Administering the Maryland Needs Assessment in Community Schools

Maryland State Department of Education

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Interim Director of Community Schools

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Presentation Outline

Overview of Community Schools

About the Needs Assessment

Components of the Needs Assessment
- Asset mapping
- Partnership inventory
- Gathering and analyzing data
- Surveys
- Focus groups and interviews

Next steps
Overview of Community Schools

Community schools have been present in some Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in Maryland for more than 25 years, with demonstrated positive results related to attendance and other school success factors.
What is a Community School?

• A community school is a **whole school model** designed to promote positive, equitable outcomes by providing students, families, and communities with the **physical health, mental health, academic, and extracurricular supports needed to thrive**.

  – Community schools serve as **hubs that bring families, communities, and partners together** to remove barriers to learning. Using an asset-based approach, community schools strive to strengthen connections between home, school, and communities to generate improved student outcomes.

• Community schools work in **collaboration with community partners**, local governments, and other stakeholders to **identify and address structural and institutional barriers** to achievement.

  – **Leveraging the power of the collective** allows community schools to provide resources to students and families where they need it the most—neighborhoods that have **been historically underfunded and underserved**.

• Community schools provide a wide array of **wraparound services** that enhance student’s ability to be successful.

  – These wraparound services include **safe transportation to and from school, vision and dental services, social workers and mental health counselors, extended learning time, and health and wellness services**.

Community Schools Coordinator (CSC)

Roles and Responsibilities of the CSC

- Determined by the LEA, and principal
- Develop, coordinate, manage partnerships
- Provide wraparound services
- Lead steering committee, participate in other school wide committees
- Connect students and families to resources
- Conduct the Needs Assessment
- Execute implementation plan
Overview of Community Schools

Check In

Select the responses that best match your school’s resources and enter them in the chat room

A. We have integrated student supports.
B. We have expanded learning times and opportunities.
C. We have active family and community engagement.
D. We have collaborative leadership.
E. I am not sure yet...
Currently in FY 2023, there are **358 community schools** in 19 LEAs receiving Concentration of Poverty Grants.
Maryland Concentration of Poverty Grant Funding

Personnel Grants

- Community Schools Coordinator
- Professional Healthcare Provider (licensed physician, licensed physician’s assistant, or licensed registered nurse, practicing within the scope of their license)

Per Pupil Grants

- Calculation based on the number of students living in poverty in the school
- Funds used to provide wraparound services
## Wraparound Services Identified by the Blueprint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extended learning time, including before and after school, weekends, summer school, and an extended school year</td>
<td>Providing increased time for academic instruction and support services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe transportation to and from school and off-site apprenticeship programs</td>
<td>Facilitating safe and timely transportation for students and staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vision and dental services</td>
<td>Ensuring access to essential health services for students and staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establishing or expanding school-based health center services</td>
<td>Expanding health services to meet the needs of students and staff.</td>
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<td>Additional social workers, mentors, counselors, psychologists, and restorative practice coaches</td>
<td>Providing support and guidance to students and staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhancing physical wellness, including providing healthy food for in-school and out-of-school time and linkages to community providers</td>
<td>Promoting health and well-being through healthy food and community connections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhancing behavioral health services, including access to mental health practitioners and providing professional development to school staff to provide trauma-informed interventions</td>
<td>Supporting mental health and trauma-informed practices within schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing family and community engagement and supports, including informing parents of academic course offerings, language classes, workforce development training, opportunities for children, and available social services as well as educating families on how to monitor a child’s learning</td>
<td>Ensuring family and community engagement and support services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establishing and enhancing linkages to Judy Centers and other early education programs that feed into the school</td>
<td>Linking students to community resources and support programs.</td>
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<td>Enhancing student enrichment experiences, including educational field trips, partnerships, and programs with museums, arts organizations, and cultural institutions</td>
<td>Expanding opportunities for student enrichment and cultural engagement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving student attendance</td>
<td>Increasing student attendance rates.</td>
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<td>Improving the learning environment at the school</td>
<td>Enhancing the learning environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any other professional development for teachers and school staff to quickly identify students who are in need of these resources</td>
<td>Providing additional support services as needed.</td>
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Source: MD Code, Education §9-101
Community Schools Established Through Concentration of Poverty grants- Timeline

### Year 1
- **July - August**: School receives Concentration of Poverty grant
- **September - October**: School hires Community School Coordinator (CSC) AND fulltime healthcare worker
- **November - April**: School establishes steering committee
- **May - June**: CSC and steering committee complete a Needs Assessment
- Needs assessment submitted to LEA and MSDE

### Year 2
- **August - October**: School analyzes needs assessment data
- **November - May**: Implementation plan submitted to LEA and MSDE
- **June**: Wraparound services, partnerships, programs guided by implementation plan

Data used to create implementation plan
Before the Needs Assessment

1. Reach out to community partners and organizations to establish relationships, introduce and educate about community schools, and learn about programs/services
   
   Listen to ideas about the design and launch of the community school

2. Determine managing entity

3. Ensure that the community school has committed leaders

4. Hire the Community School Coordinator

5. Ensure access to school health offerings (full-time professional healthcare provider)

6. Establish a Community School Steering Committee

7. Plan for professional learning and support
Committed Leaders

- Embrace the community school model
- Understand the significance of equity and culture responsiveness
- Establish a community of care and support for students
- Engage meaningfully with families and community
About the Needs Assessment

Required of all concentration of poverty community schools, this collaborative process for gathering information on the needs of the school helps determine what assets the school can access, what needs exist, and what is needed to fill the gap between needs and assets.
What is a Community School Needs Assessment?

• A collaborative process for gathering information on the needs of a school
• Designed to determine what assets exist, what needs exist, and what stakeholders want from a community school
• Critical step in developing programming in a community school
• Without data and input from stakeholders, programs, and partnerships might not have the desired impact
What is a Community School Needs Assessment?

What does the legislation say?

HB 1300 (2021), Annotated Code of Maryland. §9.9-104, states that community schools must administer a Needs Assessment within one year of becoming a community school receiving the Concentration of Poverty grant

• Submitted to LEA and MSDE

The Needs Assessment should:

• Be completed in collaboration with:
  - the school principal
  - professional healthcare practitioner,
  - parent teacher organization/ school family council, and
  - others
• Include an assessment of the physical, behavioral, and emotional health needs of the students, their families, and their communities

What is a Community School Needs Assessment?

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Administration of the Needs Assessment

- The MSDE recommends that the Needs Assessment be administered once every three years.
  
  Some parts might be updated annually.

- Utilize a collaborative team to plan and execute administration of the Needs Assessment. The Community school steering committee might accomplish this.

- Collaboration is key!

- Share data, previous needs assessment results, and community agency data.
Use a Team!

Existing Community School Steering Committee

If no team exists, a team might include:

- CSC
- Principal
- School health worker
- Reps. from parent leadership organizations
- School counselor
- Teacher
- Families

- Community partners
- Community representatives
- OST representatives
- Coaches
- School support staff
- Students
- Judy Center Coordinator
- Representatives from early childhood community
Let’s Chat

What questions do you have so far?

Does your school have a community school steering committee that could take on this work?

- If yes, who else might be included on the team?
- If not, how might you start this process? What support might you need?
Assessing needs requires multiple methods of data collection. The main priority of the first year, the assessing of needs, directs the work and the success of the community school.
Five Components of the Needs Assessment

- Asset mapping
- Partnership inventory
- Gathering and analyzing data
- Surveys
- Focus groups and interviews
Asset Mapping

Process for identifying and locating strengths and resources in a given community

Why asset mapping?

– Helps community schools develop an accurate picture of the full scope of the strengths, resources, and supports in a community

– May include looking at people, places, organizations, partnerships, etc.

– Represents potential partners and resources for the school, students, and families
Check In

Select the response that best describes your experience with asset mapping and enter it into the chat room.

A. I am not really sure what this is.
B. I have been involved in asset mapping but need more information.
C. I have a good understanding of asset mapping.
D. I am confident that I can manage a group to complete asset mapping.
What information is included in Asset mapping?

Might include community resources such as:

- Health partners
- Mental health providers
- Colleges or universities
- Non-profit organizations
- Businesses, faith-based institutions
- Recreation centers
- Childcare providers, before and after school providers
- Local management boards

And anyone else who may be able to support the services needed by families and students.
Process for Asset Mapping

- Form a team—may be the steering committee. Involve students, families, and the community.
- Select a process or protocol to follow.
- Map your assets.
- Share your results with the steering committee and other stakeholders, as needed.
- Consider which assets the school is currently utilizing and in what capacity, as well as which assets are being underutilized or not utilized at all.
- Identify needed assets and see if they exist.
Structure Asset Mapping Protocols

There are many structured asset mapping protocols available to community schools.

Resources include:

- Advancement Project: Participatory Asset Mapping Toolkit
- UCLA Center for Health Policy Research: Asset Mapping
- LISC: Asset Mapping
- Southern Poverty Law Center: Community Asset Mapping
Asset Map Example

New Era Academy is a public high school in Baltimore, Maryland. This map highlights some of the partners and provided services.

- Youth Development
- Health & Mental Health
- Workforce Development
- Community
- Food
- Group Home

Made with Google My Maps
Partnership Inventory

Identification of current partners and programs. Both internal and external.

Have the team make a list of current partnerships in the community and in the school.

Include information such as:

- Name of partner
- Points of contact information
- Address or contact information
- Date(s) of contact
- Type of partnership currently providing services to the school
- Population served
  - Where and when are they served?
  - Potential services
- Other
Partnerships

Consider:

How many partners does the school have?

What sectors do the partners represent?

Who is being served by these partners?

What gaps in service exist?
### Sample Partnership Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Partner</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Purpose of Partnership</th>
<th>Population Served</th>
<th>Length of Partnership</th>
<th>Date(s) of Contact</th>
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**Note:** This is a sample partnership inventory table used to administer the Maryland Needs Assessment in Community Schools.
Data Analysis

Needs assessment consists of quantitative and qualitative analysis. Data analysis is the quantitative analysis.

Why data analysis?

• Education, health, community metrics that provide more information about students, families, and the surrounding community

• Community health and social services data can be obtained using the State of Maryland Open Data Portal.

• Educational data can be found in the Maryland School Report Card
Data Analysis - Before You Begin

Component Data is always plentiful (and can be overwhelming). Narrow your scope!

- What information can this data give me?
- How does it help me understand the needs of my students, families, or the community?

Collaborate with school leadership, other teams, internal/external partners to gather data

- Needs assessments for federal programs (Title I, Title III, etc.)
- Judy Centers/Early Childhood Advisory Councils
- School Improvement Team/Academic Leadership Team
- Student support
- Local governments (health department, etc.)
- Hospitals
Data Analysis- Protocols

- Select a protocol to use to analyze the data
- Assists committees in examining data through multiple lenses
- Allows for examination of data in an organized, thoughtful way
- Facilitates productive conversations about data

Harvard University- The Data Wise Improvement Process

Oakland Unified School District- Data Protocols
Data Telling a Story

What does this data tell us about:

- the strengths of our school, students, families, and/or community?
- the needs of our school, students, families, and/or community?

What gaps exist in this data? Where might we get additional information?
Surveys

Surveys are tools that assist in gathering information about the wants and needs of various stakeholders.

The Maryland Community Schools Needs Assessment includes surveys for students, families, staff, and partners.

**Why administer surveys?** Surveys assist in gathering feedback from a wide range of people and the results can be used to gather information on what students, families, and communities want and need. They are generally easily administered.
Survey Forms

Can be distributed on paper, electronically, or both

Administer to grades 4+

Develop a plan to reach all stakeholders

Communication

Reminders

Incentives

Share results

Should be distributed and results analyzed before conducting focus groups

MSDE Staff and Partner Survey: https://forms.gle/sU33sS8weJ39CRUH8

MSDE Student Survey: https://forms.gle/GRg6LxEkQfbrpUHu6

MSDE Family Survey: https://forms.gle/ZLUd7AAVMQXNDTCG9
Survey Forms- Analysis

Check In

- Review the “Family Survey” form.
- What kind of data might this survey provide about the needs of your community school?
- What modifications might need to be made so that it reflects the needs of your families?
- How might your school distribute the survey so that all families can participate?
Focus Groups and Interviews

- Longer interviews with small groups of participants designed to collect additional information

- Why hold focus groups?
  - Allows for gathering more in-depth information about a topic
  - Can help the community school gain a better understanding of a problem or need that emerges in the surveys or data analysis

- Note- while the other three components can be completed fluidly, the focus groups must be held after administering the surveys so that the results can be used to form questions and guide conversation.
Components of a Focus Group

- 5-10 participants
- Last 30-60 minutes
- Interviewer asks questions with a designated recorder taking notes
- Guided by questions based on findings in the data analysis and/or surveys
  - Questions may be developed and approved by the steering committee
  - Consistent across focus groups
Considerations for Holding a Focus Group

**Plan, plan, plan**

- Prepare questions ahead of time
- If possible, practice facilitation
  - Conversation will probably get derailed- how will you get it back on track?
- Establish ground rules and norms with the group
- Emphasize the importance of confidentiality
- Take notes
- Closing is important- thank participants for their time and ideas, discuss how the information will be used
Interviews

Identify individuals for interviews-usually key personnel

- School health practitioner
- Mental health providers
- Before and after school providers
- Key community partners
- Parent liaison and leaders
- Student leaders
Let’s Chat

We have discussed the five components of the Maryland Community Schools Needs Assessment.

What feels manageable? Where might you need more support?

a) Asset mapping
b) Partnership inventory
c) Gathering and analyzing data
d) Surveys
e) Focus groups and interviews
Next steps

Needs assessments yield a lot of data. The Community Schools Advisory Council works to summarize the data to determine the significant needs of the students in the school and begin to develop an implementation plan to meet the identified needs.
Next Steps

With steering committee, consolidate all data to perform an analysis

Submit the results from all components of the Needs Assessment to the LEA and the MSDE in June 2023

Share the results with your stakeholders

Begin to create the implementation plan

Use the information to begin developing partnerships, programs, and services that benefit your students, families, and communities
Other resources

The MOST Network (Maryland Coalition for Community Schools)
National Center for Community Schools
Coalition for Community Schools
Prince George’s County Public Schools Community Schools Asset map
Institute for Educational leadership Resources for Community Schools
Learning Policy Institute
Center for Education Equity
Contact

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