

The Full-Service Community School Expansion Act of 2021

Senators Sherrod Brown, Chris Van Hollen, and Kirsten Gillibrand

Our public schools play a foundational role in our communities, yet too many communities – rural, suburban, and urban – face inequities related to food security, healthcare, education, housing, and economic stability. These challenges do not magically disappear when students enter the classroom – they have lasting impacts on students, families, and school communities that our public schools lack the resources to address. School systems that were already struggling to support children and families in educational attainment, medical and mental health services, broadband connectivity, and food shortages have been strained more than ever by the public health and economic crises caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Community schools can play an integral role in addressing these inter-connected challenges. Community schools are public schools that use evidence-based, collaborative leadership practices to provide integrated student supports, expanded learning opportunities, and family and community engagement activities that result in positive outcomes for students. Investing in community schools, and the infrastructure to support these schools, will help students and communities thrive. By treating our public schools as community hubs and providing them with the resources they need to meet the holistic needs of the whole child, we can support the well-being and success of students, families, and communities.

It is time to reimagine our public schools and invest community schools that meet the needs of the whole child. **The Full-Service Community School Expansion Act of 2021** will assist schools and districts by providing integrated student supports – including medical, mental, and nutrition health services, mentoring and youth development programs, technical assistance, and continuing education courses – to serve students, families, and communities. This legislation would also provide essential resources for school districts to plan for, implement, expand, and build out the infrastructure for community schools. Specifically, the Full-Service Community School Expansion Act of 2021 would:

- Invest \$3.65 billion over the next five years to plan, implement, expand, and support full-service community schools serving low-income students;
- Provide renewable grant opportunities and additional resources to existing community schools to build collaborative leadership structures and strengthen wraparound services that support the needs of students, families, and neighborhoods;
- Build out community school infrastructure by funding the establishment of state-level teams that provide professional development opportunities and resources for community school staff, work with schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) to develop and implement restorative justice principles, and collaborate with LEAs on integrating supports for community schools; and
- Set aside up to 5% of funds for technical assistance and support to leverage federal, state, and local resources that address healthcare and early childhood education, and connect LEAs with other statewide institutions and funding opportunities.

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