# FutureEd
### GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

# Community Collaborations

*This is one of a series of evidence-based strategies to help states and school districts invest Covid relief aid effectively. Read all 18 strategies in FutureEd's* Covid Relief Playbook.

The pandemic demonstrated the need for schools to collaborate with other community agencies and organizations to deliver a full range of services to students and families. Covid relief spending can support such collaborations, including data-sharing agreements. This is particularly important for students facing complex problems—such as homelessness, pregnancy, and mental illness—who require coordination and case management across public agencies.

## THE RESEARCH

Many communities use the Full-Service Community Schools model to provide multi-agency wraparound services and essentially turn schools into hubs providing health, employment and social services for the entire community. In 2014, New York City spent $52 million to create 45 Community Schools, a number that has since grown to 200. A 2020 RAND Corporation study of the first three years of the initiative found that the model led to reductions in chronic absenteeism in all grades and across all years of the study, as well as a decline in disciplinary incidents at elementary and middle schools. Graduation rates improved, and math achievement rose significantly in the final year of the study.

Communities in Schools (CIS) offers another model for encouraging interagency collaboration. Like Community Schools, the nonprofit provides a school-based coordinator and a school support team to evaluate the needs of students and families. The most vulnerable students receive intensive case management. A 2017 MDRC evaluation of two years of case management by

CIS found improvements in students' attitudes about school and relationships with teachers and peers, but no significant progress in achievement, attendance or behavior. Results were slightly better for students whose participation began in transition years, such as sixth and ninth grades.

Some communities have developed "cradle-to-career" partnerships that track a key set of education outcomes from infancy to adulthood. StriveTogether, a nonprofit based in Cincinnati that has networks in 70 communities, is developing guidance for collecting and reporting on an additional set of system indicators focused on racial equity.

Impact Tulsa, a StriveTogether network member, focuses on data to help educators understand the factors outside of the classroom that influence student success. It connects individual data on student outcomes from 21 school districts (including attendance, grades, and suspensions) with census-tract data on neighborhoods in four domains: neighborhood poverty and education levels; neighborhood health; and neighborhood access to such assets as schools, parks, trails, transit, and grocery stores. The school district has used the index to identify areas where schools and their community-based partners need to work more closely to eliminate barriers to student success.

At the state level, many states are developing Children's Cabinets—intragency partnerships across such fields as education, health, human services, and juvenile justice—to coordinate service delivery for vulnerable students.

# Community Collaborations

*Continued*

## WHAT TO CONSIDER

The pandemic has underscored the value of schools as community hubs, with schools providing meals and connecting students and families to healthcare and other resources. These collaborative approaches work best with a school-based coordinator at the helm. Full-service community schools can be funded with federal grants available under Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Covid relief funding can cover the coordinator's salary and support convening partners, as well as help to develop data systems key for sharing information. Community-based projects such as afterschool or mentoring programs need access to attendance records, grades, disciplinary records and other information. This naturally raises privacy concerns that may require memoranda of understanding between districts and outside agencies. The federal government provides **guidance** on navigating these issues.

### RESEARCH

- **Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools: MODERATE**

- **Two Years of Case Management: PROMISING**

- **Breakfast in the Classroom Linked to Better Breakfast Participation, Attendance: PROMISING**

### RESOURCES

- **FERPA Guidance for Sharing Information with Community Based Organizations**

- **Strive Together Collaborative Improvement**