

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

“A full-service community school is a public elementary or secondary school that uses established partnerships between schools, families, and community organizations to provide well-rounded educational opportunities and meet the social, emotional, physical, mental health, and academic needs of students.”

Federal Department of Education Full-Service Community Schools FAQs, July 2021

Each community school reflects the local needs, assets, and priorities, no two look exactly alike. What they do share, however, is a commitment to partnership and to rethinking, and at times rebuilding relationships based on a strong foundation of trust and respect. The Rochester Board of Education supports school climates that support relationships and the needs of the whole child and by extension, their families, whether or not a school is designated as a Community School.

Like every good school, community schools must be built on a foundation of powerful teaching that includes challenging academic content and supports students’ mastery of 21st-century skills and competencies.

What makes community schools unique is the combination of four key pillars (or features) that together create the conditions necessary for students to thrive.

1. **Integrated Student Supports**
2. **Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities**
3. **Active Family and Community Engagement**
4. **Collaborative Leadership and Practices**

COMMUNITY SCHOOL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. **Pursue Equity**
Educational excellence and equity are inseparable. Community schools work actively to identify and confront policies, practices, and cultures 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 embrace but go 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**
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 toward 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.

Cross-ref: District/Community Collaborative Presentations, Programs and Services (4830.1)
Capital Planning for Shared Building Use (7050)

Ref: Education Law §414

Notes: Prior policy, Policy Manual, Community Schools (November 19, 1987), Revised August 20, 1998; Amended August 24, 2023 pursuant to Resolution No. 2023-24: 234 (Formerly Community Involvement)

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