

Community Schools Model

Newton Public Schools

January 2017

1. **Definition**

- a. Community Schools are both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources.
- b. They have an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth development, and community engagement.
- c. They lead to increased school attendance, decreased disciplinary incidents, stronger families, healthier and safer communities, and improved academic outcomes.
- d. They offer a curriculum that emphasizes student-centeredness, real-world learning, and community problem-solving.
- e. They have transformed traditional American schools for over a century; currently serving over 5 million students in approximately 5,000 schools nationwide -- more than charter schools by enrollment and number of locations.

2. **Objectives**

- a. Broaden and deepen the range of services, resources, and developmental opportunities available to students in ways that: 1) promote student well-being and attachment to school; 2) address academic and psychosocial deficits; and 3) promote positive development.
- b. Address the needs of parents and families, and strengthen the parent-school relationship as an asset to student learning.
- c. Link classrooms and teachers to community resources and professionals in ways that support student learning.

3. **Essential Strategies**

- a. Engaging, culturally relevant, challenging curricula in a robust selection of classes and afterschool opportunities.
- b. Emphasis on high quality teaching, not on high stakes testing, with professional development led by teachers and support staff.
- c. Wrap-around supports such as health and social services that sustain academics.
- d. Positive discipline practices and social/emotional learning reinforcements.
- e. Authentic parent and community engagement.
- f. Inclusive school leadership committed to making the model central to the school's operation.

4. **Research Literature**

[What is a Community School?](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools \(Feb 2016\)](#)

[NJ Health Initiatives \(Dec 2015\)](#)

[Leadership in Community Schools \(Feb 2016\)](#)

5. **Key Takeaways from [Needs Assessment](#)**

- a. Most respondents (75%) were students in grades 7-12.

- b. Stress management (54%) and anger management (53%) were cited as important needs.
- c. Self defense (44%) and English language learning (34%) were rated higher than expected.
- d. Concerns with privacy during service use (20%) need to be addressed.
- e. School climate surveys confirm the needs.

6. Connections to Existing Initiatives *(in no particular order)*

<i>TRS</i>	<i>Food Pantry</i>	<i>Child Assault Prevention (CAP)</i>
<i>School of Character</i>	<i>Parent Academy</i>	<i>Great Kindness Challenge</i>
<i>Project Launch</i>	<i>Week of Respect</i>	<i>Student/Faculty of the Month</i>
<i>Food Back Packs</i>	<i>Girls on the Run</i>	<i>School Climate Teams</i>
<i>Altitude</i>	<i>Rachel's Challenge</i>	<i>Framework for Understanding Poverty</i>
<i>Honor Roll/STARS</i>	<i>#Tags Mentors</i>	<i>Schoolwide summer reading activity</i>
<i>Walk/Bike to School</i>	<i>Second Step</i>	<i>Healthy Schools / Fitness-Based PE</i>
<i>7 Habits for Teens</i>	<i>Peer Leaders</i>	<i>Community Based Instruction</i>
<i>Caring Award</i>	<i>Attendance Works</i>	<i>Responsive Classroom</i>
<i>Faculty Mentors</i>	<i>Anti-Bullying Summit</i>	<i>Connections Class / Extended Homeroom</i>
<i>Best Buds</i>	<i>Community Kids Club</i>	<i>Faculty Book Discussions</i>
<i>Action Alliance</i>	<i>Watch DOGS</i>	<i>Community Service Activities</i>

7. Provision of Services

While services will be tailored to the specific needs of the site, each school will consider how to address the following categories:

- a. academic supports for students
- b. health and wellness access for students and families
- c. social/emotional health services and referrals for students and families
- d. social and cultural enrichment as well as recreational activities
- e. adult education and family/community engagement programming

8. District Parameters

- a. Each school considered all five service provision areas to come up with a proposed plan.
- b. The model has been developed from a family-based case management approach (i.e., coordination of services).
- c. School teams needed to identify the resources required (e.g., partners, personnel, space, time) to provide the desired services.

- d. Existing services were to be reviewed as to how they meet our needs, and whether they could be coordinated better within our model.

9. Key Existing Community Assets / Partner Organizations

[Merriam PTO](#)

[Newton Pride Foundation](#)

[Halsted Parent Organization](#)

[Pass It Along](#)

[Newton Police Department](#)

[Center for Prevention & Counseling](#)

[Project Self-Sufficiency](#)

[Sussex County Municipal Alliance](#)

[Newton Medical Center](#)

[Sussex County YMCA](#)

[Town of Newton Recreation](#)

[Sussex County Community College](#)

[Youth Services Commission](#)

[United Way of Northern NJ](#)

[Sussex County Transit](#)

10. School-Based Plans

- a. Merriam Avenue School, pages 4-7
- b. Halsted Middle School, pages 8-11
- c. Newton High School, pages 12-13

Merriam Avenue School

1. Needs Assessment

a. Current demographic data

Grade	Total	FRL%	ELL %	SWD %
pK	72			
K	75	55%	7%	15%
1	89	49%	7%	13%
2	83	49%	2%	18%
3	91	42%	0%	11%
4	91	57%	4%	23%
K-4 Total	429	50%	4%	16%

b. Early literacy screening

- i. Our screening data indicates that up to 70% of incoming kindergarteners do not have adequate early literacy skills, creating a gap that is more and more difficult to close with each passing year.
- ii. Of the 70% of students needing remediation, 55% are at risk for experiencing reading difficulties and require a higher level of reading instruction in order to successfully acquire the necessary prerequisite skills for proficient reading.
- iii. Our reading teachers are currently serving 75 of our 429 K-4 students (17.5% of the student population). Tier 3 reading instruction is designed for 10 – 15% of a student population.

2. Resources Allocated

a. Academic resources

- i. increased the number of reading teachers to 2.5 teachers;
- ii. provided all students a minimum of 90 minutes of daily language arts instruction;
- iii. implemented a tiered approach to intervention (RTI) in language arts;
- iv. ensured all Tier 3 interventions are in addition to core instruction;
- v. built a 45 minute intervention period into the school day to minimize students being pulled out of core academic subjects for Tier 2 & 3 interventions;

- vi. increased core academic instructional time by 2.25 hours a week;
 - vii. changed instructional goals, materials and practices to better serve student needs;
 - viii. implemented a research-based reading intervention program (Wilson) at all levels of intervention including special education;
 - ix. improved our library services;
 - x. increased the number of team teaching in-class support classrooms to better facilitate inclusionary educational practices; and
 - xi. begun the work of aligning instruction, defining goals, and expanding access to literacy in the content areas.
- b. Social, health, and family support services
- i. Breakfast in the Classroom which provides healthy breakfast to all students free of charge;
 - ii. Project Backpack for students in food-insecure homes;
 - iii. Parent Academy, which provides an opportunity for parents to learn literacy and math strategies from teachers;
 - iv. Watchdogs, which encourages fathers and other significant male figures to volunteer in the school;
 - v. A school-based social worker who provides counseling services to parents and children;
 - vi. Pass it Along brings high school volunteers to read with children after school; and
 - vii. Onsite dental and vision screenings.

3. Service Overview

- a. We seek a holistic approach to community schools encompassing all five service provision areas.
- b. A primary goal of our school is to provide equitable access to high quality literacy instruction to all of our students.
- c. Preschool can be the first introduction to schooling not only for children, but also for parents and families. A positive and effective preschool that is part of a comprehensive community school can provide services to families to support learning and early literacy for children in those critical formative years.
- d. We see a preschool expansion as integral to continuing and expanding our family support services in children's early formative years.

4. Service Plan

- a. Internal and external research tells us that a preschool program which focuses on oral language development, print knowledge, phonological awareness and comprehension strategies using non-print sources can help to ameliorate the need for remediation in later grades by providing early literacy skills at the very time when those skills are most impactful.
- b. Each of these pre and early literacy skills shows a strong continuity over time, providing a solid foundation on which to build literacy. One study quoted in Mesmer, Mesmer, and Jones (2014) found that, "Of Pre-K children who scored exactly 12 on uppercase alphabetic recognition in the spring of their 4 year old Pre-K year, about 74% were reading at or above grade level in the spring of first grade." (pp. 81-2)
- c. Analysis of our current preschool program supports the findings in the external research literature. Of the nine students who attended our preschool who went on to kindergarten at this school year, 78% met the early literacy benchmarks in DIBELS, while 89% met the benchmarks in our Early Screening Inventory.
- d. Our data, albeit limited in scope, does align with external research findings about the impact of both outside-in and inside-out literacy skills taught in pre-K on literacy in subsequent elementary grades, showing a correlation between preschool participation and a reduction of the number of students in need of Tier 3 intervention in those grades to percentages which more closely align with current RTI models.

5. Key Resource Need - Universal Preschool

- a. Through our comprehensive RTI program in language arts literacy, we are providing that "substantial and sustained" remediation for our students. Yet with up to 70% of students entering kindergarten needing some level of remediation, the need is outpacing our current resources.
- b. Preschool participation will not replace the need for reading interventions in K-4, but there are indications that it can serve as a pre-intervention to help close early learning gaps.
- c. We have had initial meetings with United Way of Northern NJ to elicit their expertise in seeking grant funding for a preschool expansion. We would also like to reach out to Newton Medical Center to explore partnering on health and social services for our families.
- d. The following data reflect the costs for the existing partial day program and the expected needs of a full day program (25 hours/week) for 75-85 four-year old students and 24 three-year old self-contained special needs students.

	Existing provided by district	Additional provided by district	Additional requested from partner(s)	SUBTOTAL
Teachers	2 @ \$100,000		4 @ \$80,000	\$520,000
Assistants	5 @ \$20,000		10 @ \$20,000	\$300,000
Curriculum	\$15,000		\$30,000	\$45,000
Furniture	\$8,000		\$16,000	\$24,000
Transportation	\$10,000		\$20,000	\$30,000
Classroom space	2 @ \$100,000	*2 @ \$100,000	**2 @ \$100,000	\$600,000
TOTAL	\$533,000	\$200,000	\$786,000	\$1,519,000

** Additional space from existing classrooms repurposed for preschool*

*** Additional space in the form of purchased classroom trailers*

Halsted Middle School

1. Needs Assessment

a. Current demographic data

- i. 43.6% of our students are at or below the poverty level; 34.4 % of our students qualify for free lunch/breakfast; and 9.1 % of our students qualify for reduced lunch/breakfast.
- ii. These numbers will only be increasing in our school. In fact at our elementary school: 48.2% of our elementary students are at or below the poverty line; 41.5% of our elementary students qualify for free lunch/breakfast; and 6.6% of our elementary students qualify for reduced lunch/breakfast.
- iii. Our homeless population has increased from one student in 2013-14 to eight students in 2016-17.

b. Community Schools Survey 2016 (from students, parents, staff, and community)

- i. When asked “What academic supports do you believe students would access if they were available at the school?”, the third most popular response was life skills.
- ii. When asked, “What health and wellness services do you believe families would access if they were available at the school?”, the number one response was stress management, and the number three response was mental health.
- iii. When asked “What social/emotional health services do you believe families would access if they were available at the school?”, the responses with most frequent first were: anger management/conflict resolution; dealing with grief; dealing with divorce; and teen concerns.

c. Counseling and behavioral services

- i. 42% of our students who are referred for counseling and/or behavioral intervention services are also failing one or more subject.
- ii. 84% of our students who are referred for counseling and/or behavioral intervention services have one or more disciplinary incidents logged.
- iii. Students receiving counseling and behavioral interventions services at the elementary level (current 4th Grade) will be in need of support upon entering grade 5 at Halsted:

Grade	# of Students receiving Tier II counseling	# Students in Grade	% students in need of support
4	27	94	29%

- iv. Students in need of counseling and/or behavioral intervention services at the middle school level, however we only have the capacity for crisis management (current 5th-8th Grade):

Grade	# of students in need of Tier II	# Students in Grade	% students in need of support
5	37	94	39%
6	25	84	30%
7	22	74	30%
8	32	85	38%
Total	116	337	34%

2. Resources Allocated

- Guidance counselor receives updates regarding student progress during teacher unit meetings organized by grade level to identify academic concerns.
- Student updates. Assistant principal analyzes discipline data on a monthly basis to identify the student supports needed in order to create a positive behavioral support plan for behavioral management.
- School psychologist provides counseling to students as outlined in their IEP and teaches social skills to classified students in the Positive Supports Class (special education class)

3. Service Overview

- Academic supports - tutoring with NHS and/or potential partnership with SCCC, need coordinator
- Health and wellness access - vision (Sojihuggles, Lions Club or Zufall as potential partner, Optical Academy with other partners); laundry (through vouchers, community detergent programs through outreach with companies such as Tide)
- Social/emotional health - school based social worker through potential partnership with NMC
- Social and cultural enrichment/recreational activities - partner more closely with Town Recreation to make more parents/students aware of what Town is already doing, scholarships/vouchers from local businesses to support disadvantaged students; expand family movie night at Halsted, need coordinator
- Adult education and family/community engagement - School based social worker through potential partnership with NMC

4. Service Plan

Services	Action Items (How)	Resources Needed	Implications for the School	Potential Partnerships
Tutoring	HS to Halsted peer tutoring	Facility-school open evenings/Saturday	Increased academic	NHS SCCC

	SCCC students County HS students Local Retired Community Members	Supervisor/ Coordinator Training and screening for Tutors	achievement Positive school engagement	Pass It Along Service Corp
Vision Services	Vision screen Informing parents of service	Eye exams Eyeglasses	Increase student achievement	Lions Club Zufall Clinic, Newton Optical Academy Newton Medical Center Sojihuggles
Laundry Services for students (health & wellness)	Identify students in need. School nurse identification.	Detergent Laundromat vouchers or school machine Money for detergent	Health and hygiene Social acceptance	Local laundromats Pass It Along, Sojihuggles, Detergent Companies
School Based Social Worker (for individual counseling)	Board Approval, Budget	Funding for hiring	Family and student support	Newton Medical Center (Mental Health),
Town Events/Trips	Better coordination and advertising of existing events. Designate a coordinator (stipend or part of existing staff role)	Look for scholarship opportunities for families who can not afford it. (ThorLabs, ELKS, Moose, Lions, Rotary, local business)	Family Engagement Increased parent-school relationship	Newton Rec department
Expand Family Movie Night	Coordinate with HMS Student Council	School Space, DVD, refreshments, Compensation for staff chaperones		Halsted Parent Organization
Advertise, offer facility use and better coordinate adult education and community activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education opportunities with PSS • Offer school site for Pathways to Prosperity (CPC) • Offer school site for Strengthening Families (CPC) • Community Partner Awareness for NPS staff 	Outreach to CPC program coordinators Designate PD time	School space	Family Engagement Increased parent-school relationship	Project Self Sufficiency, Center for Prevention. Perhaps we can brainstorm with them and even promote some events here. Atlantic Health, PSS, Pass It Along, United Way, YMCA, CPC, NORWESCAP, Zufall Clinic

5. Key Resource Need - Social Worker

- a. Trained mental health professional to address:
 - i. Behavioral concerns and provide positive behavioral support intervention services

- ii. Individual, group and family counseling
 - iii. Crisis intervention
- b. Assist with carrying out the work as outlined in our mission statement, “Intervention systems will be positioned to ensure that we are meeting students’ physical, emotional, and social needs through a variety of measures.”
- c. Conduit between school and home
- d. Connect student/family to outside services
- e. Advisor to Climate/Culture Team
- f. Groups to address issues including coping with daily stressors, supporting social and emotional development, developing skills to identify and regulate emotions
- g. Specific services provided by the social worker can be broken down for students, families, staff, community, etc.

Newton High School

1. Needs Assessment

- a. 18.4% of our students are economically disadvantaged;
- b. 54% of district students identified stress management resources as valuable on the community schools survey;
- c. 53% of district students identified anger management resources as valuable on the community schools survey;
- d. Currently, of the 6 high school students using APEX, 3 of them use it due to school phobia and anxiety issues;
- e. Currently two NHS students have been out of school for five months due to anxiety and school phobia; and
- f. It is a logistical hardship for families (transportation, parent cooperation, parent resources) to meet the needs of their child.

2. Resources Allocated

- a. These services currently require an outside referral.
- b. Goal would be to return students to effective academic functioning as soon as possible.

3. Service Overview & Plan - partnership with Newton Pride Foundation to activate the capacity of NHS alumni (monthly calendar of activities)

- a. Academic Supports
 - i. Resume building
 - ii. Interview techniques
 - iii. Networking
 - iv. Book club
 - v. Test prep (SAT, ACT, etc.)
 - vi. ELL support for current students and community
 - vii. Fine arts: instrumental
 - viii. Professional mentoring
- b. Health and Wellness Access
 - i. Physical fitness center with activities such as yoga, fitness, cooking, nutrition, adult leagues (volleyball, badminton, etc.)
 - ii. Weight Watchers
 - iii. Family parenting/counseling (PSS and CFPC)
 - iv. Personal hygiene
- c. Social and Emotional Health
 - i. Stress and anger management - possible partners (PSS and CFPC)
 - ii. Lunch and Learn
- d. Social and Cultural Enrichment
 - i. Speakers bureau

- ii. Adult leagues as noted above
- iii. Book club
- e. Adult Education and Family/Community Engagement
 - i. Driving school for those who can't afford behind the wheel time
 - ii. Youth Employment Center: weekend and after school
 - iii. Strengthen families, parenting classes
 - iv. ELL classes for adults

4. Key Resource Need - Social Worker (in partnership with Newton Medical Center)

- a. Trained social worker who can aid students and families in managing situations that arise, including those that are triggered by stress and anxiety, anger, poverty, substance abuse issues within the family, etc.
- b. Provide direction and assist in connecting resources in the community with the student and family
- c. Act as a conduit between school and home
- d. Advisor to the School Climate Team
- e. Assist in crisis interventions, as needed
- f. Lead student group meetings centered around social and emotional well-being
- g. Coordinate with Guidance and CST to determine student need (i.e. counselor identifies student/family who require services beyond the school-based personnel).
- h. Increased perception that schools have the best interest of students and families in mind, and the ability to address needs
- i. Possibility of home visitation for families with minimal resources
- j. Based upon data from the social worker, build upon this initiative by considering full-time, school-based therapists in Year Two or Three