



Building Thriving Communities Through Equitable Education

An Overview of Community Schools

One Voice's Education Equity Work with Community Schools: At One Voice, one of our goals is to find and resource equitable education opportunities for the children and families across the state of Mississippi. To accomplish these goals, we developed our Education Equity program. The staff working in this program work to convene and connect education advocates looking to innovate Mississippi's educational system. With this motivation, One Voice has joined the OurJPS coalition in its efforts to implement the community schools' model in the Jackson Public School District. One Voice sees this implementation as a pilot to launch a statewide community schools' model.

What are Community Schools? According to the Partnership for the Future of Learning, community schools work with partners (like local government agencies and nonprofits) to provide comprehensive supports and opportunities to meet the unique needs and interests of students and families and are rooted in the existing resources and knowledge of their neighborhoods.

Community schools pay explicit attention to challenges children face—such as lack of stable housing, inadequate medical and dental care, hunger, trauma, and exposure to violence. Deep engagement with families and community members helps to enrich curriculum and learning opportunities. This engagement reinforces community pride and a commitment to shared goals, all while strengthening the school.

The Four Pillars of Community Schools

01 integrated student supports, such as health care, behavioral health, and dental services	02 expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, including lengthening the school day/year, offering after school and summer programs and/or broadening the curriculum to include enrichment and community-based learning	03 family and community engagement	04 collaborative leadership and practices, such as shared goal setting and decision making, among students, families, teachers, school staff, school/district administrators, and staff from community-based partner organizations
---	--	--	--

Community Schools

VS

Charter Schools

Community schools ARE public schools. These schools employ a strategy that brings community resources (like nonprofits, local businesses, and public institutions) to support children, families, and neighborhood residents. This support ranges from free meals, afterschool programming, mental health resources and other wrap around services that improve the quality of life for all involved.

Research shows community schools following the best practices improve student educational outcomes. Education researcher, Joy Dryfoos studied 49 community school initiatives and found 36 to report academic improvement. Some of these programs also reported reductions in suspensions and increased parental involvement.

Due to community schools' holistic approach to supporting children's education and health needs, they miss fewer days of instructional time to easily treatable illnesses, show improvement in behavior problems and provide services necessary to address any learning difficulties.

Community schools emphasize the need for culturally sensitive learning and providing life-based learning.

Community schools educate and uplift the entire community. These schools develop programs like adult education, family counseling, and meal distribution. By encouraging investment from local businesses and organizations, this strategy allows the community to provide the resources needed to sustain itself.

Charter schools are publicly funded yet privately operated. This means when children from traditional public school attend these institutions, the charter school drains millions in funding from the traditional public school in the community.

Charter schools are not producing the academic performance results they promise. Recent research has charter school performing the same level or below traditional public schools

Charter schools increasingly suspend or expel children with behavioral problems or learning disabilities. These schools lack a commitment to the children and families in the communities they serve.

Charter schools exacerbate the achievement gap by segregating children by race, socioeconomic status, language and ability.

With charter schools being privately run, they lack accountability and transparency. This has opened the door for financial schemes and fraud in charter schools across the country.

Resources to learn more about Community Schools

<http://onevoicems.org/>

<https://www.ourjps.org/>

<https://communityschools.futureforlearning.org/>

