

Addressing the Whole Child: Community Schools in New Mexico

Community schools represent a place-based strategy in which schools partner with community agencies and allocate resources to provide, according to the [Coalition for Community Schools](#), an “integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement.”

Community schools vary in the programs they offer and the ways they operate, depending on their local context. However, four features—or pillars—appear in most community schools and support the conditions for teaching and learning found in high-quality schools.

1. Integrated student supports
2. Expanded learning time and opportunities
3. Family and community engagement
4. Collaborative leadership and practice

In the [Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy Brief](#), the Learning Policy Institute examined 143 research studies on each of the four community school pillars and evaluated studies of community schools as a comprehensive strategy. They concluded that well-implemented community schools lead to improvement in student and school outcomes and contribute to meeting the educational needs of low-achieving students in high-poverty schools.

Community Schools in New Mexico

The New Mexico Community Schools Act, signed into law by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in April 2019, triggered the launch of a new grant opportunity for New Mexico schools. The Region 13 Comprehensive Center (R13CC) supported the New Mexico Public Education Department in planning, launching, and implementing this new grant program. R13CC provided training to local education agencies and schools about the strategic funding of a community school and assisted in the development of the New Mexico Public Education Department’s Community Schools brief that reports on the state’s progress. New Mexico’s state-funded community schools have provided expanded learning time and social and health services with community partners for over 11,048 students in the last two years despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Read the full [State of the State Brief](#), released in March 2021, to gain an understanding of how the four research-based community school pillars are being implemented and for highlights of New Mexico community schools.