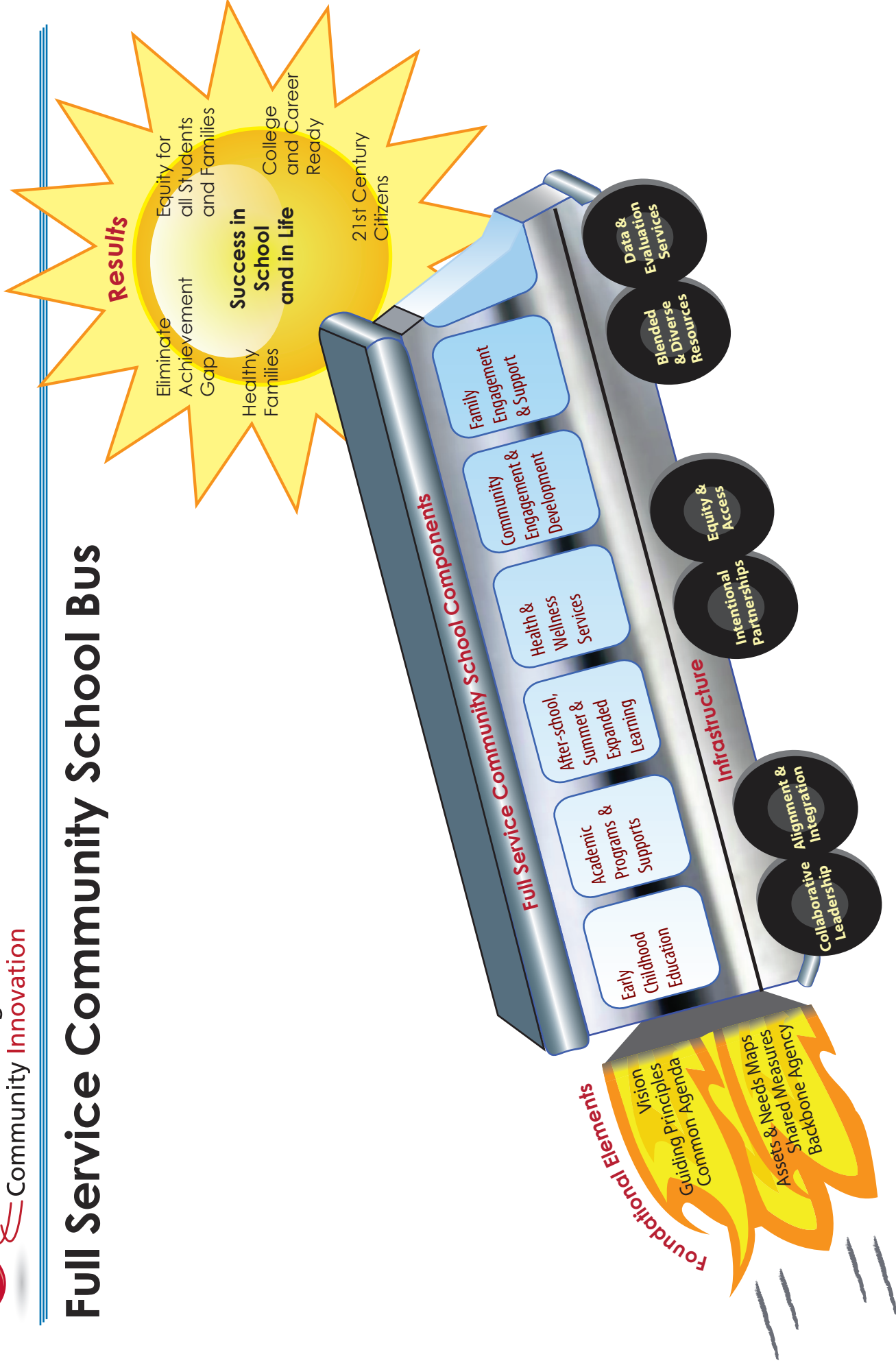


Full Service Community School Bus





Center for Strategic Community Innovation

CSCi Community School Approach: The School Bus

CSCi has identified three major aspects of a successful Full service community school: *Foundational Elements*; *Infrastructure*; and *Program Components*. The “school bus” framework is a helpful tool for planning, program development, self-assessment, continuous improvement and communications. This framework is at the core of CSCi’s community school planning process. For more information and tools, go to www.cscinnovation.org.

Foundational Elements

There are six main elements that make up the foundation of a community school effort, and are used to inform all key decisions:

- A clear vision that is developed by and embraced by all stakeholder groups
- Guiding principles agreed to by all major partners
- A common agenda, which operationalizes the vision and principles into shared priorities
- Asset map and needs assessments that guide and justify programming, partnering and resource decisions with an eye towards aligning existing resources and maximizing public, private and non-profit capacity
- Shared measures that promote collection of key data to promote success, improve sustainability and inform the growth of the FSCS recognized that no single organization can solve the scale of today’s social challenges
- A Backbone Agency that holds the FSCS system and its component parts together so that sustained and coordinated progress is possible.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure of a community school effort has six critical and interrelated pieces that must be built at the site level and system level:

- **Collaborative Leadership** is at the heart of a community school approach. Strong site and blended system leadership teams are the secret to success, sustainability and true shared ownership.
- **Alignment and Integration** is a big part of what makes a full service community school different than a traditional school with *wrap-around* or *co-located* services. Community School coordination involves working with internal and external partners to ensure supports are integrated with each other and with the school’s core instructional program and daily life, such that everyone is working towards shared goals (usually in the form of a full-time Coordinator). At all levels, time and attention are paid to coordination and integration of resources, and the communication systems and policies needed to support it.
- **Intentional Partnerships** are the heart of full service community schools. These are deep and substantive partnerships, involving shared vision and planning, implementation, and accountability. The partners are not conducting business as usual; they are working together to propel a different kind of institution. The documented successful impacts of full service

community schools illustrate what can happen when a group of motivated stakeholders join forces with a unified vision of student and community success. Strategic and intentional school-community partnerships strengthen the ability of all involved to do their work in a holistic manner that improves outcomes for students, family, school and community.

- **Professional Development, Equity and Access Structures** are instrumental not only in improving individual practice, but when done jointly, i.e. school and afterschool staff, counselors, parents and teachers they also create the opportunity for cross-discipline learning, collaborative student support, and equitable distribution of resources. This also builds teamwork and a common language.
- **Blended and Diverse Resources** that leverage monetary, human, and political capital from all sectors, including local, state and federal government, non-profits, philanthropy, businesses, and community members.
- **Data and Evaluation Systems** must be built as an important part of the infrastructure early on. Full service community schools and Districts across the country have successfully designed evaluations that allow them to improve programing, measure outcomes, demonstrate impact, and assist with decision-making at all levels. In addition, a quality evaluation of a full service community school effort contributes directly to its ongoing support and sustainability.

Program Components

Full service community schools include student and family supports in six core areas, although the specific types and intensity of services provided will vary at each school. There are six major components:

- **Academic Program and Supports** are essential, as student success remains at the core of the full service community school mission. The school provides a culturally competent core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high expectations for all students. Utilizing the principles of youth development, students are involved in competency building academic supports that ensure the relevancy of the curriculum and help bring it to life. Examples could include:
 - ▶ tutoring and mentoring
 - ▶ arts education
 - ▶ environmental education
 - ▶ project-based learning
 - ▶ literacy programs
 - ▶ youth leadership development
 - ▶ strategic attendance programs
 - ▶ and more.
- **Early Childhood Education** refers to the formal teaching of [young children](#) by people outside the family or in settings outside the home. "Early childhood" is usually defined as before the age of normal schooling – five years in most states. Full service schools include early childhood education to maximize the child's success quotient. Research clearly demonstrates it improves student outcomes and career success. For example, a research study conducted in [Ypsilanti, Michigan](#) showed that 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income families who were randomly assigned to a group that did not receive preschool education were five times more likely to have become chronic lawbreakers by age 27 than those who did receive it.¹

¹ ["Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40"](#). High Scope. 2005. <http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=219>.

- **After-school, Summer and other Expanded Learning opportunities** are often the starting point of a school's transformation to a full service community school. Full service community schools are open from morning till evening, weekends and through the summer, engaging students in learning year round. This helps to address the opportunity gap that is at the heart of our persistent achievement gap. In full service community schools, in-school and out-of-school-time learning experiences are planned so that the knowledge, skills and competencies that young people need to succeed are reinforced in all settings. These additional experiences deepen student learning and engagement through real-world learning, arts, enrichment, sports, special projects and more.
- **Health and Wellness Services** are strongly linked with academic success and is an important part of a community school's mission. Full service community schools work to address, as fully as possible, all factors that interfere with students' abilities to learn. These factors include hunger, poor health, illness, physical inactivity, substance abuse, physical and emotional neglect and abuse, domestic and community violence, and social isolation.
- **Family Engagement and Support** are building blocks of a successful full service community school. A family's attitudes and behavior about education profoundly influence children's learning and academic performance. In full service community schools, families are viewed as partners, and actively engaged in making decisions affecting their children's education. Families have the opportunity and help to expand their capacity to support and advocate for their children and their schools. Equity issues are addressed, not avoided. Family support is an equally important piece of the work. Family Support America defines family support as both an approach and programs that are *"based on the premise that the primary responsibility for the development and well-being of children lies within the family, and that all segments of society must support families as they raise their children."* In a full service community school, this translates as partnering with families in developing activities, opportunities and resources, designed to help them meet their basic needs, so that they can best support their children's overall development. Regardless of their cultural backgrounds or socio-economic status.
- **Community Engagement and Development** is an essential component of the full service community school philosophy, knowing that schools cannot work in isolation. When the community supports education; educated citizens will in turn support the community. In a full service community school environment, active community engagement and development includes outreach and transparent communications, service learning and internships in the community, recruitment of volunteers, communitywide events, and leadership development for families and community members.

Results

Short and long-term outcomes vary by community, and each initiative has its own style. However there are some core results that underlie the collective impact of most any community school effort, for example:

- Students and families can access a high quality education and all related supports and opportunities.
- Students thrive academically regardless of their socio-economic status.
- Students develop the skills, knowledge and habits necessary to succeed in the 21st century.
- Students graduate high school ready for college and/or a career path.
- Families are healthy, self-sufficient and engaged leaders in their school and their community.