

## Model Legislation

### Model State Community Schools Act

This bill is modeled after Minnesota Statute [124D.231](#), New York [S 3481](#), and Tennessee [Senate Bill 2393](#).

This model legislation provides funding for a competitive grant program to support the implementation of a community schools initiative. Two categories of grants are authorized: (1) planning grants; and (2) implementation and renewal grants. One-year planning grants enable local education agencies (LEAs) (the applicant), in partnership with the community and participating school(s), to prepare to apply for implementation grant(s) (i.e., conducting a needs and assets assessment(s) and drafting community school plan(s)). LEAs may bypass planning grants if prepared to apply directly for implementation grants. Implementation grants provide funding to transform schools into community schools in accordance with the four pillars approach found in the Learning Policy Institute and National Education Policy Center's research on effective community schools. Renewal grants are provided to sustain community school initiatives. The model legislation is not exhaustive. States may augment the bill to better contextualize the content or move some of the text into accompanying regulations or requests for proposals. Likewise, states may choose to change the structure of this bill, such as by creating a formula grant program or reprogramming and aligning existing funds.

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act shall be called the "Community Schools Act."

#### SECTION 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

**(A) FINDINGS** – The legislature finds that:

- (1) Every child should be able to grow up and have the opportunity to achieve his or her dreams and contribute to the well-being of society. Every neighborhood deserves a public school that fully delivers on that promise.
- (2) According to the most recent data, more than half of the nation's schoolchildren live in low-income households—meaning they qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, the highest proportion since this statistic began being documented over 60 years ago. As a result, some schoolchildren face more challenges than others in succeeding in school and in life.
- (3) Community schools provide comprehensive programs and services that are carefully selected to meet the unique needs of students and families—such as lack of stable housing, inadequate medical and dental care, hunger, trauma, and exposure to violence—so students can do their best.

- (4) According to a report from the Learning Policy Institute, the four key pillars of the community schools approach—integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, active family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices—promote conditions and practices found in high-quality schools, as well as address out-of-school barriers to learning.
- (5) Research shows that community school interventions can result in improvements in a variety of student outcomes, including attendance, academic achievement (including reducing racial and economic achievement gaps), and high school graduation rates, and meet the Every Student Succeeds Act standard of “evidence-based” approaches to support schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support and intervention.
- (6) Research also shows that these programs offer a strong return on investment: Up to \$15 for every dollar invested in community schools.

**(B) PURPOSE** – This law is enacted to support the successful implementation of effective community schools that provide all students with equitable access to a high-quality education.

### **SECTION 3. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

#### **(A) DEFINITIONS**

- (1) “Community school” means a public elementary or secondary school that includes all four of the following:
  - (a) Integrated student supports, which address out-of-school barriers to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies and providers, coordinated by a community school director, which may include but are not limited to: medical, dental, vision care, and mental health services, or counselors to assist with housing, transportation, nutrition, immigration, or criminal justice issues.
  - (b) Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, including before-school, after-school, weekend and summer programs, which provide additional academic instruction, individualized academic support, enrichment activities, and learning opportunities that emphasize real-world learning and community problem solving and which may include, but are not limited to: art, music, drama, creative writing, hands-on experience with engineering or science, tutoring and homework help, and recreational programs that enhance and are consistent with the school’s curriculum.
  - (c) Active family and community engagement, which brings students’ families and the community into the school as partners in children’s education and makes the school a neighborhood hub, providing adults with educational opportunities they want, including, but not limited to: English as a Second

Language classes, green card or citizenship preparation, computer skills, art, or other programs that bring community members into the building for meetings or events.

- (d) Collaborative leadership and practices, which build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility using strategies which shall, at a minimum, include a school-based leadership team, a community school director, and a communitywide leadership team and may include, but are not limited to: other leadership/governance teams, teacher learning communities, and other staff to manage the multiple, complex joint work of school and community organizations.

(2) “Community School Director” means a person who:

- (a) Is a full-time staff member serving one eligible school;
- (b) Is responsible for the identification, implementation, and coordination of integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices;
- (c) Serves as a member of the school-based leadership team;
- (d) Serves as the lead for the needs and assets assessment and community school plan described in Section 3(E); and
- (e) Leads the needs and assets assessment and stakeholder-driven approach to problem-solving and continuous improvement.

(3) “Community School Initiative Director” means a person who:

- (a) Aids implementation and coordination of Integrated Student Supports, Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities, Family and Community Engagement, and Collaborative Leadership and Practice, when a local education agency has more than three eligible schools operating community school programs in its jurisdiction; and
- (b) Provides support and guidance to Community School Directors.

(4) “Communitywide leadership team” means a team at the local education agency (LEA) level that is responsible for guiding the vision, policy, resource alignment, implementation, oversight, and goal-setting for community school programs within an LEA. This team shall include representatives from the LEA, teachers, school leaders, students, and family members from the eligible schools, community members, system-level partners that include representatives from government agencies, relevant unions, nonprofit and other community-based partners, and, if applicable, the Community School Initiative Director.

(5) “Eligible applicant” means:

- (a) An LEA; or
- (b) At least one nonprofit organization that partners with an LEA with approval from the governing entity responsible for the LEA.

- (6) “Eligible school” means a public elementary or secondary school that:
- (a) Has a student body where at least 40% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch pursuant to the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.); or
  - (b) Has been identified for Comprehensive or Targeted Support and Intervention pursuant to Section 1111(c)(4)(D) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or otherwise identified by the state as in need of additional support.
- (7) “School-based leadership team” means a school-level team that is responsible for assessing that school’s needs, developing its goals, selecting programming and services, and implementing the entire program. The Team shall be comprised of 12 to 15 people with no less than one-third parents or local residents and no less than one-third teachers and other school staff, as well as the principal, representatives of nonprofit organizations that serve the school, and, for secondary schools, students at the school. The leader shall be selected by the membership of the team.
- (8) “Teacher learning communities” means a group of primarily instructional staff in an eligible school who are given common planning time to participate in ongoing decision making and planning that examine their practice and student performance to improve school policy and classroom teaching.

## **(B) INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The State Education Agency shall provide the following forms of technical assistance to LEAs:

- (1) Distribute materials that describe the elements and advantages of community schools, including references to governmental and nonprofit reports;
- (2) Assist any school district in forming a taskforce to study the creation and administration of community schools;
- (3) Inform LEAs of the availability of grants authorized by this law, and provide technical assistance to eligible applicants in applying for such grants;
- (4) Inform school districts of other sources of funding for community schools, including the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, and assisting school district efforts to secure such funding; and
- (5) Facilitate effective coordination among state agencies in the deployment of resources and services such as health, nutrition, and other supports.

## **(C) GRANT AUTHORIZATION**

The State Education Agency (SEA) is authorized to provide planning, implementation, and renewal grants to eligible applicants as follows:

- (1) A 1-year planning grant of up to \$X for each eligible school;
- (2) Annual implementation grants of \$X a year for a period of 3 years for each eligible school; and
- (3) At the conclusion of the initial 3-year grant period, applicants with demonstrated success, as determined by the SEA's evaluation defined in Section G, may apply for a renewal grant of \$X annually for each eligible school for up to 3 years.

#### **(D) PLANNING GRANTS APPLICATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

- (1) Eligible applicants shall submit an application to the SEA and shall include a description of the following:
  - (a) The initial communitywide leadership team and the school-based leadership team(s) or the process that will be put in place to establish the teams;
  - (b) The process and timeline for conducting a needs and assets assessment and community school plan for each eligible school as required by Section 3(E); and
  - (c) If applicable, plans for hiring additional staff, providing additional compensation to existing staff, or the contracting of a nonprofit entity or entities that will help the eligible applicant apply for an implementation grant or grants.
- (2) Eligible applicants shall make an assurance that the eligible applicant intends to apply for an implementation grant within 6 months of receipt of a planning grant.
- (3) Planning grant funds shall be used for the following activities:
  - (a) The establishment of—or continued support of—a communitywide leadership team and school-based leadership team or teams; and
  - (b) Conducting a needs and assets assessment and crafting a community school plan for each eligible school as required under Section 3(E).
- (4) Planning grant funds may be used for hiring additional staff, providing additional compensation to existing staff, or contracting with a nonprofit entity or entities to aid in the activities necessary to apply for an implementation grant.

**(E) APPLICATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND RENEWAL GRANTS AND COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN.** Eligible applicants shall submit an application for an implementation or renewal grant to the SEA and for each eligible school shall include:

- (1) A needs and assets assessment that includes:

- (a) Where available, and where applicable, student demographic, academic achievement, and school climate data, disaggregated by major demographic groups, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, English language proficiency, students with individualized education plans, and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch status.
  - (b) Access to and need for integrated student supports as detailed in Sections 3(A)(1)(a) and 3(F)(1)(c).
  - (c) Access to and need for expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities as detailed in Sections (3)(A)(1)(b) and 3(F)(1)(d).
  - (d) School funding information, including federal, state, local, and private education funding and per-pupil spending, based on actual salaries of personnel assigned to the eligible school.
  - (e) Information on the number, qualifications, and stability of school staff, including the number and percentage of fully certified teachers and rates of teacher turnover.
  - (f) Active family and community engagement information, including:
    - (1) Family and community needs based on surveys, information from public meetings, or information gathered by other means;
    - (2) Measures of family and community engagement in the eligible school, including volunteering in schools, attendance at back-to-school nights, and parent-teacher conferences;
    - (3) Efforts to provide culturally and linguistically relevant communication between schools and families; and
    - (4) Access to and need for family and community engagement activities as detailed in Sections (3)(A)(1)(c) and 3(F)(1)(e).
  - (g) Collaborative leadership and practices, including a description of the communitywide leadership team; school-based leadership teams; teacher learning communities; and common planning time for educators.
  - (h) Opportunities for partnerships with nonprofit organizations, faith- and community- based institutions, institutions of higher education, including teacher preparation institutions, hospitals, museums, businesses, and other community entities that can partner with the eligible school.
  - (i) Community climate indicators, including housing instability, unemployment, poverty, jobs that offer a living wage, health indicators, youth employment, access to parks, environmental hazards, crime, and gang activity.
- (2) A community school plan, which shall include a description of the following:
- (a) How the Community School Director and, as applicable, Community School Initiative Director will be expected to fulfill their responsibilities as described in Section (3)(A)(2) and Section (3)(A)(3);
  - (b) The collaborative leadership and practices structures and strategies;
  - (c) The integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, and active family and community engagement activities

that will be tailored to the needs and assets assessment under Section 3(E)(1) and provided in accordance with the activities specified in Section 3(F)(1);

- (d) How the eligible school will provide culturally and linguistically relevant communication between schools and families;
- (e) How the eligible school will establish and maintain partnerships with nonprofit organizations, faith- and community-based institutions, institutions of higher education, including teacher preparation institutions, hospitals, museums, businesses, and other community entities that will help implement and sustain the community school plan;
- (f) How activities chosen will reinforce—and not be duplicative of—existing programs and activities at the eligible school; and
- (g) If applicable, a description of the federal, state, local, and private funds that will be accessed.

## **(F) ACTIVITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND RENEWAL GRANTS**

- (1) Programming, services, and activities in this section shall be tailored to school and community needs as identified in the needs and assets assessment and community school plan in Section 3(E). As a condition of receipt of funds, eligible applicants shall, for each eligible school:
  - (a) Provide a Community School Director and, as applicable, a district-level Community School Initiative Director to coordinate services across eligible schools;
  - (b) Establish or maintain a school-based leadership team and teacher learning communities, and, for the LEA, a communitywide leadership team; and
  - (c) Implement at least two of the following integrated student supports:
    - (i) Health services that may be based in the eligible school or provided in the community, including primary health, dental care, and mental health, including trauma-informed care;
    - (ii) Nutrition services, including providing additional meals or assistance in accessing food assistance programs;
    - (iii) Programs that provide assistance to students who have been chronically absent, suspended, or expelled:
      - a. Mentoring and other youth development programs;
      - b. Programs that support positive school climates;
      - c. Juvenile crime prevention and rehabilitation programs;
      - d. Specialized instructional support services;
      - e. Homeless prevention services;
      - f. Developmentally appropriate physical education;
      - g. Legal services, including immigration-related legal services;

- h. Dropout prevention programs; and
  - i. Transportation services necessary for students to access integrated student support services, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement activities, or other services and activities identified to support the development of students.
- (d) Implement expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, which may include additional academic instruction, before- and after-school and summer learning programs, mentorship programs, job training, internships, apprenticeships, and service-learning opportunities, and provide time for the Community School Director, school staff, the school-based leadership team and others to plan, coordinate, and integrate these opportunities; and
- (e) Implement at least two active family and community engagement strategies, which may include:
  - (i) On-site early childhood care and education programs; and
  - (ii) Home visitation services by teachers and other professionals;
  - (iii) Adult education, including instruction in English as a second language, GED, or credit recovery programs;
  - (iv) Job search and preparation services and career advancement activities;
  - (v) Legal services, such as help with green card or citizenship preparation;
  - (vi) Programs that aid family and community well-being, including accessing homeless prevention services; and
  - (vii) Programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy, provide volunteer opportunities, promote inclusion in school-based leadership teams; and empower and strengthen families and communities.
  - (viii) Provide other programming or services designed to meet school and community needs identified in the needs and assets assessment, that may also satisfy requirements in sections 3(F)(1)(c), 3(F)(1)(d), and 3(F)(1)(e).
  - (ix) Conduct an annual self-assessment based on information in Section 3(E) and make the results publicly available.

(2) Required activities shall not be duplicative of existing programs and activities.

## **(G) EVALUATION**

- (1) At the end of the initial 3-year grant period of an implementation award and every third year in which a renewal grant ends, each eligible school shall undergo an evaluation designed by the SEA. The evaluation shall include, at a minimum,



information in Sections 3(E)(1), 3(E)(2), and 3(F)(1), including the impact on academic achievement and opportunities, school climate information, integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, active family and community engagement strategies, the collaborative leadership and practices in place, and changes in school spending information.

- (2) By [DATE,] the SEA shall report to the Legislature and the Governor on the impact of the Community Schools Act and the grant program established therein. The report shall be made publicly available via the agency's website. The SEA shall provide data gathered (in the aggregate and disaggregate) pursuant to Section 3(E)(1) for each eligible school and present the data in such a manner that allows it to be easily searchable. As applicable, the SEA shall make recommendations to the legislature, governor, and public concerning possible revisions to the state's funding formula, particularly for the highest-poverty LEAs in the state.

#### **(H) APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS**

- (1) The sums indicated in this section are appropriated from the general fund to the State Department of Education for the fiscal years designated for community schools under State Statute XXX.

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- (2) The SEA may set aside:
- (a) No more than X percentage of funds for informational and technical assistance for eligible applicants and eligible schools pursuant to Section 3(B).
  - (b) No more than X percentage of funds for the evaluations required in Section 3(G).