

## **Full-Service Community Schools Operating Principles**

The Eisenhower Foundation is dedicated to identifying, funding, evaluating, building the capacities of, and replicating models that show significant positive results for the inner city, the truly disadvantaged, children, youth and families. Through scientific evaluations of the models' systematic replications, the Foundation establishes what works. In its national policy reports, the Foundation communicates what works (and what doesn't) to citizens, media and decision makers.

One of the models implemented by the Foundation is full-service community schools. To replicate this model the Foundation employs, what the Mott Foundation designates as a concept dissemination approach. This replication approach demands fidelity to the model's principles and quality standards while recognizing the need to adapt to the local community context. The Foundation places high value on building the capacity of the local teams and monitoring the performance of the replication sites.

At present the Foundation is targeting the replication of the full-service community school model to middle schools because young adolescence is, in the words of former Eisenhower trustee Joy Dryfoos, a risky passage. To make it through adolescence young people need abundant supports at home, in the community and at school, where they spend many hours of the day.

### **Brief Overview of the Full-Service Community School Model**

Full-service community schools capitalize on community assets and build upon them. They are developed by community/school partnerships, which, by

bringing community resources to the schools, are able to provide a wide range of school-based programs and services to students, their families and the community overall.

Full-service community schools become the hubs of their communities. They grow out of bubble-up planning by families, area residents, community agencies, businesses, principals and teachers. They are oriented toward the community not only by responding to its needs, but also by connecting students to the community through service learning and community service.

Openness toward the community is expressed as well in the schools' extended hours. Before- and after school, weekend and summer activities extend the school day, giving students the opportunity to learn in more ways and to be in a safe place while their parents are at work. Health and dental care, mental health counseling and referrals to community agencies are provided to students and families, based on their needs. A family resource center assists families with resources and provides a place for families in the school. Classes for families may include parenting, job training and ESL.

### **Full-Service Community Schools Goals**

The foremost goal of full-service community schools is that each student be ready and able to learn. More broadly, full-service community schools provide comprehensive supports for the assets, identified by the National Research Council, that predict adult success: good health habits, risk management skills, school success, critical thinking, decision-making, life skills, vocational skills, good mental health, positive self-regard, self-regulation, coping skills, autonomy,

effective time management; connectedness, sense of place, attachment to pro-social institutions, ability to navigate cultural contexts, and commitment to civic engagement.

### **Rationale for the Replication of Full-Service Community Schools**

The Eisenhower Foundation is replicating full-service community schools because research shows that environments with caring relationships, high expectations and opportunities for meaningful participation have key supports for young people's healthy development, including school success and avoidance of risky behaviors. Transforming schools into environments rich in developmental supports makes sense not only because students are there for a good part of the day, but also because academic achievement is the foundation of young people's future success.

Full-service community schools partner with the students' homes. By removing barriers to family involvement, the schools are better able to partner with families to educate young people. By arming families with resources to better parent their children and to enhance their ability to address daily challenges, full-service community schools have a positive impact on home environments.

Full-service community schools partner with the community. By connecting with community agencies, by hiring residents, by providing programs and

services in the school building and by linking families with programs and services, full-service community schools contribute to community development.

### **Full-Service Community School Strategies**

The strategies used by full-service community schools are based on research on best practices at successful schools and rigorous evaluation. Activities for young people in full-service community schools are aimed at nurturing positive intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. The Foundation seeks to recreate the program characteristics supportive of positive youth identified by the National Research Council including,

- Physical and psychological safety
- Appropriate structure
- Supportive relationships
- Opportunities to belong
- Positive social norms
- Support for efficacy
- Opportunities for skill building
- Integration of family, school and community efforts.

Activities to support youth developmental assets include, but are not limited to homework completion, tutoring, academic enrichment, expression through the arts, interacting with role models from the community, sport participation, recreation and support groups for behavior management.

Family involvement strategies employed by full-service community schools are based on Joyce Epstein's model of six types of school/home partnership:

parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, collaborating with the community and the best practices of schools employing this model. All full-service community schools in the Eisenhower network use Epstein's framework, but each school chooses those practices that will help it achieve its most important goals and meet the needs of its students and families.

### **Developing a Full-Service Community School**

Full-service community schools demand a good understanding of the local context in which they operate. Collecting information in the community about needs and assets are two initial steps in the development of a full-service community school. Community surveys, focus groups and asset mapping are tools that are employed by the planning team.

The development of partnerships between the school and community agencies, businesses and local government create the foundation on which to build a full-service community school. The identification of a community organization that will become the lead agency partnering with the school takes place at this stage.

### **Roles and Responsibilities at the School Site**

At each full-service community school one full-time site director and the school principal partner as school co-leaders. The principal is responsible for the academic component of the school and the site director for the programs and services created around the academic component. In particular, the site director is responsible for coordinating these school-based programs and services, reaching out into the community to identify resources and to develop

relationships with community agencies, businesses, colleges, universities and community stakeholders. The site director reports to the lead agency and the Eisenhower Foundation.

The site director hires qualified staff to deliver programs and services. The site director also brings staff from community agencies to deliver programs and services and recruits volunteers to work at the school. All paid and unpaid staff are provided an orientation and periodically participate in professional development, which includes at least an understanding of full-service community schools, asset based youth development principles, characteristics of successful youth programs and Epstein's family involvement model. Extended-day and summer staff as well as community service providers report to the site director. Written agreements between the school and the service providers clarify mutual expectations and commitments.

The full-service community school management team works to integrate programs and service to the school. While adding programs and services to a school puts it on its way to becoming a full-service community school, the developmental goal is to fully integrate those programs and services into the school to provide a seamless array of programs and supportive services. Only when those programs and services are aligned with and integrated to the school; when the school leadership is collaborative, communicates smoothly, and agrees on policies and procedures; when parents become actively involved in the school, and when the school aligns itself with the larger community to support

young people's development can we say that the school is maturing as a full-service community school.

Governance at the school includes the principal, the site director, key staff members, parents and community stakeholders, all of whom work to align full-service community school offerings with the school and community's priorities.

### **The Roles of the Eisenhower Foundation and of the Lead Agency**

The Eisenhower Foundation provides federal start up and continuation funding to a qualified 501 (c)(3) community organization, which has experience working with local public schools and is trusted by the local education agency, typically, with a focus on youth and community development. The organization chosen becomes the lead community agency partnering with the school. It has the responsibility of adhering to the operating principles at the local level and has final accountability for the performance of the full-service community school programs and services.

The lead agency is present in all the components of the full-service community school either providing direct services or ensuring their coordination and integration. The lead agency manages the non-academic components of the full-service community school on behalf of the school district, has fiduciary responsibility for the program and hires a site director.

The Eisenhower Foundations asks that each local partnership submit an annual workplan. In the workplan, the goals, responsibilities, outputs and expected outcomes for the full-service community school are detailed and linked. The workplan identifies the nature of each task associated with the development

of the full-service community school. It includes all relevant information about full-service community school components, the activities that will be carried out and those responsible for them, a list of outputs and expected outcomes. The Foundation reviews the plan to assess the relationship between inputs and outputs, the alignment of the outputs to the expected outcomes, the quality and quantity of the staffing given the outputs indicated, and the reasonableness of the timeline. The workplan is a preliminary document and is subject to changes as work progresses, conditions change or adjustments are needed to improve quality.

The Eisenhower Foundation promotes the use of memoranda of understanding between the school district and the lead community agency and between the full-service community school and community service providers. Memoranda of understanding make mutual expectations, roles and responsibilities explicit and facilitate collaboration.

### **Sustainability of the Full-Service Community Schools**

In concert with the Eisenhower Foundation, the lead community agency and the school leverage matching funds throughout the course of the replication. School districts merge funding streams for after-school programs, tutoring, and reading and math specialists. Local lead agencies secure funding from the state and federal government, foundations and business for specific program components.

### ***Technical Assistance to the Local Partnerships***

Providing technical assistance to build capacity at the replication sites is a major component of the Full-Service Community Schools Initiative. In providing technical assistance, the Foundation assumes the role of catalyst/change agent with its sites. In the performance of this role the Foundation values:

- Faithfulness to the principles of the full-service community school model
- Collaboration and partnership
- Responsiveness to the needs of the sites
- Commitment to the process of inquiry and discovery
- Strong commitment to working and learning within an action research framework
- Strength and asset based orientation
- Commitment to supporting youth in the context of their family, school, and community
- Employment of youth development principles to support school and life success

Technical assistance to the sites is based on the following premises:

- Leaders of full-service community schools need ongoing support as they plan, implement, reflect on their actions, revise, and plan anew based on their observation of their own work.

- Full-service community school leaders need to interact with a community of practitioners embarked in parallel initiatives to develop full-service community schools.

The goal of technical assistance in the Full-Service Community School Initiative is to:

1. Deepen content knowledge and skills to plan and implement a full-service community school. In particular,
  - Assessing, establishing and meeting standards for quality programs
    - Intentionally infusing and integrating principles and best practices around youth development in programming.
    - Conceptualizing their programs using a youth development model
    - Assessing and working to increase current levels of integration in the areas of programming and administration among the various supports offered and the school day.
2. Build individual and organizational capacity by creating opportunities for reflection and self-monitoring.  
In particular,
  - Developing and following norms of continuous improvement
  - Developing observation and information processing tools and orienting the teams in the use of those tools

- Providing feedback and encouraging the search for new ideas from within and outside the team

The Foundation's technical assistance supports the local teams in the following ways:

- Customizing the technical support to be responsive to the opportunities, needs, strengths, resources, systemic and environmental context of each site. This is accomplished through site visits, phone consultations, and requests initiated by the sites.
- Educating sites regarding best practices, deepening and broadening their knowledge of the field. This is accomplished through identifying or sharing resources, informing of and encouraging attendance to key national or regional conferences and events relative to full-service community schools, participation in the Eisenhower network of full-service community schools and in annual National Cluster Workshops.
- Helping to identify opportunities for sites to discuss their work and share lessons learned through hosting site visits and making presentations to various local, national and regional audiences.

- Providing opportunities for sites to learn from experts in the field. This is accomplished through periodic phone conferences and in the National Cluster Workshop.

The Foundation has created and regularly updates a Full-Service Community Schools Implementation Handbook that clearly describes program components, the roles and responsibilities of the various partners and operational procedures.

Given the geographical distance that separates the sites from the Eisenhower staff and from each other, various mechanisms have been developed to provide technical assistance, among them, site visits, annual National Cluster Workshops, conference calls, contacts with individual teams and team members via email, phone and regular mail. Each of these means of providing technical assistance builds on each other.

### **Utilization of the Data from the Management System**

The Foundation employs a web based data management system to monitor the operation of the full-service community schools in its network. This information is used to guide the lead agency and the local teams and for evaluation purposes. Timely input of program data is a requirement for all replication sites.

### **Evaluation of the Full-Service Community Schools**

***Outcomes evaluation.*** Full-service community schools are a complex model to replicate and evaluate. The Foundation has opted to conduct outcome evaluations of these schools employing a quasi-experimental comparison group

design. This evaluation focuses on the changes experienced by individuals, including students and parents, and impacts on the school's organizational level.

Student outcomes are the results most rigorously evaluated because students are the primary targets of change for full-service community schools. Through a quasi-experimental pre/post comparison cohort design, the evaluation tests the hypothesis that students participating directly in the full-service community school after-school programs show greater improvement over time than students not participating. Improvement is measured in relation to these outcomes:

- School behavior (disciplinary action);
- School attendance;
- Academic achievement;
- Satisfaction with school;
- Attachment to school;
- Orientation toward learning;
- Exposure to new activities;
- Participation in school activities (outside of full-service community school programs);
- Interest in non-academic subjects (art, music, dance, etc)
- Social support;
- Self-efficacy (sense of achievement);
- Positive future orientation;
- Positive peer and adult relationships;

- Access to needed services; and
- Sense of safety.

For parents, the Foundation conducts end-of-year assessments of outcomes experienced by parents personally, parents' perceptions of student outcomes, and parents' perceptions of school outcomes. Parent outcomes include:

- Increased communication between home and school;
- Increased communication among parents;
- Increased support for learning at home; and
- Participation in school/support activities.

The Eisenhower Foundation provides schools with extensive technical assistance to implement the model. Due to this school-wide assistance, the model is intended to affect schools at the organizational level. The evaluation therefore includes an assessment of the following school/organizational level outcomes:

- Increase in communication between school and extended day staff;
- Increased school capacity to meet student needs;
- Improved partnerships between teachers and Principals to address student needs;
- Increased participation of full-service community school staff in decision-making bodies; and
- Increase in partnerships with community agencies to provide school-based programs and services.

***Implementation Evaluation.*** The implementation evaluation for this initiative has two broad areas of focus. The first is to track information about students served and their participation in full-service community school programs and services. The second is to ascertain the extent to which replication sites are implementing programs according to plans, the barriers they encounter and how they address them.

**Criteria used by the Eisenhower Foundation for Selecting New Replication Sites**

The Foundation assesses the feasibility of potential sites. For schools to become an Eisenhower replication site they must meet the following criteria in:

1. Willingness to invest time and effort in the transformation of the school into a full-service community school
2. Commitment to adhering to the Eisenhower Foundation full-service community schools replication principles
3. Support from the school principal and staff
4. Support from the School Superintendent
5. Demonstrated need
6. Evidence of curricular and instructional innovation
7. Evidence of family and community involvement efforts
8. History of collaborative leadership
9. Appreciation of and need for coordination and integration across services/resources

10. History of valuing youth participation in school improvement
11. A local community-based organization that has worked with the school district before and has the capacity to be a lead agency
12. Commitment to scientific evaluation.