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BRIEFING

Community Schools Impact on Student Outcomes: Evidence from California

Special thanks to the Stuart Foundation and the Youth Thriving Through Learning Fund for their support.



Welcome

Tara Kini | Chief of Policy and Programs, Learning Policy Institute

Agenda

- ▷ Welcome and Opening Remarks
- ▷ Community Schools Outcomes Study and Cross Case Study Presentations
- ▷ Equity Leaders Panel
- ▷ Voices From the Field Panel
- ▷ Sustainability Lessons From Other States
- ▷ State Leaders Panel
- ▷ Closing Remarks





Opening Remarks

Linda Darling-Hammond | Chief Knowledge Officer, Learning Policy Institute; President, California State Board of Education



Research Presentation

Walker Swain | Principal Researcher, Learning Policy Institute

Laura E. Hernández | Senior Researcher II, Learning Policy Institute

Community Schools Impact: How the CCSPP Is Improving Student Outcomes and Practice

NEW LPI Impact Study: California Community Schools

- ▶ California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP) implementation grants
- ▶ First major post-pandemic outcomes study for community schools' effectiveness
- ▶ CCSPP Cohort 1 schools outperformed similar schools that did not receive grant funding

Scan to view the report and brief
<https://bit.ly/cacommsimpact>



Community Schools Impact on Student Outcomes

Evidence From California

Walker Swain, Melanie Leung-Gagné, Anna Maier, and Cassandra Rubinstein



SEPTEMBER 2025

What Is the CCSPP?

- ▷ Community schools are an evidence-based school transformation strategy that unites the efforts of students, families, educators, and community partners to improve student learning and well-being.
- ▷ California's community schools are organized around four core pillars:
 1. Integrated student supports
 2. Expanded learning opportunities
 3. Collaborative leadership
 4. Family engagement
- ▷ An expanded framework to guide implementation focuses on instructional strategies, school climate, and shared decision-making.



What Is the CCSP?

- ▷ Nation's largest community schools initiative now serves ~ **2,500 schools**
- ▷ **Targets highest-need schools** in the state (~87% of student body on average)
- ▷ LEAs/schools receive **detailed state/regional guidance** and technical assistance + **local flexibility**
- ▷ Common expense: Hiring a **community school coordinator, social worker**, or other key staff

Study Context

Builds on prior research:

- ▷ 2017 LPI research review of more than 143 studies
- ▷ Rigorous RAND evaluation of New York City's community schools
- ▷ Both of which found **positive impacts on absenteeism, math test scores, and discipline rates/school climate measures**



LPI Study Research Questions

- ▷ To what extent did community schools supported by CCSPP implementation grants **improve student outcomes?**
- ▷ To what extent did the **impacts vary by student groups?**
- ▷ To what extent did the **impacts vary by school type/size?**

CCSPP Exceeds the Target for Serving High-Needs Schools

	California	Cohort 1 (funded in 2022)	Cohort 2 (funded in 2023)	Cohort 3 (funded in 2024)	Cohort 4 (funded in 2025)
Amount awarded	N/A	\$611.1 million	\$750.5 million	\$1.29 billion	\$633.5 million
Number of LEAs	1,016	76	128	288	127
Number of schools	10,121	458	570	995	470
Total enrollment	5.9M	246,382	293,746	519,094	284,981
Average enrollment per school	580	538	515	525	613
Percentage of unduplicated pupil count (UPC) students	65.4%	89.1%	85.1%	85.9%	86.8%

- ▷ Funds reached almost a quarter of California students
- ▷ Average unduplicated pupil count (UPC) for grantee schools: **87%**

Analytic Strategy for the LPI Study

- ▶ **Matched** each of the 458 Cohort 1 CCSPP schools with a demographically similar school that did not receive the grant
- ▶ **Compared** the Cohort 1 CCSPP schools to matched schools **both before receiving CCSPP funding and after**
- ▶ **Focused** main analysis on schools and districts that are newer to community school approaches
- ▶ **Treated** 2023-24 as first full intervention year
- ▶ **Used** statewide administrative data (test scores, chronic absence, suspensions) to examine outcomes



Findings

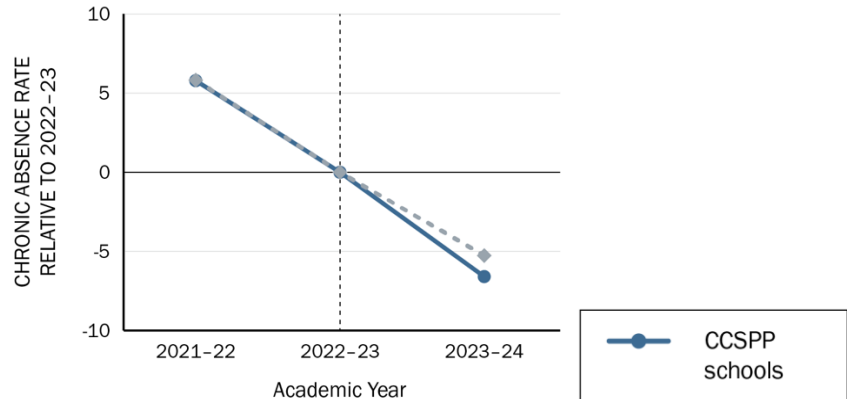
Key Findings Across CCSPP Schools

- ▷ Reduced chronic absence rates
- ▷ Reduced suspension rates
- ▷ Improved test scores
- ▷ Made the largest gains among historically underserved students

Chronic Absence & Suspensions Improved More in CCSPS Schools Than Comparison Schools

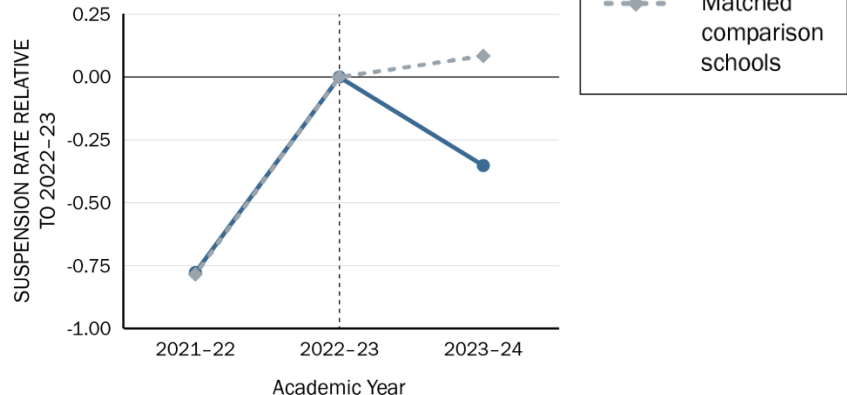
Chronic Absence:

- **30% larger reduction** compared to similar schools

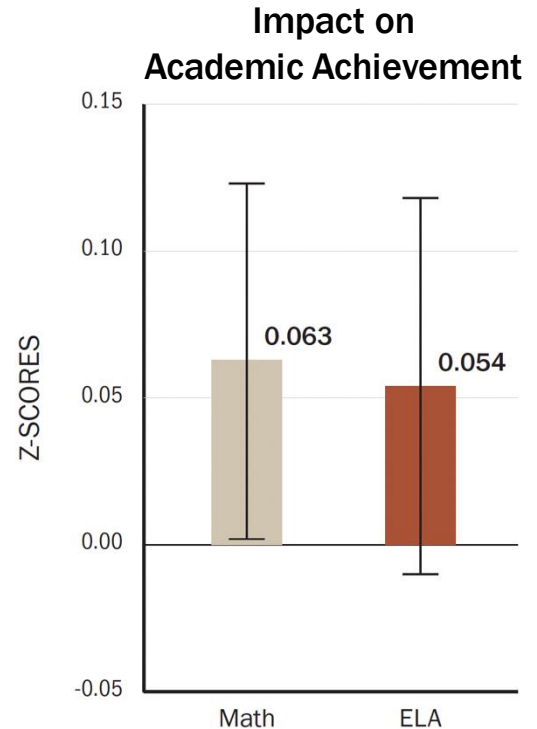
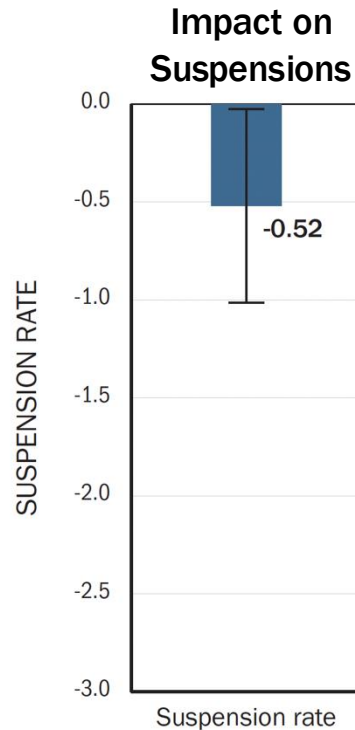
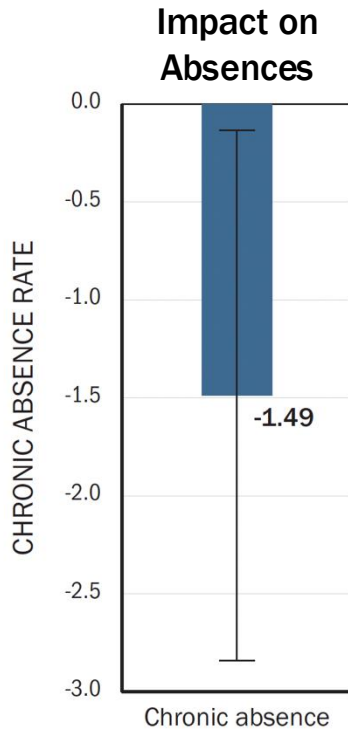


Suspensions:

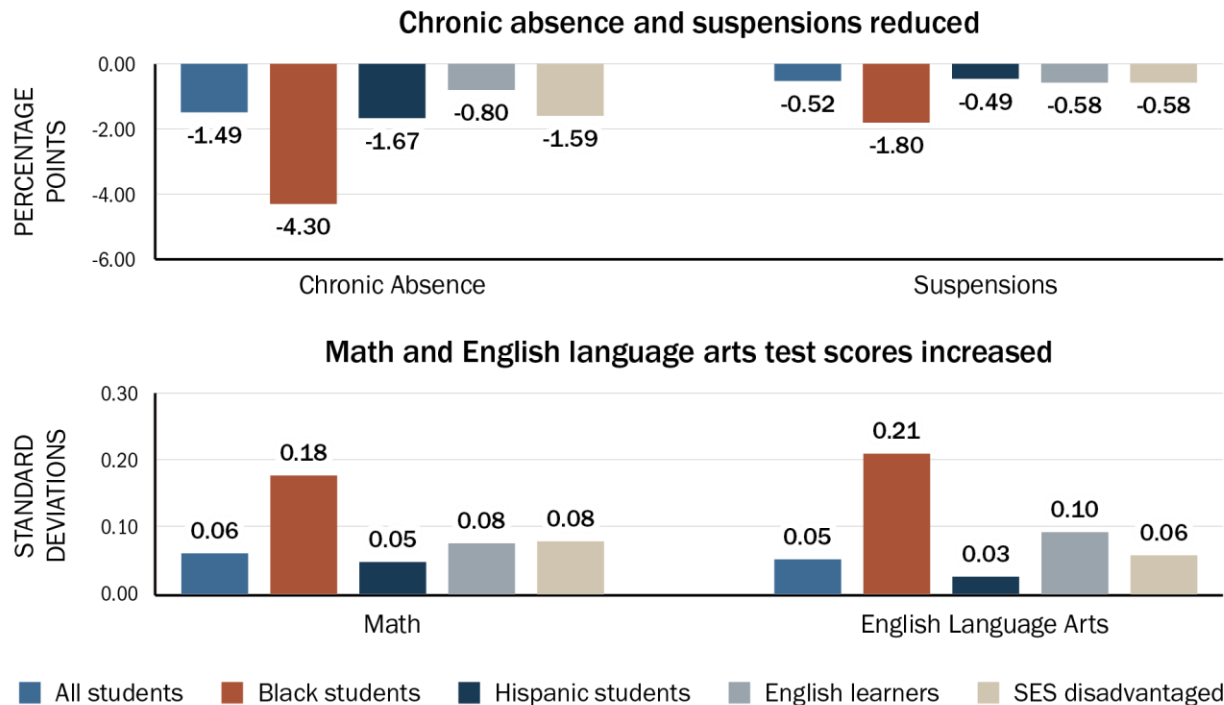
- **15% average reduction** in suspension rates at community schools



Improvements Across All Measured Outcomes Overall



Positive Impacts on all Outcomes Especially Among Historically Underserved Student Groups



CCSPP Test Impacts Translate to Meaningful Learning Gains

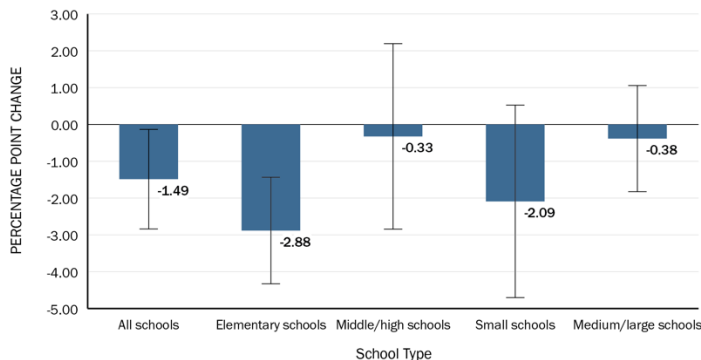
(average 180-day school year)

Student group	Math		English language arts	
	Effect size (SD)	Grade-level equivalent (days of learning)	Effect size (SD)	Grade-level equivalent (days of learning)
All students	0.06*	43	0.05	36
Black students	0.18+	130	0.21+	151
Hispanic/Latino students	0.05	36	0.03	22
English learners	0.08+	58	0.10*	72
SES disadvantaged	0.08**	58	0.06+	43

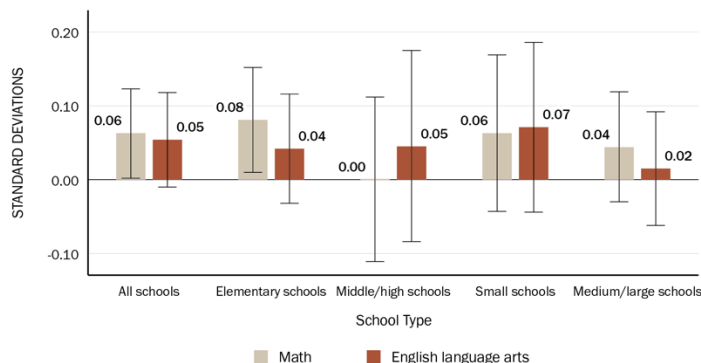
CCSPP Outcomes Varied by School Type and Size

- ▶ Elementary schools had larger impacts on chronic absence and achievement than secondary schools
- ▶ Small schools had greater improvements than large schools in chronic absence, suspension rates, and achievement

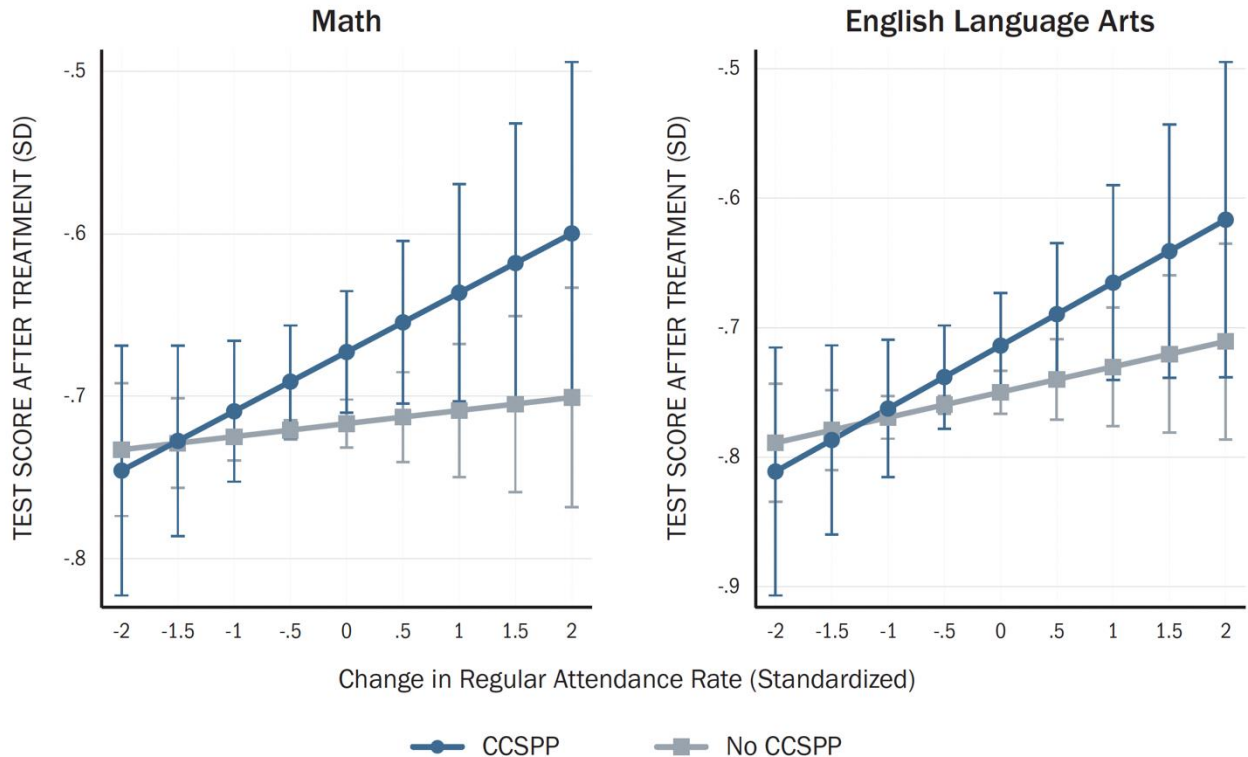
CCSPP Community School Effects on Chronic Absence Rates, by School Type



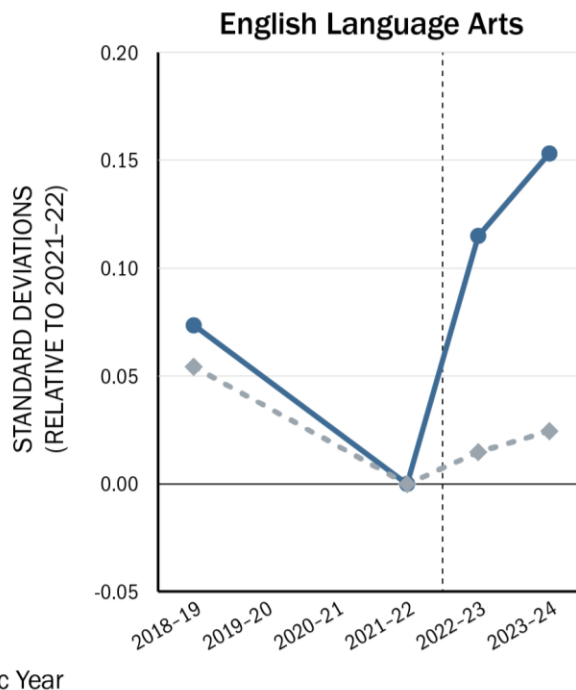
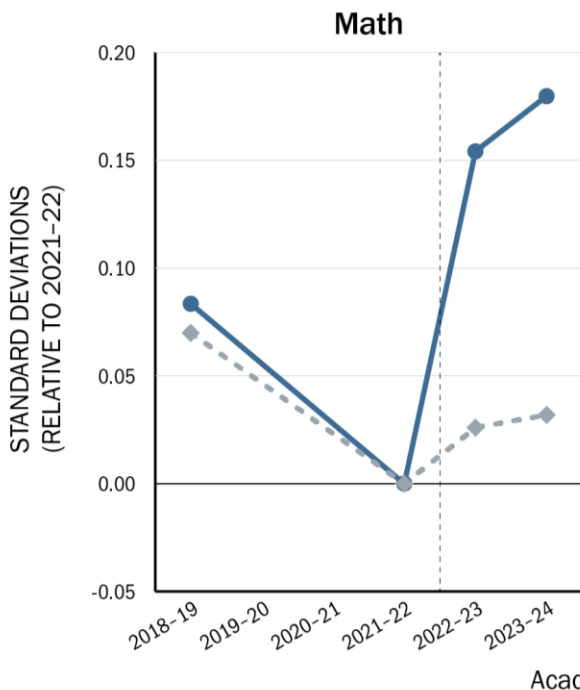
Effects on Student Achievement, by School Type



Larger Returns to Attendance Improvements in CCSPS Schools



Sample Case Study Findings: Larger Test Score Gains in CCSPS Schools in LAUSD



—●— CCSPS schools

-♦- Non-CCSPS High UPC Schools



How Community Schools Enable Improvement

Learning From CA Community School Initiatives

- ▷ Examined three initiatives meeting key criteria:
 - Early CCSPP grant recipient
 - Geographic diversity
 - Attention to whole-child practices
- ▷ Qualitative case study design
 - Interviews with LEA and school actors
 - Observations (e.g., site visits, PD, governance meetings, etc.)
 - Documents (e.g., training materials, meeting notes, etc.)



Reducing Chronic Absence Rates



Reducing Chronic Absenteeism

Lessons From Community Schools

Emily Germain, Laura E. Hernández, Sarah Klevan,
Rebecca S. Levine, and Anna Maier

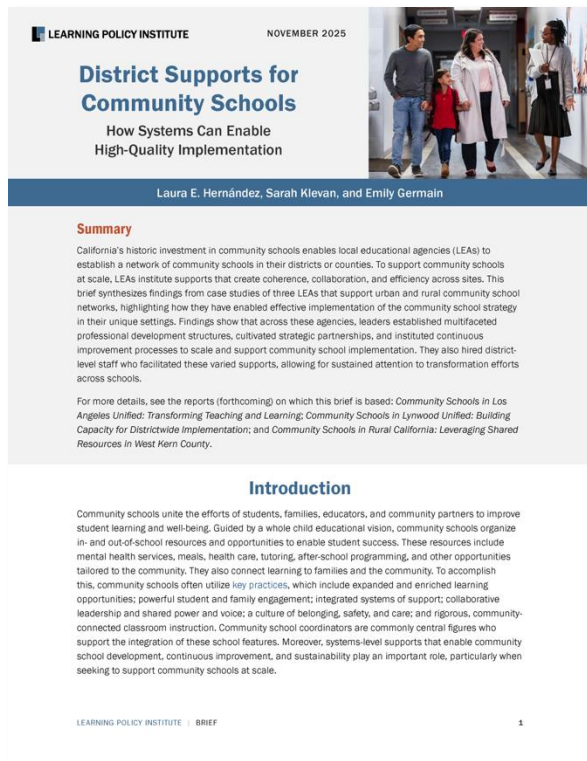


AUGUST 2024

- ▷ Spotlight on chronic absence
 - How four CA community schools achieved **dramatic reductions in chronic absence** post-pandemic
- ▷ Key findings:
 - Improved **family engagement**
 - Increased **student connectedness & relationship-building**
 - Systemically **tracked & analyzed data**
 - Utilized **tiered systems of support**
 - Leveraged **partnerships**
 - Deployed **community school coordinators**

District Supports for Community Schools

- ▶ LEAs are using CCSPF funds to enable high-quality community schooling and strong outcomes
- ▶ Each LEA is using funds to support:
 - Robust professional learning opportunities
 - Strategic partnerships
 - Continuous improvement structures
 - Dedicated administrative capacity



LAUSD Emphasizes Teaching & Learning at Community School Sites

- ▷ The Community Schools Initiative is part of the **Division of Instruction**
- ▷ **Initiative-wide professional development:**
 - Community-connected learning (incl. project-based learning, Linked Learning pathways)
 - PBL Champion teacher leadership
 - Restorative practices and SEL



What's Next?

- ▷ Further outcomes research:
 - **Continue to track impacts** for Cohort 1 and subsequent implementation grantees (Cohorts 2, 3, and 4)
 - Conduct large-district-specific and student-level data analyses
 - Explore additional outcomes including teacher retention
- ▷ Work with statewide research partners and technical assistance providers to **examine how and why** we are seeing these impacts



Equity Leaders Panel

Equity Leaders Panel

- ▷ **Martha Hernández**
 - Executive Director, Californians Together
- ▷ **Angelica Jongco**
 - Deputy Managing Attorney, Public Advocates
- ▷ **Ted Lempert**
 - President, Children Now
- ▷ **Christopher J. Nellum**
 - Executive Director, EdTrust-West
- ▷ **Robert Medina** (*moderator*)
 - Director of Policy and Advocacy, Sobrato Philanthropies





Voices From the Field Panel

Voices From the Field Panel

▷ **Maritza Bermudez**

- Community Organizer, Orange County Congregation Community Organization

▷ **Alma Castro**

- Director of California Initiatives, English Learners Success Forum; School Board Member, Lynwood Unified School District

▷ **Ronda Evans**

- Director of Community Schools, Eureka City Schools

▷ **Dawn Green**

- District Community Schools Coordinator, Lynwood Unified School District

▷ **Yadira Moreno**

- Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services, Anaheim Elementary School District

▷ **Arianne Nova**

- Community Organizer, True North Organizing Network

▷ **Peter Ross** (*moderator*)

- Managing Director, Youth Thriving Through Learning Fund





Research Presentation

Anna Maier | Senior Policy Advisor & Researcher, Learning Policy Institute

Community Schools Sustainability Lessons From Other States

Federal & State Support for Community Schools

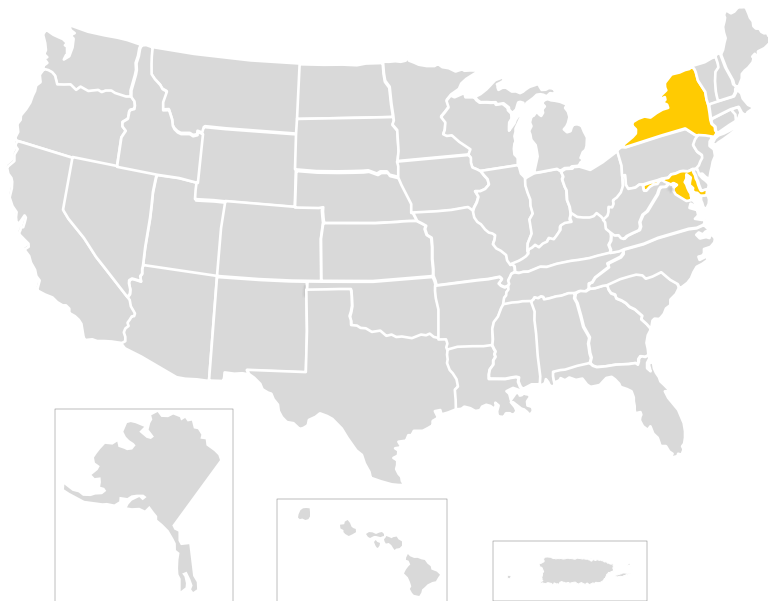
School funding formula

Maryland

- Entitlement grant program for high-poverty schools
- Approx. \$250K annually per site + per-student \$\$ for services

New York

- Set aside for high-need districts
- (\$250M overall per year)
- Regional technical assistance



Federal & State Support for Community Schools

Competitive grants

California

- State general fund
- \$75K–\$500K annually/site, average ~\$266,000
- Technical assistance

Illinois

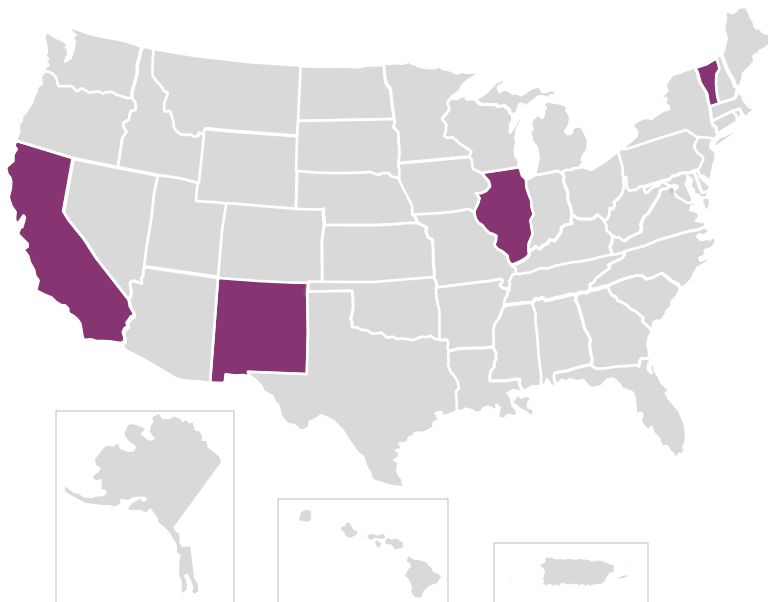
- ESSER, federal FSCS state scaling grant

New Mexico

- State general fund
- \$150K annually/site

Vermont

- ESSER and state general fund
- Approx. \$50K to \$250K annually/site



Federal & State Support for Community Schools

Capacity-building

Florida

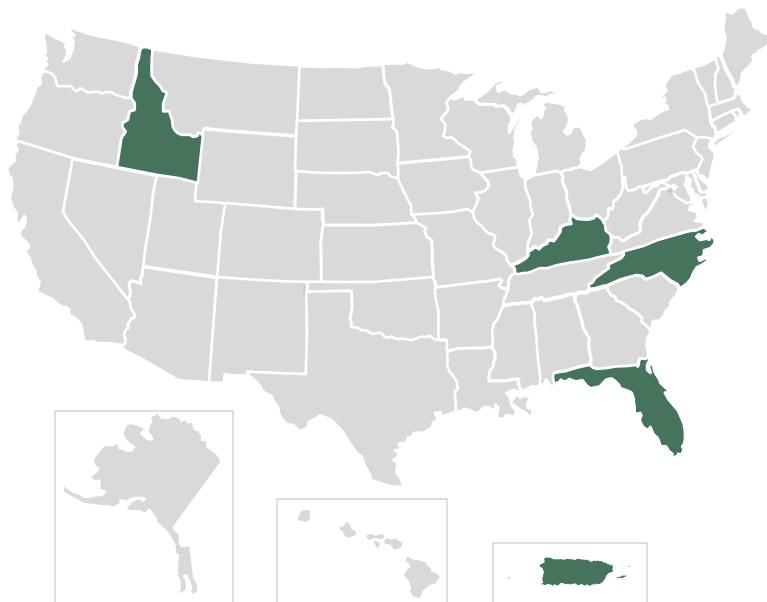
- State general fund for certification grants, federal FSCS state scaling grant
- Approx. \$150K to \$250K annually per site

Kentucky

- State funding for Family Resource & Youth Services Centers co-located at school sites
- Federal FSCS state scaling grant

Idaho, North Carolina, Puerto Rico

- Federal FSCS state scaling grant



Federal & State Support for Community Schools

School funding formula

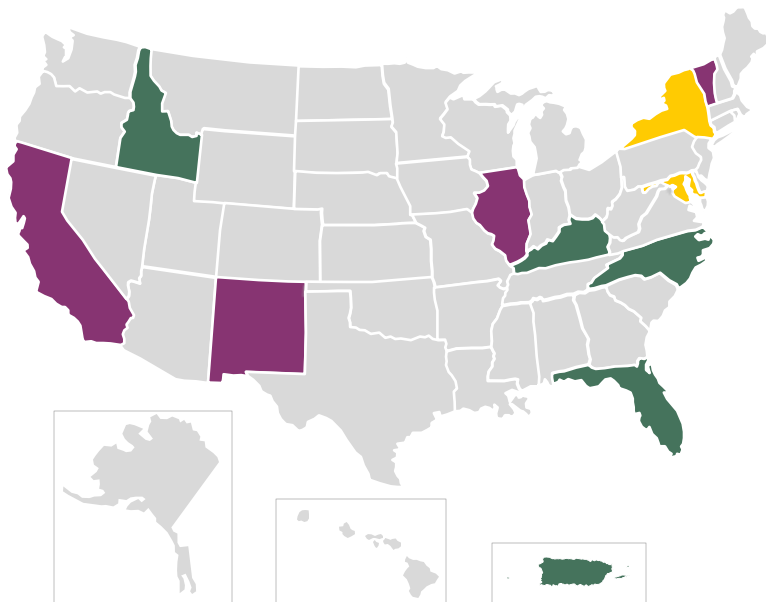
- **Maryland** (~\$250K annually/site + per-student \$\$ for services)
- **New York** (\$250M overall/year)

Competitive grants

- **California** (\$75K–\$500K annually/site, average ~\$266,000)
- **Illinois**
- **New Mexico** (\$150K annually/site)
- **Vermont** (~\$50K–\$250K annually/site)

Capacity-building

- **Florida** (~\$150K–\$250K annually/site)
- **Idaho**
- **Kentucky**
- **North Carolina**
- **Puerto Rico**



State Investments Reinforce Positive Outcomes for Community Schools

	California	Florida	Maryland	New Mexico	New York	Ohio
Evaluation scope	Statewide	Statewide	Statewide	Case study sites	New York City	Cincinnati
Attendance outcomes	▼ Chronic absence	▲ Attendance	▼ Chronic absence	▲ Attendance	▼ Chronic absence	
	▲ Attendance		▲ Attendance			
Achievement outcomes	▲ ELA and math test scores			▲ Test scores ▲ Graduation rates	▲ On-time grade progression ▲ Graduation rates ▲ ELA and math test scores	▲ 3 rd grade reading and graduation rates
School climate outcomes	▼ Suspension rates	▼ Disciplinary incidents	▲ School climate survey results	▲ Student and family engagement	▼ Disciplinary rates	▲ Black student enrollment higher in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods
Achievement gaps outcomes	▼ Reduced for Black students, English learners, Hispanic students, Socioeconomically disadvantaged students					▼ Reduced for Black students





State Leaders Panel

State Leaders Panel

▷ **Daryl F. Camp**

- Superintendent, San Lorenzo Unified School District; President, Association of California School Administrators

▷ **Todd Finnell**

- County Superintendent of Schools, Imperial County Office of Education; President, California County Superintendents

▷ **David B. Goldberg**

- Elementary Bilingual Teacher, Los Angeles Unified School District; President, California Teachers Association

▷ **Bettye Lusk**

- Board Member, Monterey Peninsula Unified School District; President, California School Boards Association

▷ **Ingrid Roberson**

- Chief Deputy of Public Instruction, California Department of Education

▷ **Efrain Mercado Jr. (moderator)**

- Director of California Policy, Learning Policy Institute





Closing Remarks

David Alvarez | California Assemblymember, District 80

Thank You!



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Questions about the report?

Please contact LPI's Director of California Policy **Efrain Mercado** at emercado@learningpolicyinstitute.org



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