

The Full-Service Community School Expansion Act of 2020

Senators Sherrod Brown, Chris Van Hollen, and Kirsten Gillibrand

Our public schools play a foundational role in our communities, yet we have underfunded classrooms for decades and failed to provide schools with the support and tools necessary to invest in transformative change. 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 academic and non-academic outcomes for students. Investing in community schools, and the infrastructure to support these schools, will help students thrive.

Too many communities – rural, suburban, and urban – face inequities related to food security, healthcare, education, housing, and economic stability. 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 rethink our public education system by reimagining how schools and the organizations they partner with can serve the larger community and effectively bridge academic and non-academic equity gaps. By treating our public schools as community hubs and providing them with the resources they need to meet the holistic needs of their students, families, and larger communities in which they serve, we can support the well-being and success of students, families, and communities across the country.

It is time to invest in a system that meets the needs of the whole child. **The Full-Service Community School Expansion Act of 2020** 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, and expand community schools, and would further develop the infrastructure to support these schools. Specifically, the Full-Service Community School Expansion Act of 2020 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, connect LEAs with other statewide institutions, and inform LEAs of funding opportunities.

This bill is supported by: the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the Institute for Educational Leadership, the Coalition for Community Schools, Community Learning Center Institute, Children's Aid, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, Healthy Schools Campaign, School-Based Health Alliance, StriveTogether, Journey 4 Justice, Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, Maryland Out of School Time Network, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, Promise Heights, United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, GradCincinnati, Ohio Community Learning Center Collaborative, the School Superintendents Association, Adopt a Class, MindPeace, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National League of Cities, the Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania