



## PCAPS PLATFORM FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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Community schools are the best strategy for meeting the educational and related needs of Philadelphia's children in a cost-effective way. Once state funding is secured, it is time to move forward.

**We call on Mayor-Elect Kenney, Superintendent Hite, the School Reform Commission, and City Council to take these three steps immediately:**

- 1. ESTABLISH A CITY-WIDE TASK FORCE** that includes parents, students, teachers and other school staff, community organization leaders, and city agency leaders. The task force should be charged with developing Philadelphia's plan for community schools, including fleshing out the ongoing governance structure, long-term funding, program components, school selection criteria, performance metrics, and processes and templates for partnership contracts.
- 2. ALLOCATE FUNDS SO THAT THE CITY-WIDE PLANNING PROCESS IS INCLUSIVE AND EFFECTIVE.** The task force should have a budget to engage staff and perform its role.
- 3. ADOPT A SHARED DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS THAT INCLUDES:**
  - Instruction that is challenging, engaging, and culturally and socially relevant;
  - Wrap-around supports, such as health care, eye care, and social and emotional services, that supplement but do not replace certified school-based professionals;
  - A school council, composed of a majority parent and community members (as well as students, at the high schools), and with responsibility for budget oversight and selection of school leadership, as well as prioritizing school needs and partnerships;
  - A school-based coordinator at each school, responsible for managing partnerships, collecting performance data, and training/supporting members of the school council;
  - An emphasis on high quality teaching, not high stakes testing;
  - Positive school climate and discipline practices, such as restorative justice.

As one of its first tasks, **the Community Schools Task Force will need to identify an initial cohort of schools.** These principles should guide the school selection process:

- While the community schools model can be adopted by any type of school, **public support and funding must be directed solely toward District-run schools.**
- The three schools currently slated for charter takeover (**Cooke, Huey, and Wister**) should have the opportunity to instead become community schools, as should **Kensington Urban**, which is still under threat of closure.
- Selection should prioritize schools serving students and communities that will most benefit from community partnerships, including schools that serve high proportions of ELL students, special education students, adjudicated youth, teenage parents, students living in poverty, and those involved in the social services system.
- The initiative should include some of the schools that have already developed community partnerships and have expertise to share and build upon.
- Closings have created school deserts in some of Philadelphia's neighborhoods. Some community schools should be located in those areas.

**The community school approach should be the District's primary turnaround strategy for low-performing schools.**

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