
Community Schools in Maryland

Presentation to the
Whole Child Advisory Group
NCSL



September 17, 2021



History

- Community schools have existed in Maryland for over 20 years
- Most of the early community schools were established in Baltimore City with a growing number in other jurisdictions including Montgomery County and Prince George's County



What are Community Schools?

- Similar to “one-stop-shops” in workforce and economic development, the concept behind CS is to meet the “non-academic” needs of students and their families where they are in their communities – in their schools
- Typically CS provide access to health and social services for students by connecting students and their families with relevant government agencies and providers. Other services that may be provided include housing, child care, job training, adult education, transportation etc.
- Most CS employ a coordinator – often a social worker – to identify the needs of student and their families and connect them to these services



Funding for Community Schools

- Most schools are funded with federal funds, State funds (very minimal – usually health-related) and philanthropic contributions
- CS are traditionally not considered a school finance expenditure as they do not directly relate to instructional needs
- In Maryland, however, the State recently passed legislation to incorporate CS funding into a new public school funding formula



Education Commission

- The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education was appointed in 2016 by the Governor and General Assembly to make recommendations on policies to provide a world-class education to Maryland students and funding formulas to meet those goals
- The Commission determined that if schools are to be held accountable for student learning outcomes, then every student must be ready to learn at school, which means their physical health and other needs must be met



Concentration of Poverty

- In addition to base funding and per pupil funding tied to student needs (low-income, English learners, special education), the Commission recommended a new school-level funding formula based on the concentration of low-income students in schools, i.e. concentration of poverty grants
- The Commission proposed that the new formula funding be used to establish community schools in every school with 55% or more of its students from low-income families (i.e., 185% of federal poverty level)
- Unlike most formula funding, which can be spent at the discretion of the central office, concentration of poverty funding may only be spent for services at eligible schools and is generally controlled by the school, although systems with 40 or more eligible schools may develop a centralized plan to allocate services



Community School Model

- Schools must hire a coordinator and provide full-time health care coverage during the school day (including before and after school) using a personnel grant, which is 100% State funded.
- The coordinator must conduct a needs assessment of the students and school community
- Per pupil funding (for every student in the school) is provided to support wraparound services based on the needs assessment. These services include academic needs, such as tutoring and enrichment activities, and nonacademic needs. Per pupil funding is primarily State funded.
- Nonacademic wraparound services include access to medical, dental, behavioral/mental health, vision, trauma-informed, nutritional and related services, and may also provide access to housing, child care, parental counseling, job training, adult education, transportation etc.



Expansion of Community Schools

- In the first year of concentration of poverty funding (FY 2020), Maryland funded 178 community schools at 80% concentration of poverty in 13 (of 24) school districts
- In FY 2022, 286 schools at or above 70% concentration are receiving funding in 17 districts
- Every eligible school will receive personnel funding by FY 2026
- At full implementation in FY 2030, an estimated 40% of public schools or 557 schools – in all but 1 school district in the State - will receive \$522 million in State funding