

Community Schools Panel Webinar: Q&A Report

April 2nd, 2024

This report includes questions submitted by telebriefing attendees that were answered during the [Community Schools Panel Webinar](#) via the Q&A function. If you have a specific question or need clarification, please email us at LiveWellEducation@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Question	Answer
What are the benefits of becoming a community school? How would it impact our current public school systems, especially in regard to the students and their families?	<p>Community schools provide pathways that allow families to be true partners in their child's education and in decisions that a district makes. There is shared decision making with the community to determine short and long term goals. Everyone becomes invested in the same goal and begins working in the same direction to accomplish that goal.</p> <p>Instead of a child living in three different worlds, they are honored in those three worlds collectively (home, school, community), and don't have to code switch between them.</p> <p>Through intentional communication and specific data collected at a more local level, community schools have an opportunity to tailor educational opportunities and support systems to individual schools.</p>
What is the teacher to student ratio in a community school?	<p>The teacher-student ratio varies across all local educational agencies and is documented in their collective bargaining agreement.</p>
If we are a community-based organization, faith-based organization, or business, how can we support community schools?	<p>Community-based organizations can communicate with families through schools and take that information back to their organizations and collaboratives to meet needs. It is important to understand what community resources and organizations are available to support these projects. Organizations can partner with schools to distribute their resources, make connections, etc.</p> <p>As a parent, we want to understand how to support our children and be engaged with the school as their #1 advocate. Therefore, schools need to make sure their engagement opportunities are accessible to all parents.</p>

	<p>If we are intentional with relationships and understanding everyone's strengths, schools and community-based organizations can help each other achieve their goals. For example, if a community-based organization is already providing services to children, can those services be provided on the school campus? That can help the community-based organization provide services at one place, so that parents don't need to take time off work and students don't lose classroom time.</p>
<p>How do schools and districts support this transformational community leadership?</p>	<p>Communication is key in transformational community leadership. Everyone needs to be on the same page. It is important for school staff to effectively engage in the community in order to understand how to best connect students and families with available resources. At the district level, being clear about the roles of each staff member can help to align communication and develop an understanding of how everyone fits into the community schools framework. There is a lot of footwork and networking needed to identify resources and make personal connections with community members, organizations, etc.</p>
<p>Who should community-based organizations connect with to reach community school coordinators?</p>	<p>District and school websites should be updated with that contact information. Worst case, just e-mail any director or principal and they will connect you. E-mail or phone! Ask to be invited to Community Schools meetings (at site or district).</p>
<p>Are there any significant gaps or partners that are currently missing from the community schools strategy?</p>	<p>Gaps will vary from school to school. One consistent universal need is trauma-informed care and services to address the mental health needs of students, including counseling support. Trauma-informed care and healing services are limited, and many families are asking for these avenues of support through schools. Long waitlists are leading families to voice their concerns about accessibility.</p>
<p>Can each of you (the panelists) say what the top problem your community school/district is looking to solve?</p>	<p>There are different needs at different levels. With older children, one issue is not feeling a sense of belonging. Younger children sometimes need more support with having basic needs met. Food insecurity is also always an issue to address.</p> <p>Julian Pathways/Julian Union School District: Fostering more kindness and including a sense of belonging, especially for older students post-pandemic. Students need to have someone to talk to. We are also looking to address</p>

the issues of food insecurity and gas and grocery card accessibility and distribution.

Vista Unified School District: Transportation, suicidal ideation, drug use, mental health, food insecurity, and physical fitness.

Imperial Beach Charter School/South Bay Union School District: For my specific community, it is a wide economic gap. I have million-dollar homes and several families who are unhoused. This means that the needs and responses to those needs have to be exponentially nuanced. What I think goes unsaid very often is the mental health needs of our adult population. There are many resources for our youth, but for adults most have to pay for it out of pocket and they are not able to do that.