



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RE-ENGAGEMENT SERVICES

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Community engagement refers to partnerships shared between schools, families and their communities to support the social, emotional, and educational development of youth. School and community partnerships enrich and expand services for in and out of school time and as a result, positive outcomes for youth and their families.

Partners may include:

- businesses
- community-based organizations
- post-secondary institutions
- workforce development centers
- religious and civic groups
- libraries

Successful school-community engagement includes a shared goal to develop a range of resources and partnerships to address barriers to learning, enhance the healthy development of youth, and strengthen the whole community.

WHY FOCUS ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Community engagement requires a systemic approach to school and community partnership. As schools and districts consider ways to improve outcomes for youth, community engagement invites and includes community organizations in conversations and planning early and often.

In preparing students for life beyond the classroom, schools and community organizations in partnership, have the opportunity to leverage services based on the unique needs of each student. Services that are already present in some schools may have the opportunity be enhanced by offering a greater breadth or depth of the service. For example, food programs may expand to serve family members who are not yet school aged or vision and dental exams may include a free pair of glasses or dental hygiene products.

Supports provided in partnership can produce:

- Healthier students
- Better academic outcomes
- Numerous physical, social and emotional, and socio-economic benefits.

Promising Interventions

Students, communities and families experiencing risk factors such as poverty, often require supports that go beyond the walls of the school.

These supports can make the difference for a student's ability to succeed in and complete school.

Research recommends that interventions go beyond the typical school boundaries to mediate factors that put students most at risk for not completing high school.

Local examples of proven interventions include:

- National Communities in Schools
- Reading Partners
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Schools that build relationships with community organizations to provide students with opportunities and partner with health care providers and social service agencies, can have a systemic and sustained effect on positive outcomes for students.



WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

Bringing Communities into Schools

Bringing the community into the school is a practice that has been successful in creating support beyond the school building for youth and their families. Engagement from the community can come in many forms to support youth from, organizing donations for a family who has experienced an emergency, to appointing youth to a seat on city council to share information on what issues youth are facing in the community.

Several national organizations have proven effective at bringing communities and schools together.

- The Communities in Schools program, which is currently piloting a program in the Aurora School District in Colorado uses a school-based coordinator to bring community resources into schools to empower student success, remove barriers, and keep kids in school.
- The national Reading Partners program, which serves 10 schools in Denver, mobilizes communities to partner with schools and provides students who are struggling to read with one-on-one volunteer reading partners.

Schools and districts are asked to shoulder a number of non-academic needs faced by students and their families. Community youth-serving agencies are equipped to serve these needs in partnership with schools and often have the human capacity, resources and flexibility schools are more limited in.

Community Engagement References and Materials:

[Dropout Prevention Best Practice Guide References](#)

[Dropout Prevention Resources](#)

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/communityengagement>