Community Schools NYC!
What are community schools?

A community school isn’t just a public school within a community. It’s a **neighborhood hub** that combines high-quality academics and enrichment with on-site health and social services not just for the students but for families and the entire community.

- Parents and community members are leaders in a team to design a plan for the community school and carry it out.
- Schools are open in the afternoon, on weekends and during the summer to offer arts, sports, college and career preparation, tutoring, life skills and more.
- On-site medical, dental and mental health and social services for children, families and the community
- Adult education, English as a Second Language, job training, crisis assistance, housing assistance and leadership development for parents and community residents
- Full-time Resource Coordinator to support community school
Community schools serve the whole child

"Could someone help me with these? I'm late for math class."
Why community schools?

- If a child comes to school hungry....they cannot learn
- If a child comes to school sick...they cannot learn
- If a child comes to school worried about immigration, unemployment or violence...they cannot learn
- If a child’s family does not have the information, resources and stability to support them....they cannot learn

Schools must address these obstacles so children can reach their full potential!
Community schools serve the entire community
Proven results of community schools

- National studies have found that strong community schools have:
  - **higher** graduation rates and lower dropout rates
  - **higher** student attendance
  - **higher** reading and math scores
  - **improved** school climate, including teacher morale and student behavior
  - **greater** parent engagement
  - **lower rates** of neighborhood crime and violence.
When Cincinnati converted all their schools into community schools, the graduation rate rose from 51% to 82%, and the racial achievement gap dropped enormously.

A study of the Children’s Aid Society community schools found that $1 spent on community schools generates $10-15 in social value.
Community schools in NYC

- Children’s Aid Society
  - 20 years experience with community schools
  - Directs 16 community schools, mostly in Washington Heights & S Bronx
  - Runs a National Center for Community Schools

- United Federation of Teachers (UFT, teachers union)
  - Supports 16 community learning schools across the city, 9 more soon

- Beacons
  - 80 programs across the city providing afterschool, evening, weekend, summer programs for youth and adults

And others…
The **Mayor & community schools**

- Mayor Bill De Blasio made a campaign promise to **create at least 100 community schools in his first term.**
- 42 community schools this fall
- Applications due July 28th, winners announced in August.
- $300,000/year for five years to hire a full-time Resource Coordinator and provide services and programs at school
- Deputy Mayor Richard Buery convened an Advisory Committee of stakeholders, including CEJ and member organizations
CEJ’s Campaign for **College Ready Community Schools**

CEJ’s vision for high-quality education for children in low income and working class communities of color includes:

- **Focus on teaching and learning instead of test prep:**
  - Redesign the school day to add more time for challenging, rich curriculum
  - Supports for expert teaching and teacher-led professional development
  - Small group and individual tutoring

- **Comprehensive supports for children and families:**
  - Health care, mental health counseling and other social services/skills
  - Adult education

- **College-going culture:**
  - College and career workshops, fairs and trips
  - High school, college and career counselors

- **Meaningful parent involvement and engagement:**
  - Parents are equal partners in decision-making about their child and school
  - High-quality translation services
  - Parent-teacher home visits and conferences
Our children, our schools, our call

- Parents in low-income communities of color have been historically denied a say in our children’s education and in our community’s development.

- Parents are the most important problem-solvers and supporters of our children.

- All parents have skills and knowledge to bring to the school.

- Community schools put parents and communities in the driver’s seat, with relationships of equal power with principals, teachers and community partners.

- Community schools equip parents with the skills, knowledge and confidence to lead our families, our communities & the city.
In Africa, the palaver tree is a large tree in whose shade the community gathers as partners with equal power to discuss issues, solve problems and heal itself. Community schools can be the palaver tree for NYC neighborhoods.
What’s next?

• **Learn more!** Get trained at Parent Power School to lead a workshop on community schools in your neighborhood

• **Spread the word!** Talk with parents, school staff and community partners about making your school a community school

• **Join the campaign!** Work with CEJ to fight for more community schools citywide

• **Keep in touch!**

  Like us on Facebook: NYC Coalition for Educational Justice
  Follow us on Twitter: @CEJNYC
  Visit our website: www.nyccej.org
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