

State Support Can Scale Community Schools Models

Models that support evidence-based interventions to best serve students.

Community Schools Models offer integrated health and social supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, active family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices. Through decades of implementation in other states with clear evidence of improved student outcomes, Virginia should support and expand these models with state funding.

Why Community Schools Matter

- Student success is impacted by factors inside and outside the school. Community schools break down barriers through wrap-around health and nutrition services, before and after school activities, leveraging community resources, and much more, so students can focus on learning.
- These schools have a [proven track record](#) over decades of improving outcomes including attendance, graduation, and academic gains, and these findings are particularly pronounced for students living in deep poverty and/or low-resource [rural communities](#) and [English learners](#).
- Community schools models start with an assessment of needs and local assets, involving all community stakeholders to build collaboration and buy-in. These models are tailored to bring teachers, staff, volunteers, local businesses, and families together to best meet student needs.

Community Schools Help Students and Communities Thrive

- [Research](#) shows that community schools improve [graduation rates](#), reduce racial and economic achievement gaps, improve test scores, decrease behavioral offenses, and improve literacy rates.
- Community schools are [cost effective investments](#) that reduce duplication and centralize local services. Research finds every \$1 invested in these models [returns up to \\$15 in benefits](#) to the community. [Significant federal resources](#) exist to leverage for sustaining these school models.
- Increased learning time and out-of-school opportunities [improve attendance and achievement](#).
- Research from the non-partisan RAND Corporation finds community schools models see a [significant reduction in disciplinary incidents and chronic absenteeism](#).

Virginia Can Become a National Leader in Community Schools

- Virginia studied community schools [at length](#) with a committee of experts, released a start-up guide, and is well-prepared to fund these models at scale similar to [other states](#).
- Building on the current budget's \$10 million pilot grant, Virginia should bolster this fund and create a VDOE office to provide technical advising to support community schools models.
- Virginia should look to state-supported policies in other states, like [New Mexico's robust model](#) assisting with the transition to community schools, or Oklahoma and Kentucky, which offer strong support for wrap-around services and have good track records for [improving graduation rates and achievement](#), or Maryland's prioritizing fully funded coordinator positions to establish and sustain these models at the state's [highest poverty schools](#).