

Recommendations Regarding American Rescue Plan Funds and Guidance to Local School Districts

As the pandemic continues and summer approaches, it is clear that families, young people, and schools need broader community support to safely meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of young people across the state. This requires strong and strategic coordination and collaboration between local school districts and trusted community partners that serve youth and families. It is imperative that local school districts, community partners, and community-based organizations that provide afterschool, summer, youth development, social emotional, mental, and other critical supports are fully equipped and supported to provide wraparound services that students need to catch up and re-engage effectively in school and community life. To ensure this, the New York State Network for Youth Success, the New York State Community Schools Network, and our partners have provided these recommendations to help local school districts effectively prioritize and implement equitable efforts to promote learning recovery:

1. **Utilize the community schools strategy** to provide crucial wraparound services to promote the social, emotional, and physical well-being of children and youth. This includes investing in a community schools coordinators to provide needs assessments and support for pulling resources and partnerships needed to utilize the community schools strategy. Community schools are a collaborative strategy that organize community resources to best support the success of students. Research and evaluations show community schools are an effective, [evidence-based strategy for school improvement](#) and also a smart investment: the coordination of resources at both the school and system levels translates to [a return on investment](#) of over \$7 for every \$1 invested in a Coordinator's salary. As an evidence-based intervention, the strategy is well-positioned to respond to many of the recommendations that are outlined below.
2. **School-community partnerships**
 - Utilize afterschool and summer programs to implement a “recovery summer” by integrating expanded learning programs as essential elements in learning recovery and social-emotional support (including trauma-informed practice) for students and families. This includes efforts to create or enhance high-quality summer enrichment programs with community partners.
 - Leverage partnerships with community-based youth and family serving organizations to address learning loss, and provide enrichment and important wraparound services to support the whole child. This includes utilizing community resources (e.g. partnerships with libraries, museums, parks and recreation, youth bureaus, etc.) and school assets (e.g. buses to transport students to and from afterschool and summer programs) to maximize learning opportunities for students. This also includes contracting with afterschool providers to offer half-day or full-day programming to provide social emotional support, academics and tutoring, physical activity, mentoring, and other enrichment activities.
 - Establish seamless supports to maximize school and community resources. For instance, school districts should utilize stimulus funds to cover/waive expenses such as building permit fees borne by community partners who run programs in school buildings, whether they are new partners or existing partners with or without public funding.

- Prioritize STEM learning and engagement by leveraging afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs to support STEM education recovery. Afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs embrace hands-on STEM learning activities in their programming, inspiring student engagement and innovative learning opportunities that help support, broaden, and expand students' STEM experience outside the traditional K-12 classroom.
 - Leverage school and community resources to provide support for struggling students and their families. Assess needs within the school community for access to basic necessities, food, supplies, devices/WiFi, mental health supports, etc., and utilize new and existing partnerships to meet those needs.
 - Collaborate with the state afterschool network, New York State Network for Youth Success and regional afterschool networks to coordinate local capacity building and professional youth development resources for afterschool programs and providers.
3. **Prioritize comprehensive support** for students who have been historically marginalized and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds, including English-language learners, students from low-income communities, students with learning needs and disabilities and mental health needs, runaway and homeless youth, students in sparsely populated districts, and other students who need further supports beyond what is provided to catch up.
 4. **Prioritize technological supports** including access to technological devices and broadband service for students, especially those involved in virtual learning.
 5. **Invest in a curriculum that is responsive, adaptable, and sensitive** to addressing learning loss and appropriately adapts to different modalities of learning, including in-person, remote, and hybrid learning.
 6. **Expand tutoring and mentoring** opportunities for students based on their individually identified needs through partnership with youth and family serving community-based organizations. Rigorous research provides strong evidence that a wide range of students who receive significant tutoring supports see large learning gains, including those who have fallen behind academically.¹
 7. **Focus on investments that address students' academic and non-academic needs**, including their social emotional and mental health support.
 - Partnership with school-based health centers, community behavioral health providers, and social workers
 8. **Expand student and family engagement opportunities.**
 - Increase families' access to resources - during the pandemic, many families have found themselves in desperate situations.
 - Engage parents, students, and youth as critical stakeholders in decision making.
 9. **Strengthen infrastructure for integrated supports.**
 - Employ strategies that uphold the highest level of mutual collaboration, protection, and support. Community partner agreements should reflect fair compensation standards and

¹ https://annenberg.brown.edu/sites/default/files/EdResearch_for_Recovery_Design_Principles_1.pdf

include long-term funding strategies to ensure sustainable programs. (See [Cost of Quality Programs Calculator](#) to determine the costs of a variety of options for high-quality afterschool and summer programs. Other planning resources are listed below.)

10. **Leverage support from other funding sources** that provide critical services such as food and nutrition (SNAP, CACFP), broadband expansion (e.g. ConnectED), and other mental and emotional health grants to fully meet students' needs.

Resources

- Afterschool, summer, and expanded learning opportunities
 - [New York State Network for Youth Success](#)
 - [School-Community Partnerships Guidebook](#)
 - [Quality Self-Assessment \(QSA\) Tool](#)
 - [Site Leaders Institute \(SLI\)](#)
 - [SAC Credential](#)
 - [Program Accreditation](#)
 - [National AfterSchool Association](#)
 - [Afterschool Alliance](#)
 - [Starting an Afterschool Program](#)
 - [Afterschool and STEM](#)
 - [Help Kids Recover](#)
 - [Mizzen by Mott](#)
- Community schools
 - [New York State Community Schools Technical Assistance Centers](#)
 - [New York State Community Schools Network](#)
 - [National Center for Community Schools](#)
 - [Building Community Schools: A Guide for Action](#)
 - [Coalition for Community Schools](#)
 - [How to Start a Community School](#)
 - [School-Based Health Centers](#)
- Planning tools
 - Full toolkits**
 - [Summer Learning Toolkit](#)
 - Map of Existing Afterschool Programs**
 - [KWIC Maps](#)
 - Budgetary**
 - [Cost of Quality Programs Calculator - Wallace](#)
 - Assessments**
 - [Quality Self-Assessment \(QSA\) Tool](#)
 - [Devereux Student Strengths Assessment \(DESSA\)](#)