

# Hartford Community Schools

The Hartford Foundation was instrumental in the creation of Hartford Community Schools (HCS), offering insights and lessons learned from our long-running After-School Initiative.

Community schools are based on one fundamental premise — that every child and every school is capable of excellence given the right conditions for learning. The community schools strategy engages community leaders in collective action to remove barriers to students' success and address the opportunity gaps often reflected in low-income students' academic and developmental outcomes.

The schools offer students services before, during, and after traditional school hours and during the weekend and summer, extending students' total learning time by 35-40 percent. In this way, community schools substantially improve schools' capacity to meet the highest-need students and families' most pressing concerns. The community schools model also supports a school culture and climate that promotes high expectations for students, teachers, families, and the surrounding community.

## Community schools integrate multiple services and supports



- **early childhood learning opportunities**
- a core instructional program
- academic support and enrichment

- health care
- mental and behavioral health services
- parent education
- family support

**At the service site/school level** - we connect community resources (such as universities and health centers) to select schools in ways that support student achievement and family stability;

**At the “systems level”** - we promote public/private partnership as well as structural, procedural, and operational shifts at school sites and at the district level, to increase low-income students and families’ access to high-quality educational and developmental opportunities;

**At the policy level** – we support policy change, addressing barriers to student success and increasing low-income students’ access to opportunity.

The Foundation supported the first group of five Hartford Community Schools with a three-year, \$3.1 million grant. In 2011 and 2012, that commitment was renewed and more than \$1.6 million was awarded in grants to six lead agencies working in partnership with the schools in 2012.

### Recognition

- Nationally recognized by the Children’s Aid Society for integration of an independent evaluation in community school building (2012)
- Coalition for Community Schools national award for excellence in community schools (2013)

Hartford Community Schools are a partnership of:

- Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- Hartford Public Schools
- City of Hartford (Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation)
- United Way of Central and Northeastern
- Additional funding is provided by state and federal agencies and corporations.