of the nine Cohort 1 schools described the work of the coordinators in the following ways:

- *[The coordinator] is doing a wonderful job with the resources he brings into the school.*
- *The programs that [the coordinator] has been involved with have been very successful.*
- *[The coordinator] does a fantastic job at hosting events at the school and connecting on a personal level with the students.*
- *The community schools coordinator is a hard worker and does all within his influence to ensure that the initiative is functioning well at [the school].*
- *[The coordinator] is a pleasure to work with. His hard work and dedication shines bright in our school.*
- *[The coordinator] is an amazing person and so hard working. She goes above and beyond. She appears to really have the pulse on what is happening in school and with our students [and is] truly an asset to [the school].*
- *[The coordinator] has been an essential part of the equation for programming in my classroom.*

Coordinators lack clarity about their role in providing feedback to partners. As noted above, research suggests that community partners “share responsibility and accountability for student and school success.”³⁸ Coordinators did not hold partners accountable for services or outcomes, nor is it an expectation of the Philadelphia model (a departure from other national models). Nevertheless, coordinators in six schools reported providing partners with informal feedback on a case-by-case basis when opportunities allowed. The three other coordinators remarked that they did not see it as their role to provide feedback to partners.

³⁸ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 1.1*

In all but one community school, partners reported opportunities for collaboration. Coalition standards recommend “joint professional development” that includes partner organizations.³⁹ Part of the purpose for convening community school partners is to encourage them to collaborate on the services they provide and how they might work together. Coordinators and partners reported opportunities for collaboration in all but one school; in that case, the school did not have a partner meeting until close to the end of the academic year. One partner explained that, “since the Community Schools initiative has provided a monthly meeting and a connection inside of the school, it has greatly improved the collaboration between the various partners.”

Coordinators described their strategies to encourage partner collaboration in the following ways:

*This past summer, the partners all went to [one of our partners offices and] held a meeting there so we can see what the other partner does. We do a partner spotlight... that was great.
(Coordinator 1)*

I don't like it when people come to meetings and are just standing there ... I noticed that things will change when people had organic conversations from me being a partner. I always have a random icebreaker which makes you share. (Coordinator 2)

Professional development opportunities were limited. Partners reported only occasional referrals to training and professional development opportunities related to the Community Schools initiative. Recommended professional development opportunities came either through the coordinator or MOE’s central office staff.



Element 4c. *The community school should utilize available school and city resources to provide services.*

Best Practice: Community schools utilize the assets of the entire community—including the gifts of people who live and work there.⁴⁰ The integration of the Community Schools initiative can be supported by including school staff and facilities in the implementation of the community school model. As an MOE initiative, Philadelphia’s Community Schools initiative is well-positioned to leverage city resources as part of its strategy.

Summary of Best Practice Status: While implementation included staff and facilities, city resources were not leveraged to their potential to provide services across community schools.

Most community schools utilized a range of school and city resources:

- **School staff.** Teachers and staff often became involved in community school programs by supervising afterschool programs, clubs, and events.
- **School facilities.** The initiative has caused playgrounds, courtyards, libraries, lunchrooms, gymnasiums, and other facilities to be used in new ways.
- **City resources.** The new relationship between MOE and the Philadelphia Office of Adult Education allowed every community school to offer adult education classes. Partnerships also developed

³⁹ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards*: Standard 5.3

⁴⁰ Ibid. Guiding Principle 3.

between individual community schools and BenePhilly, the Office of Homeless Services, and the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Services (oTIS), and others.

However, additional opportunities exist for the Mayor’s Office of Education to collaborate with city departments and resources to expand services and shared goals. One school district official explained:

The community schools program has been very siloed in the Mayor's Office of Education... We had thought that community schools would be providing and really be looking into how to facilitate that deployment of city services from a wide variety of departments... but that was not what was happening.



Element 4d. The coordinator should improve the coordination of services at the school.

Best Practice: Developing a “coordinating infrastructure” is a standard of effective community schools.⁴¹

Summary of Best Practice Status: Coordinators have taken on responsibility for facilitating logistics for community school services and programs. A majority of partners reported that coordination was done well during 2017-18 and improved since the sites became community schools.

Coordinators consistently reported that facilitating logistics for community school services and programs is a large part of their responsibilities. During Philadelphia’s history of external partners working in the schools, coordination of these organizations often fell to the principal or another school administrator. The initiative shifted much of this work to the coordinator. One coordinator reported that as much as “50 to 60 percent of the time feels like it’s logistics.”

Overall, the quality of coordination has improved since the sites became community schools.

Principals reported that having a community schools coordinator lightened their workload. All but one principal or vice principal spoke positively about coordination since becoming a community school; in that school, the counselor continued to lead the coordination of partners. In over half the community schools, school administrators said the coordinator has taken work off their plate. One administrator said:

If we didn't have [the coordinator], I think all of this would be falling on me, which would be really difficult to do, because my role as the principal is really to try to focus on what's happening inside the building with the teachers and the students, and that's enough for my plate right now.
(Principal 1)

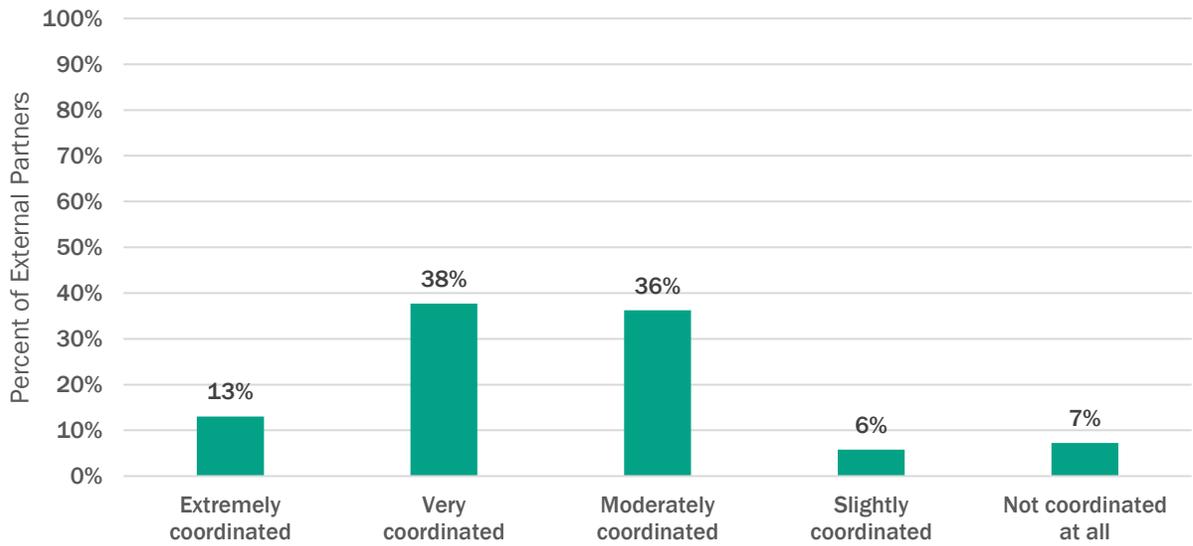
Another said:

I'm going to tell you that [coordination] is the piece that I just simply can't do because it's not enough time in the day. In the absence of [the coordinator] being here, I think you have partnerships that are kind of just hit-or-miss, or all over the place. (Principal 2)

Figures 9 and 10, below, outline partner responses about how well they coordinated and whether coordination has improved.

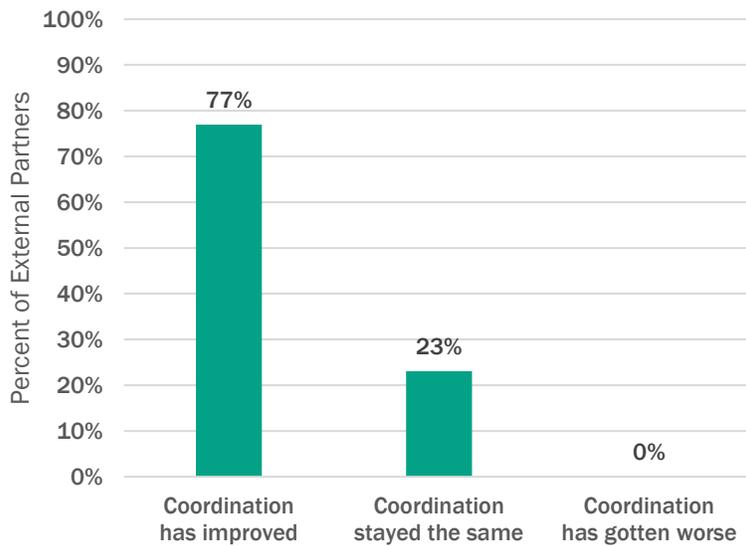
⁴¹ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 3*

Figure 9. Most surveyed partners perceived external services partners to be coordinated, but degree of coordination could be improved (N=69)



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Figure 10. More than three in four surveyed partners perceived improved coordination relative to last year (N=52)



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Note: This survey item was only asked of partners who had worked in schools prior to 2017-18.

Six community school coordinators reported providing programs and services to beneficiaries directly. From providing food to clothing to helping people find a job, these coordinators did not just facilitate the delivery of programs and services; in many cases, they also provided direct services themselves. While this is not an expectation of coordinators, it is worth noting that so many have taken on this additional role.

Recommendations for Coordination of School and Community Resources

- ***Develop and continuously update comprehensive documentation of partners, services, and alignment of community school priorities.*** External partners are the primary service providers and therefore the primary vehicle to address the needs of students, families, and community members. It is critical that coordinators thoroughly document the partners in the building, the services they provide, and the level of student and community participation.
- ***Develop systemic processes for reviewing the alignment of existing partners with community school priorities.*** The Coalition for Community Schools recommends ensuring “alignment and coordination of programs and services” with the community school plan. While some coordinators reported reviewing the alignment of existing partners and priorities in a formal way, some did not. To facilitate this work, MOE central office could develop a common process and standard documentation for coordinators to use.
- ***Meet with all partners regularly.*** Not all coordinators met with partners monthly, and individual partner meetings to review roles and responsibilities was not an expectation. Partner support, collaboration, and systemic feedback could be better facilitated by having all coordinators sponsor monthly partner meetings and meet with each partner at the beginning and the end of the year to plan the work and evaluate impact based on the school’s goals.
- ***Provide additional professional development opportunities to partners.*** Partner support can include in-house professional development on the Community Schools initiative as well as referrals to external sources for training and collaboration. While this took place occasionally, offerings could be expanded.
- ***Expand and deepen partnerships with city agencies and departments.*** In order to leverage city agencies and departments to support the work of the Community Schools initiative, MOE needs to widen collaboration to new offices and deepen the work being done with the district and other existing stakeholder groups.



Implementation Best Practice Component 5. Improved Services for Youth and Adults

Best Practice: An effective community school ensures that a broad set of services is delivered to students, their families, and communities.⁴² Because Cohort 1 of Philadelphia’s community schools already had a long history of partnerships prior to the initiative, the Community Schools initiative should introduce new services to the school and community and improve or expand existing services.

Summary of Best Practice Status: Community schools brought in additional resources to address the needs of students, families, and community members. All but one individual community school priority area was addressed by external partners or direct services provided by the school. However, the gap between needs and existing resources has not been formally analyzed. Table 14 lists the levels of implementation for this component.

⁴² Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 8.*

Table 14. Component 5: Improved Services for Youth and Adults implementation levels

	Element 5a. Priorities in the community school plan are addressed.
	Element 5b. The community school aligns new services with the needs of the students and community.
	Element 5c. New services for students, families, and community members have been introduced since the Community Schools initiative began.

 *Element 5a. Priorities in the community school plan should be addressed.*

Best Practice: To be effective, community schools should ensure the delivery of services that “respond to the needs of students and families.”⁴³

Summary of Best Practice Status: Nearly all community school priorities are being addressed by at least one external partner or school activity.

All but one individual community school priority area is being addressed by external partners or direct services provided by the school. Table 15 outlines the types of priority areas, the number of schools that selected each priority area, and examples of partners, activities, or services that addressed those priority areas. Additionally, at least one partner in four of the five community schools where at least 10 percent of students are English language learners (ELL) reported providing services for ELL students.

⁴³ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 8.3*

Table 15. Community school priorities and sample partners, activities, and services addressing priorities

Community School Priorities	Number of schools listing as:		Sample Partners, Activities, and Services addressing Priority Area
	Primary Priority	Secondary Priority	
Social and emotional health	6	2	School Therapeutic Services (STS), Big Brothers Big Sisters, Reset/Chill Out Rooms
School climate and safety	5	1	Committed Community Mentors, Parent Cafés, Philadelphia Police Department
Healthy foods	4	2	EAT.RIGHT.NOW, Common Market, Food and Wellness Network
Job opportunities and training	4	2	GED classes, Team Clean job opportunities, “job-a-thons,” interviews and apprenticeships
Physical activities	3	5	<i>Get Fit Saturdays</i> , Girls on the Run, Sierra Club, yoga classes
Afterschool/ extracurriculars	3	2	After School Activities Partnerships (ASAP), Boy and Girl Scouts, Girls on the Run
Academic supports (including ELL)	3	1	AARP Experience Corps, Coded by Kids, Children’s Literacy initiative
Community resources	2	3	UESF (Housing Support), HACE (Community Development), ESL and GED classes
Physical health services	1	1	Pennsylvania Health Access Network, Youth Advocate Programs, Lankenau Medical Center
Support for immigrants	1	1	Congreso, Center for Literacy, University of Pennsylvania, Paratodo, Puentes de Salud
Clothing and uniforms	0	1	Winter clothing drive collected coats, gloves, hats, and other accessories
Cultural and social opportunities	0	1	Drexel Dance Exchange initiative, ArcheDream for Humankind
Housing support	0	1	United Communities
Neighborhood beautification	0	1	School painting and grounds revitalization

Source: Community school plans, coordinator interviews, and partner lists



Element 5b. The community school should align new services with the needs of the students and community.

Best Practice: Along with recruiting new partners, part of a coordinator’s role is to use “data to determine services and program needs and gaps.”⁴⁴

Summary of Best Practice Status: This was an area where school-level implementation was limited due to a lack of strategic direction from MOE’s central office.

The community schools did not conduct formal gap analyses to determine which priorities were not yet addressed by existing partners. A formal gap analysis is a necessary next step after completing a needs assessment, setting priorities, and completing an inventory of existing service partnerships. While coordinators said that they had a “cursory knowledge” of the gap between existing services and the needs of the school and community, coordinators did not describe a formal process to identify the areas of need that required additional partnerships and services. One coordinator explained:

We look at, first, what the need is, what comes up, and who do we need to put in place and how do we get there? Answering those three questions, we get to the nuts and bolts of it. To say a more formalized process? Probably not. (Coordinator)

Some coordinators’ existing knowledge of the school prior to the initiative may have dissuaded them from completing such a process. One coordinator said, “I just took the gaps that I already identified personally... and fixed those.”

A standard process for vetting potential new partners is not in place across community schools.

Determining whether to have an external partner work in a community school is an important part of the process. Yet, to date, MOE has not provided schools with a standard procedure to review and determine whether a partner is appropriate for the school. As a result, most schools developed individualized processes for vetting partners, two were developing a vetting process and one was not yet developing a process.



Element 5c. New services for students, families, and community members should have been introduced since the beginning of the Community Schools initiative.

Best Practice: Providing integrated health and social supports is central to community school models.

Summary of Best Practice Status: All the community schools have explored potential new partners and new partners and/or services have been introduced at each community school.

All community schools explored potential new external partners. After public distribution of the community school plans, many potential partner organizations sought out community schools with priorities aligned with their services. All community schools engaged with new organizations to expand services provided.

Community schools introduced new partners and services for students, families, and community members. From new ongoing partnerships with external organizations to direct services and events provided monthly by the coordinator, each community school reported new opportunities for students and

⁴⁴ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 3.1*

the larger community. While in some cases these new offerings were introduced by staff other than the coordinator, a community school is not just the coordinator, but the entire school community.

Recommendations for Improved Services for Youth and Adults

- **MOE should provide coordinators with templates and processes for common responsibilities.** As evidenced by their descriptions of the partner vetting processes, coordinators must “create everything.” To support coordinators, MOE central office staff could develop formal templates and process directions that can be used by coordinators to conduct gap analyses, vet potential partners, and conduct other processes, so that coordinators do not need to establish these processes on their own. In some cases, these processes and forms may need to be developed in conjunction with the school district.



Implementation Best Practice Component 6. Measurement, Evaluation, and Adjustment

Best Practice: Evidence-based decision-making is centrally important to complex reforms such as the Community Schools initiative. The Coalition for Community Schools recommends that “data, participant feedback, and aggregate outcomes are analyzed regularly to assess program quality and progress and develop strategies for improvement.”⁴⁵

Summary of Best Practice Status: MOE has commissioned RFA to conduct an independent third-party evaluation, which has resulted in the publication of this public report and the provision of formative feedback to key stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the initiative. Internally, MOE specified broad outcomes but have yet to develop measures and processes to systematically track progress across community schools. MOE central office staff are still developing data collection, analysis, and continuous improvement processes for community schools. Table 16 lists the level of implementation of each element under this component.

Table 16. Component 6: Measurement, Evaluation, and Adjustment implementation levels

	Element 6a. The community school has specified outcomes and measures based on priorities and goals.
	Element 6b. The community school collects school and community feedback and data on a regular basis to monitor the quality of, participation in, and outcomes from the Community Schools initiative.
	Element 6c. The community school analyzes participation, feedback, and outcomes data on the quality and progress of the initiative at the school.
	Element 6d. The community school uses data to continuously monitor and improve the implementation of the Community Schools initiative.

⁴⁵ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Standard 5.1*



Elements 6a-6d. Community schools should be engaged in measurement, evaluation, and adjustment.

Community schools specified broad outcomes but lacked measures to track progress. To measure the impact of the Community Schools initiative, it is essential to identify outcomes and the measures that will be used to determine progress. After disseminating their plans, community schools collaborated with MOE central staff to develop school-specific logic models, which included outputs and outcomes for their primary priority areas. However, these outcomes were broad (for example, “families and community members have improved access to resources”) and did not include specific measures to track progress.

The Community Schools initiative is in the process of developing feedback and data collection processes. Putting data collection processes in place is also central to the work. As noted previously, we found that while feedback is collected, it is mostly done informally. MOE worked with external partners throughout the year to determine how best to collect participation data, and processes for collecting this data have been continuously developed to encourage greater data submission. Without specific measures, outcomes data have not been collected to date, although individual schools and MOE’s central office tracked attendance rates:

[MOE central office] provided some documentation to coordinators from the Philadelphia School Progress Reports, [including] what our overall average results looked like and then what the specific attendance results for their school looked like. It's not analysis. The district wide survey is another one where [we] provided bar charts, and we kind of sat down at one of the coordinator meetings and went question by question. (MOE Central Office Staff)

Data collection remains a work in progress and would be better supported through the development of a data agreement with the district as well as other city agencies.

Community schools did not analyze feedback or outcomes data related to priority areas. While some analysis takes place at MOE’s central office, it was limited due to the lack of available data, and individual schools did not conduct these types of analyses. When discussing this issue with MOE central office staff, one respondent explained that, “[coordinators] wouldn't be doing analysis, but they would be reading a report and kind of doing their own thinking about that data.” Coordinators did not regularly discuss feedback on data with community school committees, and while academic and attendance data was often discussed with the principal, it was not related to community school priorities or related outcomes.

While community schools typically adjust the implementation of the initiative, decisions are not based on a systemic review of data. As explained, data collection was limited based on a lack of clarity on outcome measures and limited data availability. Therefore, while coordinators and principals reported making regular adjustments to implementation based on informal feedback from families and community members, decisions were not typically based on community school outcomes data.

The Community Schools initiative has developed school-specific priorities that align with identified needs, as discussed above in Implementation Component 3. Moving forward, the initiative could support coordinators to assess and align partnerships to meet those needs, as discussed above in Implementation Component 4. In addition, we recommend the initiative take the following steps to support implementation of robust efforts to evaluate, measure, and adjust approaches to improving supports and services for children, their families, and the community, recognizing that work to understand fidelity and quality of implementation should guide the definition of appropriate outcome measures.

Recommendations for Measurement and Evaluation

- **Work with relevant partners to determine common, measurable school- and initiative-level outcomes, results, and indicators.** To measure progress, outcomes and indicators of progress must be identified. Without these, course corrections cannot be made based on data, and it will be difficult to measure the impact of the initiative.
- **Develop formal feedback processes.** While informal feedback can be valuable, more formal surveys and other feedback systems could be developed to gauge the quality of partner services and the degree to which student, family, and community needs are being met.
- **Develop data systems and protocols to assure access to relevant data at the individual student and aggregate levels.** Data sharing agreements between MOE, the district, and other agencies such as the Department of Human Services is critical to access needed data. Further, both individual student and aggregate school-level data will be needed to conduct the types of analysis required.
- **Discuss data with the community school committee and school leadership team regularly.** To develop data-based decision-making in community schools, the coordinators will need to receive training on data use and, in turn, discuss community school outcomes data regularly with the school leadership team and the community school committee.

Section 5. An Early Look: Short-Term Outcomes of the Community Schools Initiative

MOE's Theory of Action (TOA) designates four short-term outcomes, which are based on best practices and prior community school evaluations and expected to emerge after three years:

1. Alignment of programming and supports to needs of school community;⁴⁶
2. Integration of system and strategy into each school site and community;⁴⁷
3. Increased access to and participation in services;⁴⁸ and
4. Increased satisfaction with programs and supports.⁴⁹

These short-term outcomes are expected to set the stage for longer-term outcomes, such as improvements in student attendance, school and community climate, and the health and well-being of students and their families. According to the TOA, MOE expects to see improvements in short-term outcomes in three years and longer-term outcomes after five years of full implementation. However, other evaluations have found that outcomes may improve earlier in strong community school models. For instance, evaluations of the Communities In Schools (CIS) and Baltimore initiatives found improved attendance rates after three years, not five years.

⁴⁶ The Coalition standards specify that community school supports are based on a needs assessment and align to the whole-child needs of students, their families, and members of the community.

⁴⁷ Research on integrated student supports (ISS), one of the four pillars from the National Education Policy Center and Learning Policy Institute, emphasizes that "integration is key to the model—both integration of supports to meet individual students' needs and integration of the ISS program into the life of a school."

⁴⁸ Baltimore Education Research Consortium. (2016) *Baltimore Community Schools: Promise & Progress*. Baltimore, MD.

⁴⁹ Satisfaction surveys were included in the evaluation of City Connects Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support. (2010). *The Impact of City Connects: Annual Report 2010*. Chestnut Hill, MA.

Short-Term Outcome 1. Alignment of programming and supports to needs of school community

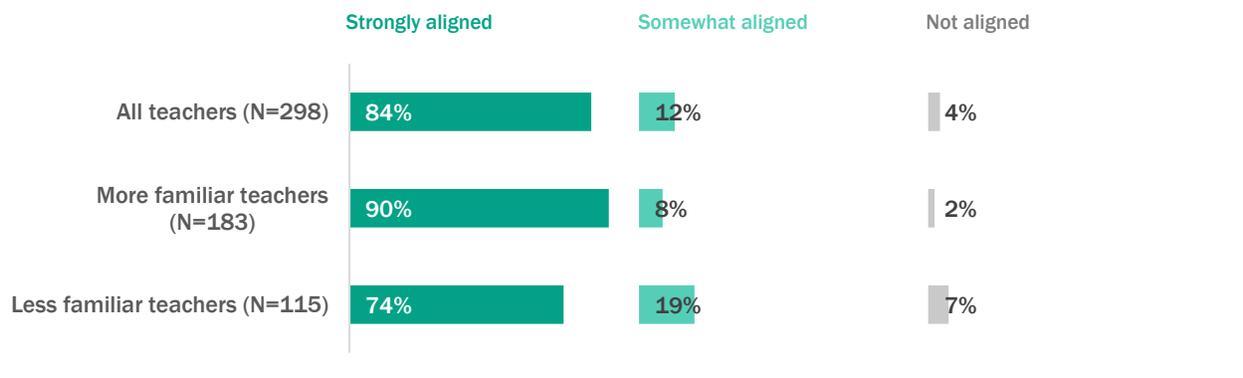
Summary: Most teachers and school staff reported strong alignment between programming and student needs during academic year 2017-18, an improvement the previous year. In contrast, most students reported that programming and supports were only somewhat aligned with their needs and that alignment was either the same or worse than last year. Compared to over 80% of teachers and school staff, less than 20% of students reported that programming and supports offered this year were strongly aligned to student needs.

In this section, we report teacher, staff, and student perceptions of whether the programs and services offered in 2017-18 were aligned to student needs.⁵⁰ We also asked survey respondents to reflect on how alignment has changed relative to 2016-17.

Perceptions of alignment of programs and supports to student and community member needs were mixed.

According to surveyed teachers and school staff, the programs and supports at their community schools largely aligned with student needs, as shown in Figure 11. Perceived alignment was even stronger among teachers and staff who reported being either “very” or “extremely” familiar with student programming and supports.

Figure 11. Most teachers, school staff perceived strong alignment between programs and student needs



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Note: Survey responses are only shown for school staff and teachers who reported being at least somewhat familiar with supports for students. “More familiar” teachers are those who indicated being “very” or “extremely” familiar with programs, activities, and services for students; “less familiar” are those who indicated they were “somewhat familiar with supports for students.”

Even though nearly all teachers and school staff reported that the programs and services were strongly aligned, open-ended survey responses offered some suggestion of unmet need. Ten responses from teachers and staff in five community schools identified the following services that they felt would help meet the needs of their communities:

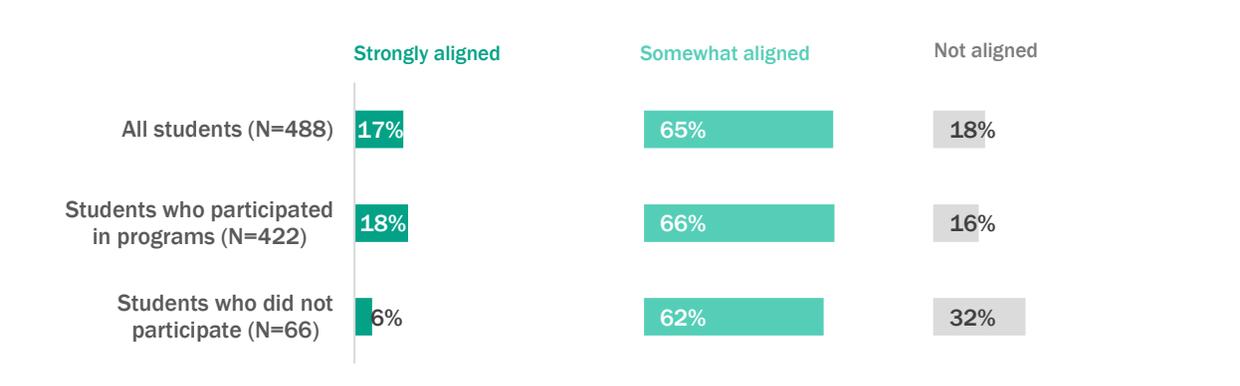
- Mental health and emotional support services;
- Programs that support conflict resolution;

⁵⁰ Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for Educational Leadership. *Community School Standards: Guiding Principle 2*

- ESOL support;
- Academic support for students;
- Mentoring programs;
- Programs to support families experiencing trauma; and
- Child care for teen parents.

In contrast to the perspectives of teachers and school staff, student perceptions of alignment were more tempered, as shown in Figure 12. This was even true among students who participated in at least one type of program.

Figure 12. Many students, even student program participants, reported that programming and supports offered at their school were only somewhat aligned to their needs



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Perceptions of improved alignment of services to student and community needs from prior year to current year were mixed.

Teachers and staff were much more likely than students to report improvements over last year in the alignment of programming and supports to student needs (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Relative to students, more teachers and staff reported that programming was more aligned to student needs this year than last year



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Specifically:

- Compared to over 70% of surveyed teachers and staff, less than a third of surveyed students reported that the programs, services, and activities at their school were more in line with student needs this year compared to last year.

- Compared to only 5% of surveyed teachers and school staff, about 30% of students reported that programming for students was less in line with student needs this year compared to last year.

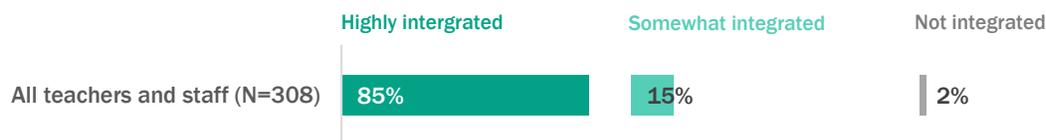
Short-Term Outcome 2. Integration of system and strategy into school communities

Summary: The perspectives of teachers, school staff, and external partners suggested that the Community Schools initiative was highly integrated into school communities. Yet student perspectives suggested room for improvement in student outreach.

This section presents findings from surveys of teachers, school staff, external partner organizations, and students on the level of integration of the Community Schools initiative into the school community. We first asked teachers and staff to reflect on the extent to which the initiative was integrated with the culture of the school. We then asked stakeholders within the school how familiar they were familiar with the initiative overall and, more specifically, with programs for students and community members.

Teachers and staff perceived that the Community Schools initiative was highly integrated into the culture of the school.

Figure 14. Nearly all teachers and school staff reported that the Community Schools initiative was highly integrated into the culture of their school



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Aligned with the above survey findings, interview and focus group data suggested that the slight variation in perceptions of integration may be tied to differences between schools. Teachers and school staff in seven of the nine community schools reported in interviews and focus groups that the initiative was highly integrated; in the other two schools, as one teacher explained, “integration will eventually get to its peak.” School administrators specifically remarked about the integration of the Community School Coordinators, who are MOE employees, into the culture of the schools where they serve.

School staff explained that:

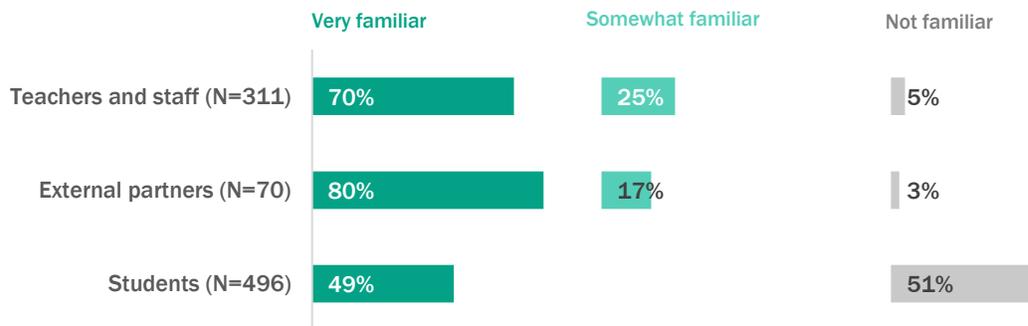
We don't really look at the community school model as being something separate from the school... we have [the coordinator] as a part of our team and this whole Community Schools initiative is now who we are, right, because we are a community school; it's not like we're [here] and then over there we have a community school. We're just all one entity. (Principal)

[The coordinator has] become a very integral part of this building. [The coordinator] communicates with all of our teachers... [the coordinator] does everything... and has really ingrained herself in this building with the teachers and the students. (Vice Principal)

Mixed stakeholder familiarity with the Community Schools initiative indicated more progress is needed to fully integrate the model into school communities.

As an indicator of the initiative’s integration into community schools, we asked external partners, teachers, and school staff how familiar they were with the Community Schools initiative. We also asked students if they knew their school was a community school. Responses in Figure 15 suggest that stakeholder familiarity with the initiative varied by respondent.

Figure 15. Familiarity with the initiative varied across stakeholders, with stronger familiarity among surveyed external partners than among teachers and staff, and still less familiarity among students



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Note: While external partners and teachers/staff were asked about their familiarity with the Community Schools initiative, students were asked to report whether they knew their school was a community school.

Student Services: Stakeholder familiarity with programs, services, and activities offered for students at the school was mixed.

We asked teachers, school staff, and students how familiar they were with programming and supports offered for students, an additional indicator of integration of the initiative into the school community. Nearly all surveyed teachers and school staff were very familiar with the programming and supports offered for students. However, many students were only somewhat familiar with the programs and supports offered at their school, as displayed in Figure 16.

Figure 16. While less so for students, nearly all teachers and staff are considerably familiar with programs, services, and activities offered for students at the school



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Open-ended survey responses gave insight into a lack of teacher familiarity with student programs at some schools, which may explain the slight variation in teacher and staff perspectives. Specifically, while we

found that most Philadelphia community schools offered learning supports, such as tutoring and homework help, those services are not a required focus of the model or coordinated with school instructional staff.

One teacher explained:

Most of the interactions are done at the student level with administrators and support staff...as content teachers we are usually the last to hear of what is available since most do not pertain to the curriculum. (Teacher 1)

Another teacher said:

It is still unclear as to what the initiative is bringing to the school. I am aware of a few programs for the community at large (i.e., GED class), but it is still unclear if there is supposed to be an impact on daily school life. (Teacher 2)

This lack of awareness is consistent with the variation between the Community Schools initiative in Philadelphia relative to other national models.

Community Services: Teachers and staff were familiar with programs, services, and activities offered at the school for community members.

We also asked teachers to report about their familiarity with programs, activities, and services offered for community members and families of current students. Figure 17 displays those results.

Figure 17. Most teachers and staff reported being very familiar with family and community programming



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Short-Term Outcome 3. Increased access and participation in programming and services

Participation in community school programs, activities, and services was relatively high among students: about 85% of surveyed students reported attending at least one type of program during the 2017-18 year. Community events and afterschool programs were the most common type of program attended. In addition, school staff reported more engagement with the community and more resources that benefited everyone because of the initiative.

This section examines self-reported data on student participation, which come from surveys of students. We asked students if, since the start of the school year, they had been to any of the following types of programs:

- Community events;
- Afterschool programs;
- Job programs;
- College-prep programs;
- Programs that provide useful things; and/or
- Health programs.

We also report findings from interviews with school staff and committee members about changes in levels of engagement associated with the initiative.

Participation in programming and supports was high among students in community schools.

Figure 18. Over 60% of middle and high school students reported attending two or more types of programs this year, and only about 15% of students did not attend any programs

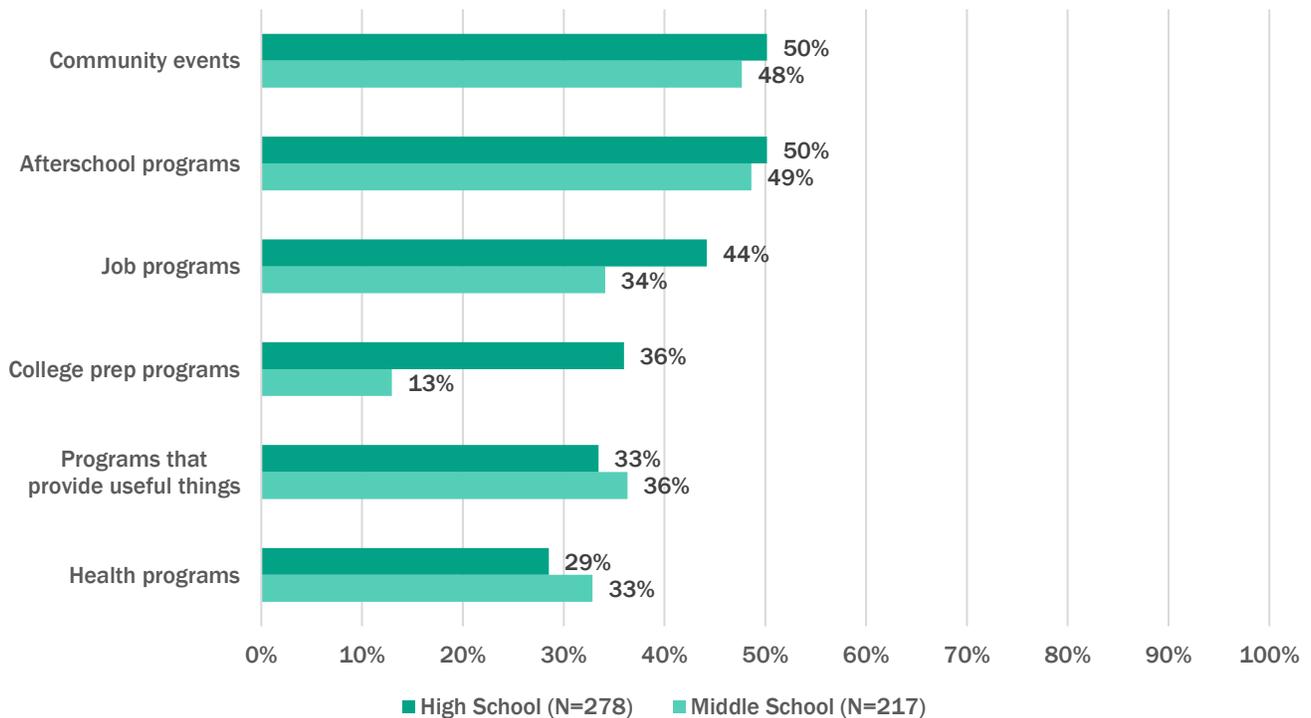


Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Community events and afterschool programs were the most prevalent type of program attended.

Figure 19 shows the percent of surveyed students, by grade level (middle or high school), who reported attending programs.

Figure 19. Percent of surveyed high school and middle school students participating in types of programs at community schools, 2017-18



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Specifically:

- About half of all students reported attending an afterschool program or community event during this school year.
- About a third of all students reported attending a health program or said they received support from programs that provided useful things like food, backpacks, or clothing.
- A higher percentage of high school students reported using job programs (44%) and college prep programs (36%), compared to middle school students (34% and 13%, respectively).

Barriers to optimal levels of family and community participation exist.

While the survey data focuses specifically on student participation, interview and focus group data suggestion that family and community participation remain a challenge. The initiative faces considerable challenges in overcoming historic fear, mistrust, and lack of involvement with the school among community members. Coordinators, principals, committee members, partners, and school staff all described many difficulties in overcoming these barriers. One coordinator explained:

The people in the community won't come... it's like pulling teeth...it's been said that there's a sense of pride in that neighborhood, that they won't come out. (Coordinator)

A committee member said:

The experience that people have moving through systems, as well as in schools, has been... anywhere from antagonistic to negligent, and engaging parents, to me, is about rebuilding trust. (Community Member)

One teacher said:

One of the obstacles or challenges, I would agree with both the other teachers, that having the parents, making sure feel as welcome and letting them know we can help you. Come here and we can help you, do what you need to do. (Teacher)

In addition, as one teacher pointed out, improving the engagement of families and community members across community schools should be addressed in schools and at the system level.

While it is unreasonable to expect the Community Schools initiative to overcome these issues in the first full year of implementation, the prevalence of these concerns requires that they be addressed at both the school and systems levels. (Teacher)

Short-Term Outcome 4. Satisfaction with programming and supports

While some teachers and school staff were very satisfied that the initiative served students and community members, there was room for improvement. External partners reported high levels of satisfaction with their community school partnerships. More work can be done to understand student and community member satisfaction with programming and supports.

The final early indicator of progress is stakeholder satisfaction. RFA surveyed teachers and school staff about their satisfaction with how the initiative served students, their families, and community members. RFA also surveyed external partners about their levels of satisfaction with their school partnerships.

A. Teacher and school staff satisfaction with services for students, families, and community members

Teachers and staff reported satisfaction with services provided to students, family members, and community members, though degree of satisfaction could be improved.

RFA surveyed teachers and school staff about their satisfaction with the student-serving work of the Community Schools initiative (Figure 20). We asked specifically about satisfaction with the extent to which the initiative this year supported students by 1) bringing resources to students, 2) connecting students to available resources, and 3) coordinating student services.

Figure 20. While about half of teachers and school staff were “very” satisfied with the extent to which the initiative supported students, there is room for improvement (N=298)

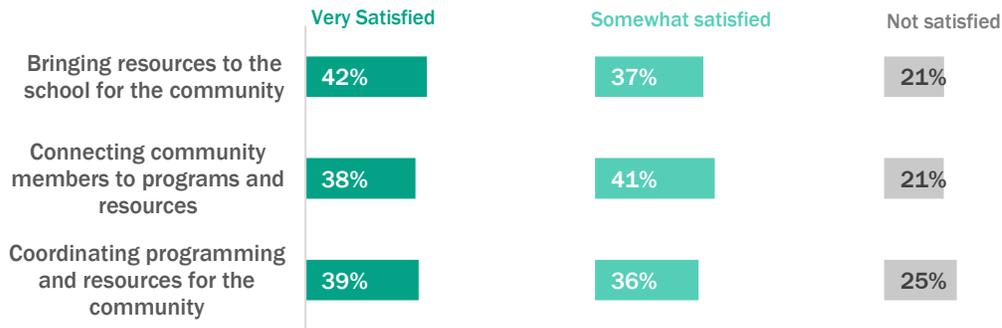


Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Note: Survey responses are only shown for school staff and teachers who reported being at least somewhat familiar with supports for students.

When asked about their level of satisfaction with how the initiative served community members and families, teachers and school staff reports were mixed (Figure 21).

Figure 21. While about 40% of teachers and school staff were “very” satisfied with how the initiative served community members and families of current students, there is room for improvement (N=287)



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

B. External partner satisfaction with initiative

Partner organizations play a key role in a strong community schools model, and two central short-term indicators of a strong and effective Community Schools initiative involve 1) whether external partners are satisfied with the partnership between the school and their organization and 2) whether partners feel that working with community schools increases program impact.⁵¹

To understand partner satisfaction, RFA surveyed external partners about the following:

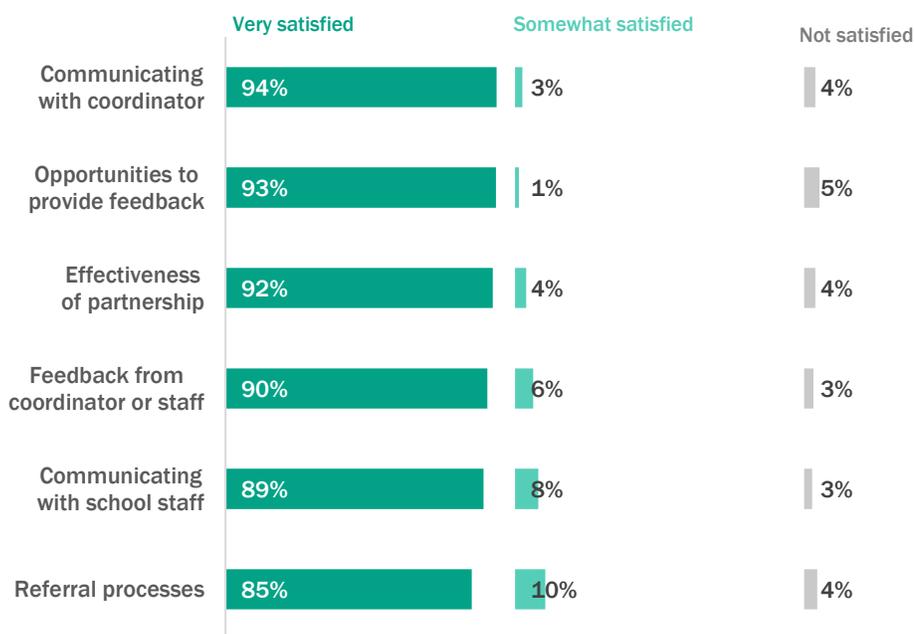
- Communication with school staff and the community schools Coordinator;
- Processes for giving and receiving feedback from the school to improve program impact;

⁵¹ Satisfaction surveys were included in the evaluation of City Connects Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support. (2010). *The Impact of City Connects: Annual Report 2010*. Chestnut Hill, MA.

- The effectiveness of the partnership for reaching program goals; and
- Processes for referring students, families, and/or community members.

Nearly all surveyed partners reported being either very or extremely satisfied with their partnership with community schools as well as with specific aspects of their partnership.

Figure 22. Over 85% of external partners reported high levels of satisfaction with their partnership with community schools (N=81)



Source: RFA surveys of community school stakeholders, 2017-18

Conclusion and Next Steps

After two years of implementation in Philadelphia, MOE has taken important foundational steps in establishing a foundation for its Community Schools initiative, but much of the work remains in process.

Areas of strength

Philadelphia scored an early and impressive win when it passed a citywide beverage tax and utilized a portion of those dollars to create a defined funding stream for its community schools effort. Yet overall, the strengths of the initiative lie, most notably, at the school building level. Through additional capacity in the form of coordinators, MOE became a catalyst for integrating social support for students, families, and community members. Needs assessment, asset mapping, and planning took place at each site. Community schools established community school committees at each school and encouraged students, family, and community members to participate in services. While participation among students was high, coordinators reported a lack of participation and involvement among families and community members. A strong working relationship existed between the coordinator and the principal in most schools, and coordinators

were accessible to school staff and beneficiaries. Alignment and satisfaction with programs and services for students improved, and the initiative is largely integrated within schools. Finally, partners reported positively on their involvement with the initiative.

Areas of continued challenge

Philadelphia's Community Schools initiative has encountered a series of challenges at the system level that must be addressed to ensure the long-term success of the initiative. Threats to the initiative's beverage tax funding stream slowed momentum, although this challenge should be resolved now that the legality of the tax has been established. In addition, high-level collaboration between MOE, SDP, and city departments has not yet become firmly established. Further, implementation at the school level was hampered to some degree by a lack of standardized systems, a common set of outcomes, and data agreements that would allow the initiative to track individual students. Student familiarity with the services offered could be improved, and high levels of mistrust of public schools among families and community members remains a challenge to both participation and buy-in.

Appendix A. Community School Implementation Components, Elements, and Indicators: School Level

At the school level, RFA assessed whether the Community Schools initiative was implemented consistently across the nine Cohort 1 community schools. RFA, in consultation with MOE and based on research on best practice, defined and operationalized specific indicators. Each community school was determined to be in full, partial, or limited implementation status for each indicator based on interview, focus group and survey data. Then, we summarized the consistency of implementation elements across schools using the icons displayed in the key below.

Key		
 Consistently strong implementation across schools	 Varied implementation across schools	 Consistently limited implementation across schools
Consistently strong implementation indicates that the initiative is meeting an implementation goal at the school level.	Variation in implementation across schools indicates school-level factors are not being implemented consistently across schools.	Consistently limited implementation indicates the initiative is falling short of an implementation goal at the school level.
 Full Implementation	 Partial Implementation	 Limited Implementation

Level	Implementation Components and Elements	
Component 1-1. Community Engagement		
	Element 1a. The community school encourages participation in the services provided using ongoing, multilingual materials and strategies.	
	Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
	The community school has ongoing outreach strategies to encourage <i>students</i> to participate in the services provided	 
	The community school has ongoing outreach strategies to encourage <i>families</i> to participate in the services provided	

The community school has ongoing outreach strategies to encourage <i>community members</i> to participate in services provided	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Outreach strategies are communicated in languages other than English used by students in their homes, if needed	In the five community schools with at least 10 percent of students who are English language learners, outreach was communicated in languages other than English



Element 1b. The community school encourages family and community involvement and leadership in support of the initiative at the school level.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
Families and community members have ongoing opportunities to <i>provide input and/or feedback</i> about the community school	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Families and community members have ongoing opportunities to <i>participate in the community school as volunteers</i>	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Family and community members are on the <i>community school committee</i>	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●



Element 1c. Community programs and special events are sponsored by the community school.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
<i>Special events</i> for the community are hosted by the community school	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
The school has sponsored community school programs and events in the <i>evening</i>	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
The school has sponsored community school programs and events on the <i>weekends</i>	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Component 1-2. Collaborative Leadership



Element 1d. A community school committee is in place at the school and regularly works as an advisory group to the initiative.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
The coordinator holds <i>community school committee meetings</i> monthly	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Committee membership includes the <i>principal, teachers and staff, partners, family and community members, students</i> (high school)	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
The committee was <i>involved in the development of the community school plan priorities</i>	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
The coordinator <i>asks the committee for guidance</i> on the implementation of the Community Schools initiative	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
<i>Written summaries</i> on the work of the committee are available to families and community members	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●



Element 1e. The school administration is encouraged to play a central role in the Community Schools initiative in the building.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
The principal <i>attends</i> community school committee meetings	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
The coordinator <i>communicates regularly with the principal</i>	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
The principal is <i>involved in decision-making</i> around the Community Schools initiative	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●



Element 1f. The coordinator communicates with teachers and staff about the Community Schools initiative.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation									
The coordinator is in regular communication with teachers and staff about community school services	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Teachers and staff have access to the community school coordinator as needed	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
The coordinator is available to teachers and staff for referrals to services and partners	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
The coordinator is a member of school leadership teams	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Component 2. Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Data Analysis



Element 2a. Data was collected on student, school, and community needs.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation									
Data was collected on student engagement and academic development	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Data was collected on school climate	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Data was collected on the physical, social and emotional health of the community	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●



Element 2b. The needs assessment included input from stakeholders including teachers/staff, community partners, students, families, and community members.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation									
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Included input from teachers/staff	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Included input from external partners	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Included input from beneficiaries (i.e. students, families, and community members)	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●



Element 2c. The needs assessment included multiple sources of information for identifying the needs of students, families, and the community.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
Included school/neighborhood statistical data	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Included survey data	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Included focus group data	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Included neighborhood observation data	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●



Element 2d. The community school collects information on resources that can be used to address identified needs.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
Collected information on school resources	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Collected information on community resources	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Collected information on partner resources



Component 3. Planning and Prioritization of Activities



Element 3a. The community school priorities are based on the needs and resources of the school and community.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
<i>Primary</i> priorities for the community school are aligned with needs	
<i>Secondary</i> priorities for the community school are aligned with needs	
The ways in which <i>community resources will be utilized</i> is outlined in the community school plan and/or logic model	



Element 3b. The community school plan supports school building goals.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
Community school plan's primary priority areas support school building goals	
Community school plan's secondary priorities support school building goals	



Element 3c. The community school plan and logic model support student learning (academic).

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
Community school plan's primary priority areas support school building goals	

	Community school plan's secondary priorities support school building goals	
	Element 3d. The community school plan and logic model address barriers to student learning (non-academic).	
	Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
	The community school plan includes primary and/or secondary priority areas that address <i>barriers to student learning</i> (e.g., health care)	
	The community school plan and/or logic model includes specific strategies to address barriers to student learning	
	Element 3e. The community school plan and/or logic model should define a process for measuring progress on short- and long-term goals.	
	Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
	The community school plan and/or logic model includes goals for each priority area	
	Measures are included for each goal in the community school plan and/or logic model	
	Method for tracking progress against goals is in place and described in the community school plan and/or logic model	
	Element 3f. The community school plan defines the roles of the principal, teachers, school staff, partners, and the committee.	
	Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
	The role of the principal in a Community School was defined	
	The role of teachers/staff in a Community School was defined	

The role of external partners in a Community School was defined	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
The role of the community school committee was defined	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Component 4. Coordination of School and Community Resources



Element 4a. The community school has reviewed existing external partnerships.

Indicators

Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation

The community school has a complete list of all existing external partners and the services or resources they provide



The community school has reviewed whether there is alignment between existing partner's services with community school needs



Element 4b. The community school supports external partners.

Indicators

Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation

The coordinator hosts partner meetings



External partners have access to the community school coordinator as necessary



External partners receive feedback to adjust services if needed



External partners are encouraged to collaborate with each other



Partners are connected to professional development opportunities	
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Element 4c. The community school utilizes available school and city resources to provide services.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
School teachers and staff are involved	
School facilities are being used in new ways	
City resources are fully utilized	



Element 4d. The coordinator is improving the coordination of services at the school.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
The coordinator is facilitating logistics such as timing, space, and resource use	
Community partners are well coordinated	

Component 5. Improved Services for Youth and Adults



Element 5a. Priorities in the community school plan are addressed.

Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
The services provided address the <u>primary</u> priority areas in the community school plan	

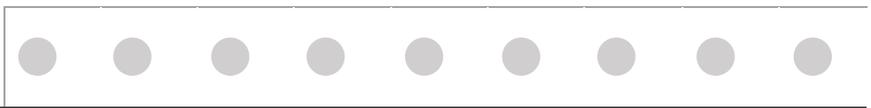
The services provided address the <u>secondary</u> priority areas in the community school plan	
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	Element 5b. The community school aligns new services with the needs of the students and community.	
	Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
	The community school has conducted a formal gap analysis to determine which priorities are not yet addressed by the existing partners	
	The school determines whether there is alignment between potential partner services and community school priorities	
A standard process for vetting potential new partners has been developed		

	Element 5c. New services for students, families, and community members have been introduced since the Community Schools initiative began.	
	Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
	The community school has explored potential new external partners.	
New services for students, families and community members have been provided.		

Component 6. Measurement, Evaluation, and Adjustment

	Element 6a. The community school has specified outcomes and measures based on priorities and goals.	
	Indicators	Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation
Outcomes have been identified		

Measures have been specified	
 <p>Element 6b. The community school collects school and community feedback and data on a regular basis to monitor quality of, participation in, and outcomes from the Community Schools initiative.</p>	
<p>Indicators</p>	<p>Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation</p>
<p>Feedback is collected from beneficiaries to gauge program quality</p>	
<p>School and community outcomes data are collected to monitor progress against goals</p>	
<p>Data sharing agreements have been developed between the community school, the school district and partner organizations</p>	
 <p>Element 6c. The community school analyzes participation, feedback, and outcomes data on the quality and progress of the initiative at the school.</p>	
<p>Indicators</p>	<p>Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation</p>
<p>Participation, feedback, and outcomes data has been analyzed</p>	
<p>Community school data has been discussed with the community school committee</p>	
<p>The coordinator and principal have discussed community school data</p>	
 <p>Element 6d. The community school uses data to continuously monitor and improve the implementation of the Community Schools initiative.</p>	
<p>Indicators</p>	<p>Number of Schools at Full, Partial and Limited Implementation</p>
<p>Data are used to monitor implementation of the Community Schools initiative</p>	

Adjustments and improvements have been made at the community school



Appendix B. Philadelphia Community Schools Implementation

Rubric: School Level

To assess the implementation level for each indicator and the variation in implementation across community schools, RFA developed the following rubric to define full, partial, and limited implementation, based on interview and focus group data.

Theory of Action Implementation Component 1. Community Engagement and Collaborative Leadership: The community school should actively encourage participation and support for programs and services by developing a shared vision based on cross-sector input in the initiative.			
Implementation Indicators: Community Engagement			
Indicators	Full Implementation	Partial implementation	Limited Implementation
1a. The community school encourages participation in the services provided using ongoing, multilingual materials and strategies.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community school has ongoing outreach strategies to encourage students to participate in the services provided 	The community school has reached out directly to students	The community school has reached out to students through parents and teachers	The community school has not reached out to students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community school has ongoing outreach strategies to encourage families to participate in the services provided 	The community school has reached out to families	The community school is developing a strategy to reach out to families	The community school has not reached out to families and is not developing a strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community school has ongoing outreach strategies to encourage community members to participate in services provided 	The community school has reached out to community members	The community school is developing a strategy to reach out to family members	The community school has not reached out to family members and is not developing a strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach strategies are communicated in languages other than English used by students in their homes, if needed 	Information about the community school is communicated in languages other than English if needed	-	Outreach materials are not communicated in languages other than English if needed
1b. The community school encourages family and community involvement and leadership in support of the initiative at the school level.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family and community members have ongoing opportunities to provide input and/or feedback about the community school 	Formal processes have been developed to collect ongoing input and feedback	Informal opportunities are offered to collect ongoing input and feedback	Neither formal or informal opportunities to collect input and feedback are offered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family and community members have ongoing opportunities to participate in 	Family and community members have	Family and community members have	Opportunities are not provided for family and

the community school as volunteers	ongoing opportunities to volunteer at the school	occasional opportunities to volunteer at the school	community members to become involved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family and community members are on the community school committee 	Family and community members serve on the community school committee	Family or community members serve on the community school committee	Neither family nor community members serve on the community school committee

1c. Community programs and special events are sponsored by the community school.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special events for the community are hosted by the community school 	Regularly scheduled events are offered at the school for the community	Occasional events are offered at the school for the community	Special events are not offered at the community school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has sponsored community school programs and events in the evening 	Regularly scheduled services and events are offered in the evening	Services and events are offered in the evening occasionally	Services and events are not offered in the evening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has sponsored community school programs and events on the weekends 	Regularly scheduled services and events are offered on the weekends	Occasional services and events are offered on the weekends	Services and events are not offered on the weekends

Implementation Indicators: Collaborative Leadership

Indicators	Full Implementation	Partial implementation	Limited Implementation
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1d. A community school committee is in place at the school and regularly works as an advisory group to the initiative.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordinator holds community school committee meetings monthly 	The coordinator holds community school committee meetings monthly	The coordinator holds community school committee meetings less than monthly	The coordinator does not hold community school committee meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee membership includes the principal, teachers and staff, partners, family and community members, students (high school) 	The committee includes: the principal, teachers/staff, partners, family and community members	The committee includes most membership types	The committee includes a minority of membership types
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee was involved in the development of the community school plan priorities 	The committee determined the priorities for the plan	The committee provided input in the development of the plan but not the priorities	The committee provided little or no input in the plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordinator asks the committee for guidance on the planning and implementation of the Community Schools initiative 	The committee is regularly asked to provide guidance on the implementation of the community school	The committee is occasionally asked to provide guidance on the implementation of the community school	The committee is not asked for guidance on the implementation of the community school

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written summaries on the work of the committee are available to families and community members 	Written notes are taken during meetings and made public	Written notes are taken but not made public	Written notes are not taken
1e. The school administration is encouraged to play a central role in the Community Schools initiative in the building.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal attends community school committee meetings 	The principal attends all or most committee meetings	The principal attends some committee meetings	The principal does not attend committee meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordinator communicates regularly with the principal 	The coordinator and the principal communicate frequently	The coordinator and the principal communicate occasionally	The coordinator and the principal seldom communicate or do not communicate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal is involved in decision-making around the Community Schools initiative 	The principal is consistently involved in decision-making around Community Schools initiative	The principal is occasionally involved in decision-making around Community Schools initiative	The principal is seldom or never involved in decision-making around Community Schools initiative

1f. The coordinator communicates with teachers and staff about the Community Schools initiative.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordinator is in regular communication with teachers and staff about the Community Schools initiative 	Teachers and staff consistently reported that they receive information about Community Schools initiative	Responses were mixed from teachers and staff about the level of information they receive about Community Schools initiative	Teachers and staff consistently reported that they receive limited information about Community Schools initiative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers and staff have access to the community school coordinator as needed 	Teachers and staff consistently reported that the coordinator is accessible	Responses were mixed from teachers and staff about coordinator accessibility	Teachers and staff consistently reported that the coordinator is not accessible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordinator is available to teachers and staff for referrals to services and partners 	Most teachers and staff reported that they would likely talk to the coordinator about services	The minority of teachers and staff reported that they would likely talk to the coordinator about services	Teachers and staff do not talk to the coordinator about services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordinator is a member of school leadership teams 	The coordinator is a member of the leadership team	The coordinator is not a member but is involved in the leadership team	The coordinator is not involved with the leadership team

Theory of Action Implementation Component 2. Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Data Analysis: Community schools collect and analyze data on school and community needs, as well as the assets already available to address them.

Implementation Indicators: Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Data Analysis

Indicators	Full Implementation	Partial implementation	Limited Implementation
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2a. Data was collected on student, school, and community needs.			
• Data was collected on student engagement and academic development	Data was collected on student engagement and academic indicators	Data was collected on student engagement or academic indicators	Data was not collected on student engagement or academic indicators
• Data was collected on school climate	Data was collected on multiple indicators of school climate	Data was collected on a single indicator of school climate	Data was not collected on school climate
• Data was collected on the physical, social and emotional health of the community	Data was collected on physical and social and emotional health	Data was collected on physical or social and emotional health	Data was not collected on physical or social and emotional health
2b. The needs assessment included input from stakeholders including teachers/staff, community partners, students, families, and community members.			
• Included input from teachers/staff	Input was included from surveys and focus groups	Input was included from surveys or focus groups	Input was not included from teachers and staff
• Included input from external partners	Input was included from surveys and focus groups	Input was included from surveys or focus groups	Input was not included from external partners
• Included input from beneficiaries (i.e. students, families, and community members)	Input was included from all beneficiaries	Input was included from some beneficiaries	Input was not included from beneficiaries
2c. The needs assessment includes multiple sources of information for identifying the needs of students, families, and the community.			
• Included school/neighborhood statistical data	Data was included from school and neighborhood	Data was included from school or neighborhood	Data was not included
• Included survey data	All surveys had participants	Some surveys had participants	No surveys were administered
• Included focus group data	All focus groups had participants	Some focus groups had participants	No focus groups were conducted
• Included neighborhood observation data	Included neighborhood observations	-	Did not include neighborhood observations
2d. The community school collects information on resources that can be used to address identified needs.			
• Collected information on school resources	Collected information	-	Did not collect information
• Collected information on community resources	Collected information	-	Collected information
• Collected information on partner resources	Collected information	-	Collected information

Theory of Action Implementation Component 3. Planning and Prioritization of Activities: Based on the needs assessment and asset mapping processes, the community school has developed a

plan that is aligned with the school building’s goals and clearly indicates the priorities of the community school, the activities and strategies involved, measures of progress, and the roles of stakeholders in the work.

Implementation Indicators: Planning and Prioritization of Activities

Indicators	Full Implementation	Partial implementation	Limited Implementation
3a. The community school priorities are based on the needs and resources of the school and community.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Primary</i> priorities for the community school are aligned with needs 	All priorities align with needs	Some priorities align with needs	None of the priorities align with needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Secondary</i> priorities for the community school are aligned with needs 	All priorities align with needs	Some priorities align with needs	None of the priorities align with needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ways in which <i>community resources will be utilized</i> is outlined in the community school plan and/or logic model 	Community school plan and/or logic model outlines how existing resources will be used to address needs	Community resources are listed in the community school plan and/or logic model, but their use is not specified	Community school plan and/or logic model does not include existing resources
3b. The community school plan supports school building goals.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community school plan’s primary priority areas support school building goals 	Principal reported that all priorities support school goals	Principal reported that some priorities support school goals	Principal reported that the priorities do not support school goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community school plan’s secondary priorities support school building goals 			
3c. The community school plan and logic model support student learning (academic) and list strategies designed to support student learning.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community school plan included primary and/or secondary priority areas that <i>support student learning</i> (e.g., homework help) 	Community school plan and logic model support student learning (academic) and list strategies designed to support student learning	Community school plan and logic model support student learning (academic) but does not list strategies designed to support student learning	Community school plan and logic model does not support student learning (academic)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community school plan and/or logic model includes specific strategies to support student learning 			
3d. The community school plan and logic model address barriers to student learning (non-academic) and list strategies designed to address them.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community school plan includes primary and/or secondary priority areas that address <i>barriers to student learning</i> (e.g., health care) 	Community school plan and logic model address barriers to student learning (non-	Community school plan and logic model address barriers to student learning (non-academic)	Community school plan and logic model does not address barriers to student learning

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community school plan and/or logic model includes specific strategies to address barriers to student learning 	academic) and list strategies designed to address barriers to student learning	but does not list strategies designed to address barriers to student learning	(non-academic)
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3e. The community school plan and/or logic model defines a process for measuring progress on short- and long-term goals.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community school plan and/or logic model includes goals for each priority area 	Community school plan and/or logic model includes short and long-term goals	Community school plan and/or logic model includes short or long-term goals	Community school plan and/or logic model does not include goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures are included for each goal in the community school plan and/or logic model 	All goals include measures in the community school plan and/or logic model	Some goals include measures in the community school plan and/or logic model	None of the goals include measures in the community school plan and/or logic model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Method for tracking progress against goals is in place and described in the community school plan and/or logic model 	A process is in place	A process is being developed	A process is not in place or being developed

3f. The community school plan defines the roles of the principal, teachers, school staff, partners, and the committee.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of the principal in a community school was defined The role of teachers/staff in a community school was defined The role of external partners in a community school was defined The role of the community school committee was defined 	The roles of all stakeholders have been specified in writing	The roles of some stakeholders have been specified in writing	The roles of stakeholders have not been specified in writing
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Theory of Action Implementation Component 4. Coordination of School and Community Resources: The community school coordinates program partners, facilitates the use of school and community resources, and aligns services to meet the needs of students, families, and community members.

Implementation Indicators: Coordination of School and Community Resources

Indicators	Full Implementation	Partial implementation	Limited Implementation
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4a. The community school has reviewed existing external partnerships.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community school has a complete list of all existing external partners and the services or resources they provide 	A comprehensive partner inventory has been completed	A partner inventory has been created but is not yet comprehensive	A partner inventory has not yet been compiled
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community school has reviewed whether there is alignment between existing partner's services and community school needs 	A formal review process was used to determine alignment between existing	The coordinator reported being aware of the alignment between existing	The community school has not reviewed whether there is alignment between any of

	partner's services and community school priorities	partners and community school priorities without using a formal process	the existing partner's services and community school priorities
4b. The community school supports external partners.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordinator hosts partner meetings 	The coordinator held monthly partner meetings during the year	The coordinator held partner meetings less than one a month during the year	The coordinator has not held partner meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External partners have access to the community school coordinator as necessary 	Most partners reported that the coordinator was very accessible	Most partners reported that the coordinator was somewhat or very accessible	Most partners reported that the coordinator was not accessible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External partners receive feedback to adjust services if needed 	A formal process has been created to provide partners with feedback from the coordinator	Partners receive informal feedback from the coordinator	External partners do not receive feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External partners are encouraged to collaborate with each other (e.g., student referrals) 	External partners are often encouraged to collaborate	External partners are occasionally encouraged to collaborate	External partners have not been encouraged to collaborate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners are connected to professional development opportunities 	The Community Schools initiative often connects external partners to professional development	The Community Schools initiative occasionally connects external partners to professional development	The Community Schools initiative does not connect partners to related professional development
4c. The community school utilizes available school and city resources to provide services.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School teachers and staff are involved 	Both school staff and facilities are being utilized	School staff or facilities are being utilized	Neither school staff or facilities are being utilized
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School facilities are being used in new ways 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City resources are fully utilized 	City resources have been fully utilized	City resources are being partially utilized	City resources are not being utilized
4d. The coordinator is improving the coordination of services at the school.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordinator is facilitating logistics such as timing, space, and resource use 	The coordinator is facilitating logistics	-	The coordinator is not facilitating logistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community partners are well coordinated 	Most partners reported that they were moderately, very or extremely well-coordinated	Most partners reported that they were slightly well coordinated	Most partners at the school reported that they are not coordinated at all
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct programs and services are provided to beneficiaries when appropriate 	MOE staff have provided direct programs and	-	MOE staff have not provided direct programs

services at the school

and services at the school

Theory of Action Implementation Component 5. Improved Services for Youth and Adults: The Community Schools initiative should introduce new services to the school and community and improve or expand existing services.

Implementation Indicators: Improved services for youth and adults

Indicators	Full Implementation	Partial implementation	Limited Implementation
5a. Priorities in the community school plan are addressed.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The services provided address the <u>primary</u> priority areas in the community school plan 	All primary priorities in the plan are addressed	Some of the primary priorities in the plan are addressed	None of the primary priorities in the plan are addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The services provided address the <u>secondary</u> priority areas in the community school plan 	All secondary priorities in the plan are addressed	Some of the secondary priorities in the plan are addressed	None of the secondary priorities in the plan are addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community schools with English language learners include partners that provide services in languages other than English 	Community schools with English language learners include partners with services in languages other than English	-	Community schools with English language learners do not include partners with services in languages other than English
5b. The community school aligns new services with the needs of the students and community.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community school has conducted a gap analysis to determine which priorities are not yet addressed by the existing partners 	A gap analysis was conducted to determine which priorities are not yet addressed	-	A gap analysis was not considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A standard process for vetting potential new partners has been developed 	A process for vetting new partners is in place	A process for vetting new partners is being developed	A process for vetting new partners is not in place or being developed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school determines whether there is alignment between potential partner services and community school priorities 	Alignment is considered in the vetting process	-	Alignment is not considered in the vetting process
5c. New services for students, families, and community members have been introduced since the Community Schools initiative began.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community school has explored potential new external partners 	New partners have been explored	-	New partners have not been explored
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New services for students, families and community have been provided 	New services are provided for students, families, and community members	New services are provided students or families and community members	New services have not been provided

Theory of Action Implementation Component 6. Measurement, Evaluation, and Adjustment: School-level data are collected on a regular basis to monitor services, evaluate impact, and make needed adjustments.

Implementation Indicators: Measurement, evaluation and adjustment

Indicators	Full Implementation	Partial implementation	Limited Implementation
6a. The community school has specified outcomes and measures based on priorities and goals.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes have been identified 	Outcomes have been identified for all priorities	Outcomes have been identified for some priorities	Outcomes have not been identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures have been specified 	Measures have been specified for all outcomes	Measures have been specified for some outcomes	Measures have not been specified
6b. The community school collects school and community feedback and data on a regular basis to monitor quality of, participation in, and outcomes from the Community Schools initiative.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback is collected from beneficiaries to gauge program quality 	Formal processes have been developed to collect feedback	Informal opportunities are offered to collect feedback	Neither formal or informal opportunities to collect feedback are offered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School and community outcomes data are collected to monitor progress against goals 	Outcomes data related to priority goals is collected	Outcomes data not related to priority goals is collected	Outcomes data are not collected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data sharing agreements have been developed between community schools, the school district and partner organizations 	Data sharing agreements are in place	Data sharing agreements are being developed	Data sharing agreements are not in place or being developed
6c. The community school analyzes participation, feedback, and outcomes data on the quality and progress of the initiative at the school.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation, feedback and outcomes data have been analyzed 	Data has been analyzed for the school	Data analysis processes are in development	Data has not been analyzed for the school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community school data has been discussed with the community school committee 	Data are regularly discussed with the committee	Data are occasionally discussed with the committee	Data are not discussed with the committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordinator and principal have discussed community school data 	Data are regularly discussed with the principal	Data are occasionally discussed with the principal	Data are not discussed with the principal
6d. The community school uses data to continuously monitor and improve the implementation of the Community Schools initiative.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data are used to monitor implementation of the Community Schools initiative 	Data are used to regularly monitor implementation	Data are used to occasionally monitor implementation	Data are not used to monitor implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjustments have been made based on data 	Adjustments have been made at the community	Adjustments have been made at the community	Adjustments have not been made at the community school

| school based on
data

| school but not
based on data

Appendix C. Methodology

Research for Action’s 2017-18 evaluation of the City of Philadelphia’s Community Schools initiative employed a descriptive research design to assess system-wide conditions and supports as well as school-level implementation and early outcomes. This appendix presents characteristics of community schools in Philadelphia and details about the evaluation’s data collection methods. Prior to data collection, Solutions IRB and the School District of Philadelphia Office of Research and Evaluation reviewed and approved the research design and data collection instruments.

Neighborhood enrollment and school performance of Community Schools in Philadelphia

This evaluation follows nine of the 12 Philadelphia public schools currently designated as community schools by the Mayor’s Office of Education. These nine schools began planning in 2016-17 and started implementation in 2017-18. This section describes neighborhood enrollment and school performance of the nine community schools, displayed in Table C1.

Neighborhood enrollment. Philadelphia community schools enroll students from both the local catchment as well as across the city. Overall, Cohort 1 community schools enrolled approximately 4,500 students in 2017-18. Three of the nine schools did not report the percentage of students who reside in the neighborhood. Two schools drew more than 80% of students from the neighborhood. The other four schools drew from the neighborhood and beyond: 44-65% of students enrolled lived in the neighborhood surrounding the school, and the rest lived outside the immediate catchment area.

School performance. Each community school began the year in need of significant improvements, as suggested by data from 2017-18 SDP school profiles and presented in Table C1. Seven of nine community schools have overall ratings in the lowest range possible (“intervene”). All nine schools are rated as “intervene” for the Achievement domain.

Table C1. Neighborhood enrollment and school performance of Cohort 1 Community Schools in Philadelphia (2017-18)

Cohort 1 Community Schools	Enrollment	% Coming from Neighborhood	Overall Rating	Achievement Rating	Progress Rating	Climate Rating	College & Career Rating
Cramp Elementary School	505	89%	Watch	Intervene	Reinforce	Watch	-
F.S. Edmonds Elementary School	601	65%	Intervene	Intervene	Intervene	Watch	-
James Logan Elementary School	330	Unknown	Intervene	Intervene	Intervene	Watch	-
Edward Gideon Elementary & Middle School	285	55%	Intervene	Intervene	Watch	Intervene	-
Southwark Elementary & Middle School	800	57%	Reinforce	Intervene	Model	Reinforce	-
William T. Tilden Middle School	380	81%	Intervene	Intervene	Intervene	Intervene	-
Murrell Dobbins CTE High School	613	Unknown	Intervene	Intervene	Intervene	Intervene	Reinforce
Kensington Health Sciences Academy	432	Unknown	Intervene	Intervene	Watch	Intervene	Intervene
South Philadelphia High School	564	44%	Intervene	Intervene	Watch	Intervene	Intervene

Source: School District of Philadelphia School Profiles, 2017-18

Schools are rated by the District as Intervene, Watch, Reinforce, or Model. According to the District’s school profile data, the overall score represents a school’s combined performance on multiple domains: Achievement, Progress, Climate, and College & Career (for high schools only).

- **The Achievement domain** measures performance on standardized assessments.
- **The Progress domain** measures growth on standardized assessments and, for high schools, progress toward graduation.
- **The Climate domain** measures school climate and student and parent/guardian engagement.
- **The College & Career domain** measures college and career readiness and post-secondary outcomes.

Methods of data collection

Findings presented in this report are based on analyses of multiple data sources, listed in Table C2. The findings in this report draw from 60 documents and data from over 1,000 individuals.

Table C2. RFA evaluation of Philadelphia Community Schools initiative: Data sources

Data Sources	Number of Documents or Respondents
Documents	60 documents
• Community Schools Plans and Logic Models	18
• Community Schools At-a-Glance Documents	9
• Needs Assessment Survey Instruments and Analyses	14
• Community Schools Stress Index	1
• Community Schools Committee and Partner Lists	18
Interviews and Focus Group	153 participants
• Mayor’s Office of Education Interviews	5
• School District of Philadelphia Interviews	3
• Community School Coordinator Interviews	9
• Principals and/or Assistant Principal Interviews	10
• Community School Committee Focus Groups (1 per school)	33
• External Partner Focus Groups (1 per school)	48
• Teacher and Staff Focus Groups (1 per school)	45
Surveys	890 participants
• Student Surveys	498
• Teacher and Staff Surveys	311
• Partner Surveys	81

A. Document review

To understand planning and school-level implementation, RFA systematically collected and analyzed an array of documents from the Mayor’s Office of Education, including community school plans, logic models, and needs assessments.

B. Interviews and focus groups

Protocol development. In fall 2017, RFA developed standardized, open-ended interview and focus group protocols to collect data on the quality of implementation from a broad range of stakeholders involved with the initiative. To enhance validity and reliability, RFA shared these protocols with MOE for feedback during the development process.

Participants. RFA selected interviews and focus group data to triangulate perspectives from multiple levels of community school stakeholders. RFA conducted interviews with key MOE central office staff and members of the leadership at the School District of Philadelphia to gather information about conditions for robust implementation and initiative inputs. At each school, interview and focus group respondents included the community school coordinator, the principal and/or assistant principal, school teachers and staff, community school committee members, and service partners. Participation in interviews and focus groups was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent prior to being interviewed. Respondents were assured anonymity.

Interviews with school-level stakeholders explored the needs assessment and planning processes, the development of service partnerships, and the integration of the initiative into the larger culture of the school. Teacher and partner focus group participants were selected with input from coordinators and principals to be representative of the grades and services provided in the school.

Data collection process. RFA conducted interviews and focus groups toward the end of the study year (spring 2018) to reduce the likelihood that the interviews would influence the initiative, as semi-structured interviews have the potential to shape responses to researcher's perceptions.⁵² In addition, RFA took efforts to reduce the burden on participants: Interviews with coordinators took place at MOE on Tuesdays, when coordinators were scheduled to be there for meetings with central staff; principal interviews took place by phone to allow for flexibility; and we conducted focus groups to coincide with existing committee, partner, and leadership meetings.

Data analysis. Interviews and focus groups were recorded (with consent), transcribed, and coded according to components specified in MOE's Theory of Action. The data were then used to determine the level of implementation as shown in Appendices A and B.

C. Surveys

RFA developed and administered three cross-sectional surveys in spring 2018 to collect data from school-level stakeholders (i.e. students, teachers and school staff, and external partners) on their perceptions of implementation and short-term outcomes.

Student survey

Instrument development. RFA developed a questionnaire, consisting of 14 close-ended questions, for students in grades 6-12. The survey was designed to gather data on student perspectives on short-term outcomes of the Community Schools initiative. RFA designed the initial survey items, which were revised to ensure the appropriate reading level. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score was 8. Since the survey was self-administered, the reading level may have negatively affected comprehension for some students. RFA staff were available to answer questions and read survey items at student request.

Sampling frame and survey administration. RFA staff administered paper surveys in May 2018 to a convenience sample of 10% of students in each grade (or 25 students, whichever was larger) in attendance on the day of administration (N=543 in 7 schools, excluding two K-5 schools). In most cases, the principal identified classrooms to survey via group administration after being briefed on our intention to include as diverse a student population as possible.

Response rate. Of the 2,310 students enrolled in grades 6-12 in community schools, RFA targeted a sample of 543. RFA received completed surveys from 498 respondents, yielding an overall response rate of 92% (Table C3).

⁵² Jack Fraenkel and Norman Wallen, *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education, 7th Ed.* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2008).

Table C3. RFA Student survey response rate, 2017-18

	Population	Target Sample	Analytic Sample	% Complete
Students (Grades 6-12)	2310^a	543	498	92%

^aSource: Philadelphia Department of Education enrollment data, 2017-18

Characteristics of the student survey respondents. As shown in Table C4, the student survey captured a diversity of student perspectives with respect to grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, and home language.

Table C4. Characteristics of RFA student survey respondents, 2017-18

Characteristics	Population	% of Population	Sample	% of Sample
Total	2,310^a	100%	498	100%
Grade Level	2,310^a	100%	498	100%
Middle school (grades 6-8)	761	33%	217	44%
High school (grades 9-12)	1,549	67%	278	56%
Gender	2,310^a	100%	Non-missing N=471	100%
Male	1,103	48%	207	43%
Female	1,207	52%	261	54%
Non-binary	Not available	Not available	-	<1%
Race/Ethnicity^c	2,380^b	100%	Non-missing N=482	100%
Non-Hispanic Black or African American	1,524	64%	279	58%
Hispanic or Latino	445	19%	123	26%
Asian	247	10%	69	14%
Non-Hispanic White	118	5%	45	9%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	Not available	Not available	22	5%
Middle Eastern or N. African	Not available	Not available	<5	<5%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<5	<5%	<5	<5%
Other	45	<5%	<5	<5%
Language most often spoken at home	Not available	Not available	Non-missing N=406	100%
English	Not available	Not available	316	78%
Spanish	Not available	Not available	44	11%
Other (including Arabic, Chinese, French, Khmer, Vietnamese)	Not available	Not available	46	11%

^aSource: Philadelphia Department of Education enrollment data, 2017-18

^bSource: Common Core Data, 2015-16

^cIn RFA survey, students could choose "all that apply"

Teacher and school staff survey

Instrument development. RFA developed a 30-item questionnaire with open- and closed-response items for teachers and school staff to generate cross-sectional data on teacher perceptions of the overall initiative and how the initiative was serving students and community members. RFA developed initial survey items and then member-checked them with the Mayor’s Office of Education to ensure validity.

Sampling frame and survey administration. In March 2018, RFA used Qualtrics to program and administer a web-based survey to a census of school administrators, school staff, and teachers in each of the nine community schools. The survey was live for four weeks, and three reminder emails were sent to non-respondents during that time.

The survey was administered online via three modes:

1. For three schools, RFA received staff email lists from principals. We uploaded this contact list into Qualtrics, which delivered an automatic email with an individual survey link to each address.
2. In three schools, principals requested to facilitate group survey administration during a staff professional development day via an open-access web link.
3. In the three remaining schools, principals requested that we send an open-access link they could email their staff listservs to access the survey.

Response rates. To calculate response rates, RFA staff compiled an inclusive list of teachers and school staff drawn from school websites, District staffing data, and professional staff reports, yielding an approximate population size of 570. RFA received completed surveys from 311 respondents, yielding an approximate overall response rate of 55% (Table C5). Response rates were highest when the survey was administered on a staff professional development day.

Table C5. Teacher and school staff survey response rates by mode of survey administration

	Population N	Sample N	% Complete
Teachers/Staff	570	311	55%
Survey administered at staff PD	209	145	69%
Link sent by principals	242	113	47%
RFA-email invitations to individuals	119	53	44%

Characteristics of the teacher and school staff survey respondents. As shown in Table C6, most survey respondents were classroom teachers (69%) and had worked in the school for at least three years (67%). Approximately 40% of classroom teachers who responded taught grades 9-12, about 20% taught grades 6-8, and over a third taught grades K-5.

Table C6. Characteristics of teacher and school staff survey respondents

Characteristics	Population	% of Population	Sample	% of Sample
Total	570	100%	311	100%
Role at School	570	100%	311	100%
Classroom teachers	309	54%	214	69%
Instructional support staff	Not available	Not available	44	14%
Non-instructional support staff	Not available	Not available	40	13%

School administrators	Not available	Not available	16	5%
Academic Year Started Work at School	Not available	Not available	311	100%
2017-18	Not available	Not available	60	19%
2016-17	Not available	Not available	43	14%
2015-16 or prior	Not available	Not available	208	67%
Teacher Grade Level	309	100%	Teachers (N=214)	100%
Grades K-5	182	60%	78	36%
Secondary (6-12)	104	34%	127	60%
Grades 6-8	Not available	Not available	44	21%
Grades 9-12	Not available	Not available	83	39%
Not specified	23	7%	9	4%

External partner survey

Instrument development. RFA developed a 30-item questionnaire with open- and closed-response items for external partners to assess their perspectives on the overall initiative as well as components of implementation. Survey items were member-checked with MOE and representatives from three external partners to ensure validity.

Sampling frame and survey administration. In April 2018, RFA used Qualtrics to program and administer a web-based survey to 178 external partners actively providing services or supports in each of the nine community schools during academic year 2017-18 (as identified by coordinators). The survey was live for four weeks, and three reminder emails were sent to non-respondents during that time.

Response rates. RFA received completed surveys from 72 of 178 partners, yielding an overall response rate of about 40% (Table C7). Partners working in multiple schools were asked to complete school-specific survey items for each school. RFA received completed school-specific responses from 81 of 202 partner-school pairs, or 40%.

Table C7. External partner survey response rate

	Population N	Sample N	% Complete
External partners	178	72	40%
Partner-school pair	202	81	40%

Characteristics of external partner survey respondents. Because the survey was not administered to a random sample of external partners, and because the response rate was relatively low, we do not interpret the characteristics of survey respondents as a reflection of the characteristics of all partners working in community schools. Instead, we present these characteristics to help understand the types of partners that completed the survey (Table C8).

Table C8. Characteristics of external partner survey respondents

Characteristics	N	%
Total	81	100%
Academic year started partnership	Non-Missing = 78	100%
2017-18 (<i>first year of full implementation</i>)	18	23%
2016-17 (<i>school designated as comm sch</i>)	17	22%
2015-16 or before (<i>prior to initiative</i>)	43	55%
Type of supports provided	N = 81	100%
Youth learning & development	48	60%
Health and wellness	38	47%
Strong community	30	37%
Economic stability	16	20%
Basic needs	7	9%
Other	10	12%
Beneficiaries served among direct providers	Direct Providers = 61	100%
Students	59	97%
Family members	15	25%
Community members	12	20%
School staff	8	13%
Other	2	3%

- **When did partnership begin?** About 23% of partnerships were established in 2017-2018, and another 22% coincided with the designation of community schools in 2016-17. That means that over half of surveyed partners had existing school relationships that predated the Community Schools initiative.
- **What kind of supports were provided?** The most common type of support provided by surveyed external partners was youth learning & development (60%), followed by health & wellness (47%) and strong community (37%). About a fifth of providers characterized their support as providing economic stability, and less than 10% of surveyed providers reported that their work supported basic needs.
- **Who were the beneficiaries of direct services?** Of the 61 surveyed partners providing direct services, nearly all served students (97%), a quarter served family members, and a fifth served community members. Less than 15% of providers directly served school staff. Note: These percentages are not mutually exclusive, because providers could directly serve more than one type of beneficiary.

D. Pilot data collection efforts

Community member survey. RFA worked with MOE to develop and pilot a survey of family and community members. RFA developed items designed to measure familiarity and satisfaction with the initiative. After discussion, RFA and MOE decided to attempt to pilot the survey with families and community members most likely to be familiar with at least some aspect of the work of the initiative (e.g., they attended a related event or participated in a program at the school).

To administer the survey, RFA designed posters and postcards with a web-based survey link, which were distributed at over 20 end-of-year community school events and once outside each school during student drop off in May 2018. Despite a month-long administration, RFA only received 45 responses. The following is a list of lessons learned from the community survey pilot:

- To achieve a more tenable response rate, more resources will need to be utilized for successful community outreach.
- Though it is difficult to define a sampling frame for each community school, RFA should work with coordinators to map informal neighborhood boundaries.
- For a diversity of perspectives, and to understand the reach of community schools, sampling should be independent of program participation.
- However, if the goal is to understand satisfaction with programming and supports received, RFA should survey participants throughout the school year so that results are not limited to perspectives on end-of-year events.

Partner participation data. RFA gathered input from school coordinators and external service providers to understand previous participation data collection efforts, and then developed a spreadsheet tool to track student, parent, and community member participation for each of the services provided by each school. RFA and MOE piloted the tool to collect participation data in Oct-Dec (period 1) and Jan-Mar (period 2). MOE sent out data requests in January and April. As shown in Table C9, response rates for period 1 (34%) and period 2 (38%) were low, suggesting that the method of data collection was not suitable for gathering administrative data on participation in Community Schools initiative programming and supports.

Table C9. Participation data collection administrations and response rates, 2017-18

Participation Data Administration Period	Response Rate
October-December (Period 1)	34%
January-March (Period 2)	38%
April	40%
May	50%
June	46%

To improve data quality and partner response rates, RFA has continually worked in collaboration with MOE to revise data collection tools. In April, RFA created a web-based tool that was workshopped with three volunteer partner organizations and presented at a partner convening in May. The primary challenge was to balance the precision of data collection with the burden on providers, many of whom did not have the staff capacity to complete the spreadsheet tool. RFA used e-mail addresses provided by coordinators to administer the participation data request to partners every month from April-July.

Lessons learned:

- Absent a unified system for tracking participants, it is very difficult to ensure all partners provide participation data.
- Including a single question in the email data request that allows a partner to indicate whether they served beneficiaries during the specified period increases the response rate with minimal burden on providers.

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