



COMMUNITY SCHOOL

PATH FORWARD



Introduction:

The Rochester City School District is committed to shifting the educational landscape in many ways including the adoption of a more inclusive approach to student learning. Our holistic approach is currently reflected in establishing 10 of our schools into Community Schools that aim to improve student achievement through strong partnerships among principals, parents, teacher and community organizations.

Over the course of the next eighteen months the district will develop a co-constructed coherent framework and approach that outlines the key elements and plan for building high quality Community Schools in Rochester. Currently, the district has been engaging with all stakeholders to define the elements of a framework that provides a common language to anchor all schools in the elements of high quality Community Schools.

Overview:

The Rochester City School District recognizes the transformational power of community schools as a strategy to help our students, families and community thrive. This strategy has been emerging within the context of the York State Education Department (NYSED) expectations for Receivership schools in Receivership, the Path Forward and the design of the Superintendent's Receivership Schools and Innovation as a strategy devoted to the transformation of schools.

The District has been thoughtful about initiating this work from the school level, supporting the school-based teams in listening and learning to the community in each school; providing responsive assistance; and, only after learning from the early phase of implementation, recently beginning to design a more formal infrastructure. The District grounds its emerging theory of action for community schools in research, synthesized in the 2017 Community Schools Standards¹ (inset to the right) and in the context of ESSA, which includes several provisions regarding community schools. In particular, the Guiding Principles section of the

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS STANDARDS

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Seven principles guide the community schools approach to school transformation, and provide a framework that undergirds each of the community school implementation standards.

- 1. PURSUE EQUITY**—Educational excellence and equity are inseparable. Community schools work actively to identify and confront policies, practices and cultures that that keep students of different backgrounds and races from achieving equitable outcomes. Community schools proactively and intentionally empower those typically disempowered by barriers to participation.
- 2. INVEST IN A WHOLE-CHILD APPROACH TO EDUCATION**—Meaningful teaching and learning embraces but goes beyond mastery of core academic subjects to include youth development principles; holding high expectations for children, youth, and adults; and developing their social-emotional, health, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.
- 3. BUILD ON COMMUNITY STRENGTHS TO ENSURE CONDITIONS**—Community schools utilize the assets of the entire community—including the gifts of people who live and work there, parents, families, residents and community partners to create the optimal learning conditions for each student.
- 4. USE DATA AND COMMUNITY WISDOM TO GUIDE PARTNERSHIPS, PROGRAMS, AND PROGRESS**—Reliable and community-specific data, coupled with the wisdom of youth, families and residents, guides how educators and community partners work together to achieve measurable results.
- 5. COMMIT TO INTERDEPENDENCE AND SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY**—Student success requires explicit investment in collaborative planning and implementation between educators and community partners and across program areas and disciplines. Mutually agreed upon results and related indicators, as well as written agreements enable educators and community partners to hold each other accountable.
- 6. INVEST IN BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS**—Deep collaboration takes dedicated effort and time, and becomes evident in the daily formal and informal social exchanges within a school community and between the school and the broader community. Trusting relationships fuel school transformation by helping to create a nurturing safe, respectful climate where caring adults, families and students come to rely on each other as part of a shared approach to student success.
- 7. FOSTER A LEARNING ORGANIZATION**—Improved student learning depends on a school community where educators and community partners work together towards continuous improvement. Time and support are available for individual and collective reflection and adjustment as well as shared learning and professional development, to facilitate responsiveness to student needs.

In combination, and when guided by a coherent and rigorous vision of how students, schools, and communities can thrive, these principles provide a strong foundation for the pursuit of the community school strategy.

¹ (Institute for Educational Leadership and Coalition for Community Schools, 2017)



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Standards align with the District’s values of Equity, Relational Capacity, Innovation, Coherence and Accountability (ERICA).

Currently, ten of our schools have formally adopted the community school strategy, as part of their State Education-approved improvement plan and/or the NYSED Community Schools Grant which are listed in the table below. The District recognizes that many other schools have elements of this strategy in place, and the framework for developing and sustaining community schools will include an articulated continuum relative to the strategy.

Moving forward, with equity as a key driver, the district will support the current and develop the next set of Community Schools and establish the systems and structures to ensure all Community Schools are supported equitably.

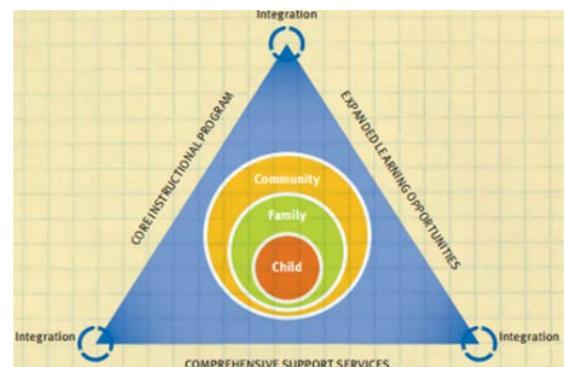
Approach and Common Language

RCSD has long supported the underlying theory of action behind the community school strategy—that in seeking to serve the whole child, schools work to connect students and families to resources. Successful Community Schools are anchored in a set of principles that align to the District’s values; ERICA:

- **Equity:** Community Schools are provided equitable resources that are sustainable
- **Relational Capacity:** All stakeholders are engaged at the highest levels to best serve students and their families
- **Innovation:** Research and best practices are essential elements of high quality Community Schools
- **Coherence:** All stakeholders have a common vision and set of metrics that keep the needs of students and families at the forefront of the work
- **Accountability:** Clear metrics and outcomes are used to keep all stakeholders accountable to best serve students

Community schools are defined as “a place and a set of partnerships” that focus community resources on students and families, resulting in students who are ready and able learn in school.

A community school acts as a hub, offering a coordinated approach to connect and cultivate assets in the community and to link families to services, so that educators can focus on teaching and students can focus on learning. Particularly in economically stressed communities, community schools can play a transformational role, removing barriers for students and families, and simultaneously strengthening schools and communities.





Rochester City School District: Community Schools

A common set of **practices** exist in high quality Community Schools which include:

- A clear vision for teaching and learning
- A collaborative school governance structure
- Opportunities for Expanded learning
- Families are valued and included as active partners in their child's education
- Positive youth development activities are included in all aspects of the school
- Medical and mental health services are offered to meet the needs of the student and family
- Community members are engaged and key to building a strong learning community

In addition, the underlying principles of a Community School approach are articulated in New York's theory of action for schools, the Diagnostic Tool for School & District Effectiveness (DTSDE). The research is clear that becoming a community school is a long-term strategy taking five to ten years to move to the highest levels of trust and coordination required to best serve children and families.

Included in the Community Schools framework will ensure consistency while allowing and encouraging each school to design a program that encourages innovation and is tailored to meet the unique needs of the school community. Research shows that common **programs and services** of a Community School include:

- Expanded Learning Opportunities
- Early Childhood Education
- Health Services
- Mental Health Services
- Family Engagement and supports
- Adult and Family Social Services and support

Key to the development of a high quality Community School is identifying a set of metrics that will be used to monitor and address the need for continuous improvement. Metrics should be developed relative to each school which are articulated in student level and school level outcomes to provide a full assessment of the theory of action for Community Schools. **Metrics** may include:

Student Results:

- Increased attendance and student engagement
- Development of social and emotional skills necessary for success
- Improved student academic outcomes

School Outcomes:

- Improved Schools culture and climate
- Family engagement
- Access to services due to collaboration of schools and community stakeholders



Actions and Plan:

To develop a comprehensive multi-year strategy, the district is assembling a community advisory group to provide ongoing input to build a Community School strategy and framework that meets the needs of the Rochester. The goals of the group will be developed collaboratively to maintain a laser focus on improving outcomes for our students. Importantly, the district is committed to creating a Community School as a key component of every new or redesigned school in the district moving forward. Financial sustainability will be aligned to the plan.

The District has created a Director of Community Schools role to support this critical work. The director will collaborate with all stakeholders, support the schools through the provision of resources to hire/contract the Community School Coordinator, develop and provide professional learning for school and community stakeholders, monitor all funding sources and ensure critical elements of community schools are in place. In addition, the Director will also be supported by two Community Schools Mentor/Lead Teachers.

Furthermore, the district has an Office of School Innovation (OSI) that works to support school transformation including community schools to provide expertise in school improvement. The OSI also supports processes, contract and partnership management, facilitation of community relationships and resources and required NYSED reporting related to Receivership, school improvement and community school laws and regulations.

With the aim of meeting the Community School theory of action, the district will engage in the following activities:

Rochester City School District Community School Work Plan thru June 2019	
Date	Activity
July 2017	Provide initial introductory session for new schools, and position them to co-construct grant opportunity. Work with schools to develop initial grant plan, building logically on existing Receivership Plan.
October 2017	Conversations with District leadership, union leaders, Community School Staff, selected school-based personnel to provide an opportunity for Shital Shah to inform District strategy, and learn from RCSD approach. Shape common understanding among RCSD leaders.
October, 2017	Explore and research other district structures
October 2017 thru February 2018	Develop job descriptions for Community School Director and Site Coordinators, recruit, interview and hire positions



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January 2018	Coordinate two-day work session with Receivership Community Schools
January thru February 2018	Launch co-construction of Community Schools Framework
January thru March 2018	Develop and convene Community Advisory Group, establishing broad support and collective ownership, quarterly (March, June, September, December/January) Members should be representative of key community stakeholders including the City of Rochester, ROC the Future, foundation members, Community Based Organizations(CBOs), and community stakeholders
January thru August 2018	Develop and implement a high quality professional learning plan for school and community stakeholders
February thru March 2018	Conversations with District leadership, union leaders, Community School Staff, selected school-based personnel to provide an opportunity for Shital Shah to inform District strategy, and learn from RCSD approach. Shape common understanding among RCSD leaders
March thru July 2018	Coordinate and launch Request for Proposals for community/agency partners Community Schools Framework development All Needs Assessments completed
August 2018	Coordinated Community Schools 2018 Summer Summit Community Schools Framework 1 completed Community School plans finalized and submitted 2018-2019 Professional Learning Plan finalized and communicated
September thru December 2018	On-going monitoring and support 2018-2019 Professional Learning Plan implemented
October 2018	Convene School and Community Stakeholders
January	Community Schools Framework assessed and modified Convene School and Community Stakeholders
January - June 2019	On-going monitoring and support 2018-2019 Professional Learning Plan implemented
April 2019	Convene School and Community Stakeholders
June 2019	Convene School and Community Stakeholders



Rochester City School District: Community Schools

As part of the overall strategy and framework, the plan will include an assessment of the following key areas to successful bring it to fruition:

- Funding Strategy
- Data Structures
- Capacity Building across the schools and agencies
- Parent and Community Engagement and Governance

Moving forward, the RCSD is committed to the following strategy for continuing and expanding Community Schools in the receivership/priority and new or redesigned schools as part of future planning.

Type	Stage of Development	Potential Number of Community Schools 2024
RISE Schools (Current Community Schools)	2017-2018 Year 1: 5 Schools	10
	2017-2018 Year 2: 3	
	2017-2018 Year 3: 2	
New/Redesign Schools	2018-2019	1
	2019-2024	3-6
Total		~20

RCSD Current Community Schools

Being a Community School means listening and responding to the local school community—students, families, staff, neighbors and partners. As agency and efficacy develops, each school will reflect on a unique signature and suite of services. The specific needs and assets that are identified will determine what services and opportunities each school should develop to best meet the needs of their school community.

To date, our schools have invested laudable efforts into organizing and launching a community school strategy, beginning with the 2016-2017 school year essentially as their first year at Schools 9, 22 and 45; School 17 was able to begin the in the 2015-2016 school year through philanthropic support. It is important that as a result of the NYSED Community Schools Grant the additional five Receivership schools which includes Schools 3, 8, 41, James Monroe High School and Northeast College Preparatory High School.

A significant milestone this year is that each school has a full-time Community School Coordinator position, devoted to building relationships, identifying needs and assets in that particular community, prioritizing and mobilizing partnerships and services, and coordinating the myriad of resources that exist in the community and school. Guided by best practice, these coordinators are working to conduct a widespread needs assessment of their school to prioritize a set of actions during the 2017-2018 school year. Each school is emerging with a unique vision (visioning exercise shown to the right), set of partners and priorities, and pace



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Community school work is largely relational and therefore difficult to capture on paper, however, these schools are investing deeply in learning about, and listening to their communities as they create their short and long-term visions, foster relationship and integrate this strategy into overall school, district and community improvement. Decisions regarding the internal structures in every receivership school is discussed with Community Engagement Teams and in all schools the School Based Planning Teams including the selection of the Site Coordinator.

Rochester City School District Community Schools: 2018		
Current Community Schools	Start	Site Coordinator
Nathaniel Rochester Community School #3	Year 1	Lead Agency Site Coordinator
Roberto Clemente #8	Year 1	RCSD Site Coordinator
Martin Luther King #9	Year 2	RCSD Site Coordinator
Enrico Fermi #17	Year 3	Lead Agency Site Coordinator
#22	Year 2	RCSD Site Coordinator
Kodak Park #41*	Year 1	Lead Agency Site Coordinator
Mary Bethune Mcleoud #45	Year 2	Lead Agency Site Coordinator
James Monroe High School	Year 1	RCSD Site Coordinator
Northeast College Preparatory High School/Northwest Middle School	Year 1	RCSD Site Coordinator
East Upper/Lower Schools-EPO	Year 3	East-EPO
<i>*=Closing June 2017 and Re-Open September 2017</i>		

Conclusion:

The district is committed to breaking down barriers and disrupting the patterns of failure to ensure all students have an education that prepares them for college and career opportunities. The Community School structure is an essential strategy in designing schools that take a holistic approach that engages the entire community, ensures all schools are of high quality and possess a culture high expectations for all students.