

Creating Community Schools

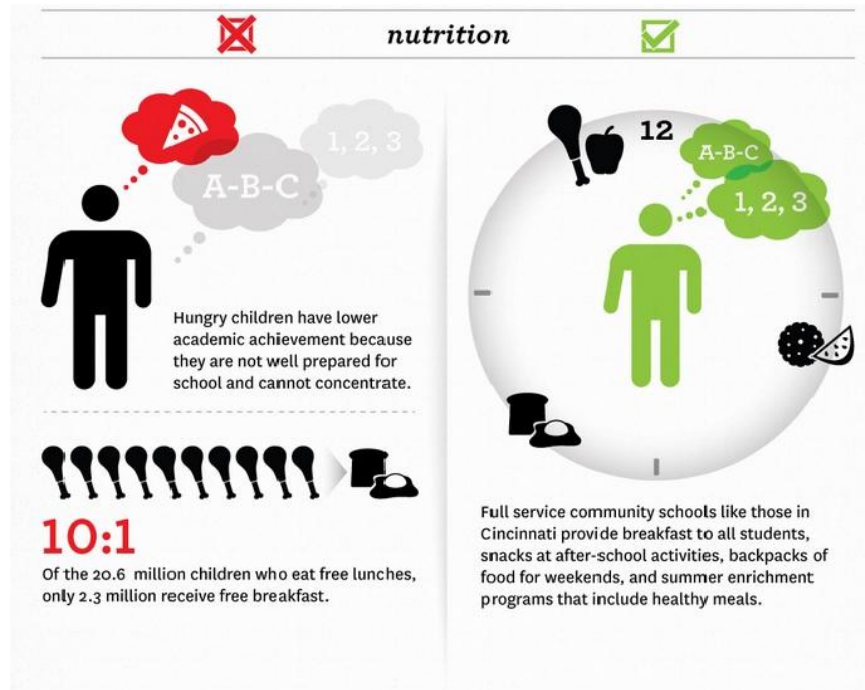
Defined: Community schools serve as hubs of a community, offering health and social services to students and their families. The aim of these schools are to meet the student's needs both inside and outside the academic classroom.

What's happening in New York:

- **First time funding:** the 2013-2014 enacted budget included for the first time a \$15 million for community schools through a competitive grant program. This new program lays the groundwork for further expansion of the program.

Benefits of community schools:

- Increased attendance and decreased drop-out rates.
- Improved behavior and youth development: students in such schools showed higher sense of self-esteem, increased college and career aspirations, and increased respect of others' property and self.
- Improved academic performance, especially in math.
- Greater engagement in learning.
- Increased physical, emotional and mental health.
- Meaningful family engagement.¹



Concerns:

- **Only a few reap the benefits:** the \$15 million invested in community schools this year will only serve one-half of one percent (0.5%) of New York's students.
- **Cuts run deep in schools:** \$2.7 billion that has been cut from schools over the last 4 years has resulted in countless services being reduced or eliminated, such as social workers, guidance counselors, after-school programs, tutoring and extra-curricular activities. Even as more money is invested into community schools, which will meet these needs, hundreds of schools across the state are struggling to even get back the basic social, emotional, academic and health support programs that their students need.

AQE's position on community schools:

- The state should expand the community schools program.
- The state should ensure students have access to guidance counselors, social workers, and school psychologists who have been reduced in many school districts leaving many issues students face unattended.

¹ Community Schools <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Indicators%20of%20Capacity%20-%20Results%20Framework.pdf>