



**OHIO
CHILDREN'S
BUDGET**
2020-2021



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ISSUE BRIEF

ISSUE: Linking Health Care and Wraparound/Integrated Student Services to Improve Academic Outcomes

According to a recent report by Kids Count Ohio in 2018, 23 percent of children, or nearly one in four, live in poverty. Additionally, Ohio ranks 49th when it comes to drug overdose deaths. Combined, these statistics have created conditions that even the best educators can't overcome without help. A recent Ohio Health Policy Institute report highlights many other health-related factors that can cause distractions and impact a student's ability to learn, such as:

- Pain or discomfort from physical health conditions;
- Constant hunger;
- Insufficient sleep;
- Elements of the physical environment of the school (e.g., lead in drinking water, asthma, and allergy triggers, temperature of the building, access to natural light);
- Untreated mental health conditions such as anxiety or depression; and
- Threats of bullying or physical violence.

Though poverty should never be used as an excuse for children not excelling in school, it also cannot be ignored as a contributing factor. We must face the reality that we have a changing demographic picture and that those demographics affect what needs to happen in our schools.

Ohio schools need to have supplemental programs that help address the exterior needs of children so teachers can focus on teaching and students can focus on learning.

Policy

Our teachers continue to strive to meet the needs of all children and to put them on a pathway to success. However, teachers are experts in the areas of content and pedagogy, not holistically addressing students' out-of-school needs. Fortunately, there are several models in place to support students' holistic needs through school-based approaches.



The Ohio Departments of Health, Medicaid, and Education have a joint effort to increase the number of school-based health clinics in areas of the state with the greatest need. An example of an approach is the Community Center Learning model, which is in place throughout the U.S. It enlists neighborhood voices in identifying the needs of the community and how best to meet those needs. A local approach, rather than a top-down approach, gives taxpayers a voice in how to best use community assets.

We believe that all schools could benefit from being Community Learning Centers. Every community has its own set of resources and needs. Community Learning Centers match the funds and services with the needs to make the school the hub of the community whether it's for meeting health needs or bringing in arts programs. Having all voices at the table in a meaningful way is necessary for success. Cincinnati is a national district model for Community Learning Centers.

Challenges

Unfortunately, several barriers exist to moving forward with more holistic student supports in schools, including:

- Reluctance by some school districts to engage the community, teacher, education staff, students, and families in developing these types of plans, which may stem from information-sharing and confidentiality concerns.
- Language in [HB 70](#) (131 General Assembly) that allows for state takeover of struggling schools.
- Greater levels of collaboration needed between state and local agencies to maximize funding.
- Limited ability for schools to use federal funding to pay for health and other services.
- A lack of incentives for the business community to support public schools and provide human (tutors/ mentors) and financial (building additions and start-up grants) capital to expand support services.

Opportunities

To support all of Ohio's students holistically and invest in effective programs that have a significant return on investment, Ohio must create a comprehensive strategy to expand the Community Learning Center model by:

- Coordinating and aligning resources across public agencies, such as health and human services and workforce development, to provide needed services and support in Centers.
 - Allowing Community Learning Center space to qualify for state school construction funds.
 - Providing state-level technical assistance and support for schools interested in implementing and operating Community Learning Centers (i.e., networks of districts with Centers, districts exploring Centers, or community networks).
 - Using [Ohio's Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) plan](#) to expand Centers and implement Ohio regulations.
 - Removing turnaround language from HB 70 and focusing on the original intent of the bill.
 - Having the State Board of Education issue policies supporting Community Learning Centers.
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- Encouraging local school board policies and resolutions.
- Creating county/city resolutions or joint agreements with school districts to leverage community resources and partnerships in support of Community Learning Centers.

Several sources of federal funds are available to support Center implementation, including:

The Federal Every Student Succeeds Act, which can provide funding for a resource coordinator (Title I), the whole child supports (Titles II & IV), and funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Full-Service Community Schools (Title IV). Schools also can apply for Flexibility for Equitable Per-Pupil Funding under Title I.

Medicaid funding for student support services, which was \$750,000 in FY 2018.

In Ohio's budget, we recommend 1) maintaining state funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant and Medicaid in Schools, 2) investing \$1 million in new money over the biennium to seed start-up grants for Community Learning Centers, and 3) creating an agency-level working group to implement supports for Community Learning Centers across Ohio.

Smart investments in children can provide a big return to communities. According to a New York Children's Aide Society study, *every dollar invested in afterschool programs has a social value of \$14.80*.¹ Other studies show similar results. Consider the return on programming and services that may also include a health and wellness aspect and the returns are even more compelling in terms of child well-being and long term benefits.

Support Child Well-Being: Recommendations

HB 70 and the Ohio Department of Education's Strategic Plan provide a solid roadmap for future action; however, additional overall funding of public schools is also needed. State investments made over the past eight years in public education have not kept pace with inflation.

Federal Funding

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act funding can drive the expansion of Community Learning Centers. Title I funds can be used for a resource coordinator.

Titles II and IV authorize funding for states to provide programs and supports that attend to the whole child—emotionally, socially, physically, and academically—through educator professional development and the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants programs.

Title IV authorizes funding to support 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) and Full-Service Community Schools. Although these two grant programs operate differently, they both can be used to help community schools. The 21st CCLC grant program, for example, supports expanded learning time and references the role of a coordinator as an allowable use of funds, signaling to practitioners that they should consider community schools.

Finally, under Title I, districts can apply for Flexibility for Equitable Per-Pupil Funding, allowing them to develop and implement a school funding system based on weighted per-student allocations for low-income and otherwise disadvantaged students. These funds can support a community resource coordinator.

¹ The Finance Project. (2013). Measuring Social Return on Investment for Community Schools: A Case Study. Retrieved from: https://www.childreinsaidnyc.org/sites/default/files/document/Social_ROI_Case_Study_and_Companion_Guide.pdf

State Funding

The Ohio Department of Education has created a line item for the support of Medicaid in Schools administration costs. These funds allow for additional federal dollars. **The State 21st Century Community Learning Center Grants provide significant funding for wraparound and integrated student services in almost every county in Ohio. State funding for mental health, social services, health care, and Medicaid can also support wraparound and integrated student services.**

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