



RESEARCH BASE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

- **All young people need ongoing supports and opportunities on the road to successful adulthood.** Extensive research on child and adolescent development indicates that young people need ongoing guidance and support in all of the developmental domains (cognitive, social, emotional, physical, moral and vocational) if they are to achieve productive adulthood—defined as having competencies that will allow them to participate in the labor economy, in responsible family life and in active citizenship.ⁱ
- **Children do better in school when their parents regularly support, monitor and advocate for their education.** Multi-year research (for example, by Joyce Epstein and colleagues at Johns Hopkins University and by Anne Henderson and colleagues at the Center for Law and Education) has documented the importance of parental involvement in children’s education as a key factor in promoting academic achievement.ⁱⁱ
- **Constructive learning activities during non-school hours are essential to children’s school success.** Educational researcher Reginald Clark found that economically disadvantaged children who spent 20-35 hours of their free time each week in engaged learning (such as reading for pleasure and playing strategy games) got better grades in school than their more passive peers.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Children’s participation in high quality after-school programs results in several important learning and developmental outcomes.** In a variety of studies spanning more than a decade, University of Wisconsin researcher Deborah Vandell has documented a host of positive benefits from children’s participation in high quality after-school programs, including better grades, work habits, emotional adjustment and peer relations.^{iv}
- **Community-based youth development programs promote positive academic and social outcomes among teenagers.** Stanford education professor Milbrey McLaughlin found that adolescents who participate regularly in community-based youth development programs (including arts, sports and community service) have better academic and social outcomes—as well as higher education and career aspirations—than other similar teens.^v
- **Consistent adult guidance and support promote positive youth development.** Resilience theory indicates that children who have consistent access to adult guidance and support have better outcomes (such as higher education and career aspirations, lower incidence of at-risk behaviors).^{vi}
- **Where key developmental influences work together, positive youth outcomes are enhanced.** A 13-year study in 10 varied communities found that child and adolescent outcomes were enhanced in communities where key developmental influences – home, school, community resources – combined to provide consistent messages, opportunities and supports for young people.^{vii}
- **Inefficient relationships and lack of continuity between education and social service programs hinder effectiveness.** Several studies have documented that our country’s education and social service systems are characterized by formal bureaucracy and little interagency collaboration or continuity. They report that this dispersion of social services limits their effectiveness in serving the needs of children and families.^{viii}
- **Community schools show great promise as the best way to promote children’s learning and development.** Researcher Joy Dryfoos synthesized a complex body of research on reducing risk and promoting resilience among children and adolescents and concluded that the single most effective intervention was the development and implementation of schools that integrate the delivery of quality education with needed health and social services.^{ix}

ⁱ Eccles, J., The Development of Children Ages 6 to 14, *The Future of Children: When School is Out*, Volume 9, Number 2, Fall 1999, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, pp. 30-44.

ⁱⁱ See, for example, Epstein, J.L., School, Family, Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share, *Phi Delta Kappan*, Volume 77, Number 9, May 1995, pp. 701-12. See also Henderson, A.T. and Berla, N., *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education, 1995.

ⁱⁱⁱ Clark, R.M., *Critical Factors in Why Disadvantaged Children Succeed or Fail in School*, New York: Academy for Educational Development, 1988.

^{iv} Vandell, D.L. and Shumow, L., After-School Child Care Programs, *The Future of Children: When School is Out*, *Op.cit.*, pp. 64-80.

^v McLaughlin, M.W., *Community Counts: How Youth Organizations Matter for Youth Development*, Washington, DC: Public Education Network, 2000.

^{vi} Benard, B., *Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in the Family, School and Community*, Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratories, Western Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities, 1991.

^{vii} Ianni, F.A.J., *The Search for Structure*, New York: The Free Press, 1990.

^{viii} Hodgkinson, H.L., *The Same Client: The Demographics of Education and Service Delivery Systems*, Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, 1989.

^{ix} Dryfoos, J. *Full-Service Schools: A Revolution in Health and Social Services for Children, Youth, and Families*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.

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