

# An Overview of the Community School Strategy



# WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

# GOALS OF TODAY'S SESSION

- Develop an understanding of the community school strategy
  - fundamental elements, development of the work
- Identify community-school-like work underway in your schools from which you could build
- Think about and discuss potential next steps

# THE FEDERATION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

A statewide collaborative that amplifies the voice and abilities of community schools.

# WHAT IS A COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

- By bringing together public schools, non-profit organizations and local businesses, community schools provide a broad range of programs and services to students and their families in support of comprehensive child development.
- Through this approach, community schools become the center of their communities, and create an environment where students and their families can reach their full potential.

# LIKE A SYMPHONY



# WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN REAL LIFE?

- [Oakland example](#)

# A STRATEGY...NOT PLUG-AND-PLAY

- Framework for organizing supports around children and families, where children and families are
- Focus on coordination and alignment – avoiding duplication of efforts, and ensuring that programs, partners and stakeholders work towards common goals
- Sometimes requires changing how we deliver programs and services...and adults changing how they do things to better support children
- *Alignment, coordination and a new way of doing our work – not a prescription or list of programs*



# BALTIMORE FRAMEWORK

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN BALTIMORE

A Community School is a place and a set of strategic partnerships among a school and other community resources that promote student achievement, positive conditions for learning and the well-being of families and communities. Through the work of a community-based partner, each Community School leverages unique community resources to meet community needs, and maintains a core focus on children, while recognizing that children grow up in families, and that families are integral parts of communities. This integrated approach will lead to student success, strong families and healthy communities.



# ACTIVITY

- Starting with the landscape – who are the partners currently connected to your school?
- What are the goals of programs and services being offered?
- What's missing?

# MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS



- No one entity can do it all – partnership is critical
- Focus on each partner's expertise – best person for the job
- Consistency, space and access
- Benefit of collaboration with other partners – collective impact, or the whole is greater than the sum of its parts

# INTEGRATION

- Moving from stand-alone programs and partnerships to an integrated system of supports
- Shared leadership, shared accountability
- Comprehensive vision for student success – guiding all partners' efforts
- Common language and understanding of priorities

# ABCs OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

A school makes the **transformation** into a community school by implementing the **ABCs**:

**A**ligning partners & programming

**B**ringing together all stakeholders

**C**oordinating community resources

# ALIGNING PARTNERS & PROGRAMMING

In a community school, out-of-school-time programming aligns and complements — but does not replicate-- school-day learning



# BRINGING TOGETHER STAKEHOLDERS

Community schools bring together stakeholders to work towards a common goal and shared vision of student success

- school administrators, teachers and staff
- parents and family members
- community-based organizations and community members
- local business leaders
- local political leaders/elected officials
- students

# COORDINATING RESOURCES

Community schools have a dedicated person responsible for building and managing community resources in the school building.





# WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORTS?

- Goals are to....
  - Supplement, not supplant
  - Coordinate and integrate, not duplicate
  - Maximize existing investments in the community
  - Use data to inform what kinds of supports, programs and resources are offered and to track progress
  - Create a structure where everyone can focus on their area of expertise

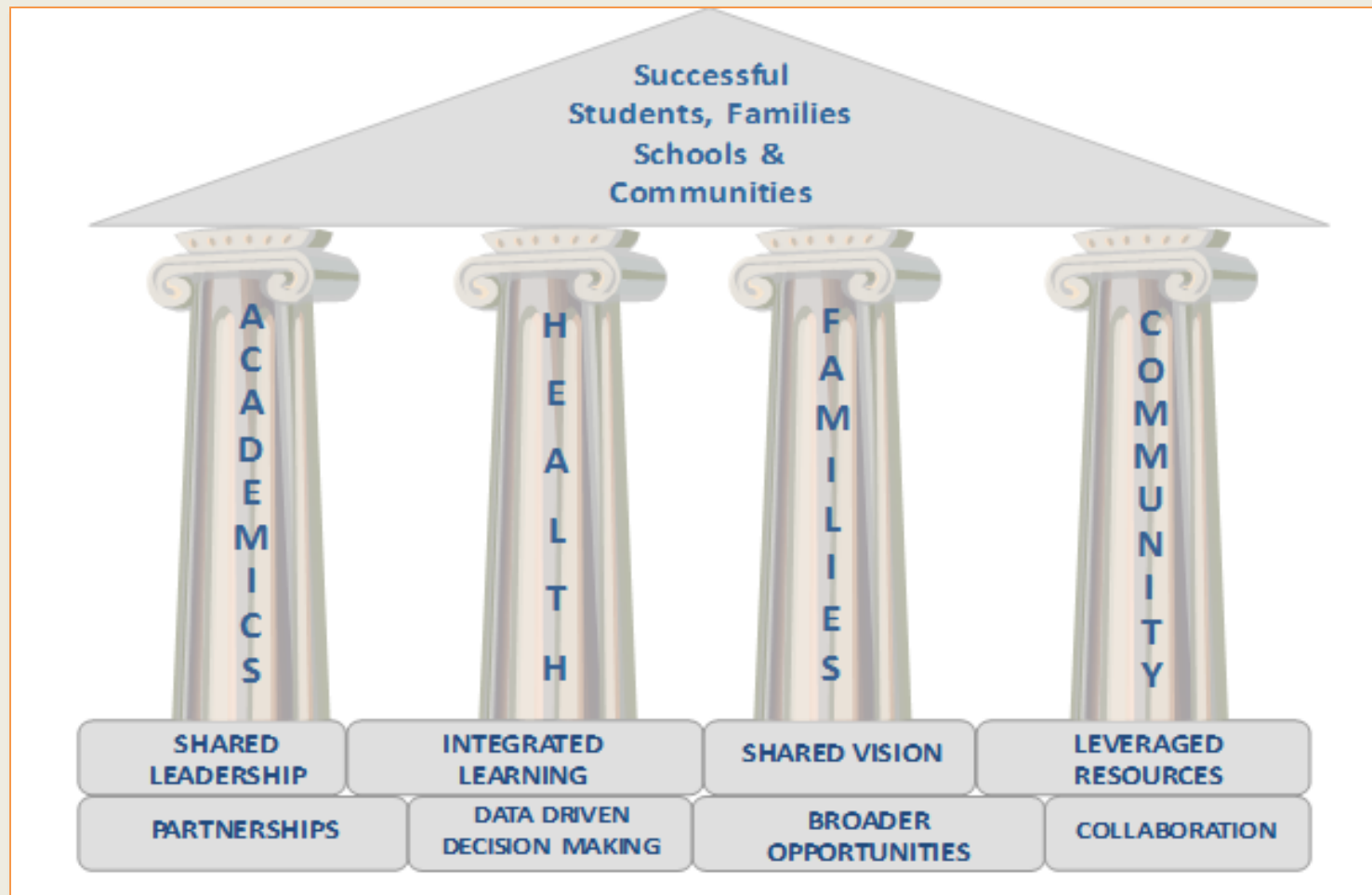
# WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORTS?

Depends on what's needed...

- Health/wellness
- Access to benefits
- Crisis intervention
- Leadership development
- Adult education
- Weekend backpacks
- Tutoring
- ...but it's not a prescribed list of programs – it's a strategy for coordinating and aligning supports.



# COMMUNITY SCHOOL PARTHENON



# PILLARS

- *Academics* –strong academics, staff prepared for excellent teaching, out-of-school-time programs linked to but not replicating classroom learning.
- *Health* – physical and mental health and wellness programs and services may include athletics, nutrition, and school-based physical/mental health services.
- *Family* – parents working in partnership with teachers, family-centered approach, programs like adult education skill-building, opportunities for involvement, and family leadership development.
- *Community* –school opens itself up to the community, allowing community members to use the facilities and provide community-wide programs; becomes a hub of the community

# FOUNDATIONS

- *Shared Leadership* – school leaders and stakeholders are shared leaders in the community school development and outcomes.
- *Integrated Learning* – out-of-school time programs are linked to learning, supporting and expanding on the school day curriculum.
- *Shared Vision* – community and school stakeholders work together to establish a set of goals for student and family success.
- *Collaboration* – community school staff, stakeholders, and community partners integrate and share their resources at the school.
- *Partnerships* – community schools build true partnerships with community-based organizations, families, and stakeholders.
- *Leveraged Resources* – community schools leverage existing community investments and resources for students and families.
- *Broader Opportunities* – during out-of-school time community schools offer programming to expand the experiences of students.
- *Data-driven Decision Making* – community schools evaluate their programs and their outcomes to ensure quality and success.

# OUTCOMES

- Community schools develop a shared vision for student success, and identify goals and outcomes to work towards.
- Often include....
  - Improved attendance and grades
  - Positive changes in school climate and culture
  - Sustained structure for connecting communities, families and schools
  - Overcoming barriers to learning and development
  - Access to opportunities all children need to succeed and thrive
  - Sustained family engagement
  - Strengthening communities

# STARTING THE TRANSFORMATION: DIFFERENT POINTS OF ENTRY

Community school transformation starts in a variety of different ways:

- Grassroots, through stakeholders – Chicago, Evanston, New Haven
- Funding requirement – Full-Service Community School grant
- As a result of partnerships that meet priority needs, i.e., mental health
- From a stand-alone afterschool program
- Stakeholders working to build off of existing funding stream – Teen REACH, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC
- From cross-community collaborations aimed at improving access to supports/ services – West Chicago, Brighton Park
- School improvement efforts – SIG, NYC

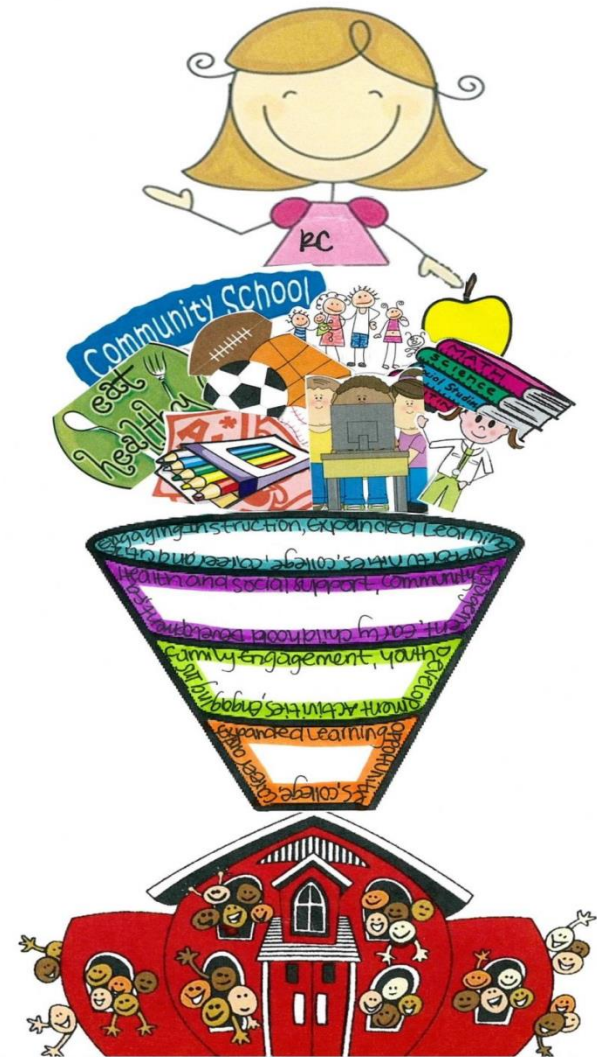
# KEY ROLES

- *Goal*: removing nonacademic barriers to academic success and positive youth development.
- Role of the principal – goal is to enable principal to focus on being instructional leader, team leader, advocates for students and teachers
- Community partners and community systems – everyone has a stake in youth success. That means everyone has to be at the table to plan and implement this approach
- Community School Manager...why do we need to conductor?



# COMMUNITY SCHOOL MANAGER

- Not one person who “owns” programs
- Ensuring that partnerships are coordinated and aligned – and that structures are in place to support them
- Promoting shared leadership, data-driven decision making
- Bridge among families, schools and partners
- If a community school is a symphony, the Community School Manager is the conductor



# DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING

- Using data to identify needs, assets and priorities
- Tracking progress towards goals
- Requires a willingness to share data, support for understanding and using data, and a shared vision and common set of goals



Not “data for data’s sake” – data to inform and guide programming decisions, set priorities, and track progress towards goals

# TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

- Role of planning process in building relationships and trust among stakeholders
  - *We must go slow to go fast.*
  - *We must go together to go far.*
  - *We must proceed with urgency around shared work – trust goes from doing the work together*
- Everyone has a role to play in creating, implementing, evaluating and celebrating the work

# PLANNING PROCESS

- Planning is critical to successful collaborations and long-term impacts
- Sets the foundations – gets everyone on the same page around a common vision for success and guiding principles for their work together (at the school, partner and community levels)
- Developmental work takes time – it takes practice before the symphony can perform
- Planning process includes working through challenges, having difficult conversations, shifting how stakeholders do their work

**Work back from the shared vision and goals – set milestones, assess progress, engage all partners in moving towards outcomes**

# COMMUNITY SCHOOLS/ COLLECTIVE IMPACT

- Community school strategy as a way to operationalize collective impact efforts
- Linking goals together – community-level goals, shared vision help drive school-level goals and vision
- Organize efforts, identify gaps, look for ways to connect inside and outside schools in pursuit of Bold Goals
- Five principles of aligning efforts –
  1. Trusting relationships
  2. Cross-sector partnerships
  3. Purposeful engagement
  4. Actionable data
  5. Shared accountability

# EXAMPLES OF PLANNING STRUCTURES

- Building the car while driving it rarely creates a solid foundation for long-term efforts or impacts
- Steering committees, work groups, backbone functions
- District 69 and West Chicago We Go Together for Kids examples

**Requires commitment from all stakeholders/ partners – this is a new way of doing our work, but it's still *our* work**

# ALIGNMENT, COORDINATION AND A NEW WAY OF DOING BUSINESS

- Strategy for organizing supports around children and families, where children and families are, and depending on the unique needs of the community.
- Focus on coordination and alignment – avoiding duplication of efforts, and ensuring that programs, partners and stakeholders work towards common goals
- Sometimes requires changing how we deliver programs and services
- Developmental in nature – won't happen overnight

# PART OF A MOVEMENT

## *Nationally*

- Coalition for Community Schools
- More than 3500 community schools around the country
- Networks forming in CA, NY, OH, MI and IN
- Federal legislation

## *In Illinois*

- Largest number of community schools in any state
- 19+ communities, more than 200 community schools
- Supportive policy at the state level, supportive Federal officials



# RESOURCES

- Federation for Community Schools tools and resources

[www.ilcommunityschools.org](http://www.ilcommunityschools.org)

[www.ilcommunityschools.org/CSresources](http://www.ilcommunityschools.org/CSresources)

- The Coalition for Community Schools

[www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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