



## Establish a Community Learning Centers (CLC) Statewide Technical Center

Community Learning Centers (CLC) are not only centers of education; they are the new heart of the community, fostering improved conditions for teaching and learning. They act as venues where teachers, families, community members, and service providers collaborate in coordinated, intentional, and results-oriented partnerships. These schools become vital to their communities by offering services that effectively address the needs of students, families, and neighbors while promoting stable, healthy neighborhoods. This is not just another program; it signifies a significant shift in how we view schools, extending beyond simply providing student support and services.

Community Learning Centers positively impact the lives of children, families, educators, and their communities daily. By going beyond the traditional boundaries of school and collaborating with local stakeholders, community schools offer practical solutions to the unique challenges faced by the students and families they serve, representing a significant advancement in fulfilling the promise of public education.

In 2000, Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) surveyed various communities to identify the types of schools needed in each neighborhood. CPS developed a plan to create schools tailored to each area's specific needs, referring to them as community learning centers. The Cincinnati model has been replicated in several other cities throughout Ohio and other states.

New Lexington Public Schools has transformed their CLC into a K-12 rural career development model. Located in rural southeastern Ohio, New Lexington Schools serves 1,741 students. According to the federal designation, 100% of the student population is economically disadvantaged. New Lexington Schools and the Village of New Lexington have come together to enhance various aspects of the town, benefiting the campus that houses the Workforce Development Building. This model provides services that support both staff and the community, including a childcare center, health services, warming centers, and community feeding programs (such as weekend and summer food initiatives), along with a robust business council.

Students don't live their lives in isolation; a variety of experiences influence them. The legislature must guarantee full funding for the Fair School Funding base costs and allocate resources for wellness programs for both students and teachers.

## Policy

In 2013, the General Assembly authorized the use of Disadvantaged Pupil Aid funds for activities related to Community Learning Centers. This enables districts to employ Community Resources Coordinators, who are crucial in coordinating services within a school building.

In 2015, after three years of a bipartisan group of legislators reviewing different CLC models, Ohio committed to expanding Community Learning Centers (CLC) statewide, as enshrined in Ohio Revised Code 3302.16, which creates local building teams and actively seeks input from students, teachers, and parents. The Fair School Funding Formula also includes components of the CLCs. This established the foundation for Governor DeWine's Student Wellness and Success Fund.

The State's expansion of school-based health centers and establishment of other CLCs is a positive development; however, to ensure that children's other needs are addressed, the state should create a Technical Center to assist those coordinating local programs. The Community Learning Center Institute of Cincinnati applied for a Federal grant to create a State-Wide Technical Center, but it fell one point short of eligibility, receiving 105 points. The federal grant identified several school districts that wanted to establish CLCs in Appalachia. State funding of a Technical Center could provide training and quality assurance, ensuring effective use of state dollars.

## Challenge

Advocating for a new Technical Center may prove challenging due to concerns about funding sources and policymakers who fail to recognize the need for such a center. The funding challenge can be addressed. Policymakers should look to local school districts in Appalachia, which have supported a statewide Technical Center. The legislature should not allow rigid national trends to obstruct funding for a sound policy decision that aligns with the Governor's priorities.

## Opportunities

Ohio's effort to expand community learning centers is like a thousand-piece puzzle. Some of the pieces are together, and all the components are there, but more direct guidance, oversight, and assistance are needed to help put all the details together faster. The Community Learning Center Institute will serve as that state hub and broaden our work regionally by working with steering committee members. Our plan will focus on rural schools and include work with suburban schools.

### Pipeline Services

- Link to high-quality early childhood education programs.
- Deliver high-quality school and after-school programs and strategies.
- Ensure activities that support postsecondary and workforce readiness, which may include job training, internship opportunities, and career counseling.

- Engage community-based support for students who have attended schools in the pipeline's service area or for those who are community members. This support will enhance their ongoing connection to the community and contribute to their success in postsecondary education and the workforce.
- Provide health, nutrition, and mental health services and support.

## Support Child Well-Being: Budget Recommendations

Ohio policymakers should support the creation of a statewide Technical Assistance Center for Community Learning Centers. The center, which would cost \$200,000, would boost student academic performance and foster community development.

This issue brief was authored by: Darold Johnson, Director of Legislation, Ohio Federation of Teachers

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Sources:

[Section 3302.16 – Ohio Revised Code](#)

[Section 3302.17 - Ohio Revised Code | Ohio Laws](#)

[Section 3302.18 – Ohio Revised Code](#)

21st-CCLC\_22-23AnnualReport\_FINAL.pdf

New Lexington Schools Workforce Development: <https://www.nlpanthers.org/WorkforceDevelopment.aspx>

New Lexington Schools/AFT Partnership: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JopbloK3liU>

Article on Emergent Welding: [https://www.perrytribune.com/news/article\\_390aeec-56df-11ec-91e5-9f9409696790.html](https://www.perrytribune.com/news/article_390aeec-56df-11ec-91e5-9f9409696790.html)