



# United Way COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## Role of a Community School Principal

### Who It Is

Community School Principals serve as a collaborative leader who empowers the Community School Coordinator to build, create, and develop relationships with school leaders, stakeholders, and community organizations to implement a community school strategy guided by a Community School Alignment Plan.

Min et al.'s (2017) review of the full-service community school literature explained that transformation into a community school requires a principal who is open to integrating “outsiders” into the school building and leadership structures. These overlapping partnerships require principals to forgo top-down leadership and support decisions “that are made through teams of people from different positions that share responsibility”.

### Critical Qualities of a Community School Principal

#### Beliefs

- Schools cannot do it alone
- Faster alone, further together
- Parents as partners in education
- All parents want their children to be successful
- High expectations & high supports to better outcomes

#### Attitudes

- Positive outlook – success is achievable if people do “whatever it takes” to make it happen.
- Passionate – seeks opportunities to connect with others to promote growth in the school community.
- Proactive – engages others early and often to problem solve around identified issues.
- People-focused – encourages cross sector communication; fosters sharing and learning across groups; confronts bad behavior directly; is energized by interactions with colleagues who share ideas, skills and expertise; solicits and provides honest, regular feedback.
- Performance matters – belief that people will/can stretch to meet high expectations and be successful with proper support and encouragement. Sees self as accountable for setting and holding others to high expectations. Is openly accountable to partners for this role.

#### Actions

- **Available** – understands the role of Community School Coordinator and utilizes as key connector between school and community resources. Communicates constantly with coordinator and holds regular check-ins to ensure integration of thoughts, intentions and actions occur in support of the school's vision.
- **Creative** – sees each opportunity presented through the lens of how to realize the school's vision. Connects possibilities with present and future work in the school to determine best fit.
- **Focused** – understands expected goals and outcomes for whole-child student success. Compares each identified opportunity to those expectations to determine where, how and if it is a good fit.
- **Solution-oriented** – open to new ideas. Aware of cost/benefit risk of new ideas, yet not afraid to proceed (cautiously and optimistically) with eyes wide open.
- **Data-informed** – comfortable discussing and sharing data that emerges inside and outside of the school as a way to identify priorities and align resources for maximum connection and impact. Creates improvement plans through lens of Community School supports.

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- **Demands quality** – expects people on the team to perform and holds them accountable. This includes students, staff, the Community School coordinator, community partners, self and others. Leads by example.
- **Inclusive** – understands the interconnectedness of systems involved in achieving synergy and success for students. Actively talks about this integration and promotes cross-sharing of ideas, space, tools, language, etc. to boost a common path to reach goals. Embeds this way of doing business as the culture of the school. Willingly interact with and embraces partner (community and otherwise) support, suggestions and feedback all with the intention of what is good for kids.
- **Champions the work** – energetically speaks to others about the transformation happening at the school site. Participates in presentations, tours, etc. Understands how to include key partners in opportunities that could serve to leverage additional support (financial, resource, policy, etc.) Leads and presses forward on difficult conversations related to identifying priorities, needs, etc. that match vision.
- **Advocates upward** and outward for changes needed to further operationalize the work. Opens avenues for further collaboration both internal and external; both verbally and actually. Seeks ways to blend blurred boundaries and efforts for a common purpose. This could be across funding streams, departments, community sectors, program providers, etc.

## Pause and Reflect:

- Where does shared leadership currently exist within your school?
- What leadership style do you identify having? Are these aligned with the leadership style you'd visualize for a CS Principal?
- How would a Principal support the implementation of the Community Schools strategy?

## Community School Principal Annual Milestones

Month	Areas of support
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce Community School model and Coordinator to Staff</li> <li>• Open school meetings to Coordinators and share Community Partner Contacts</li> <li>• Support Community Partner/Leadership Team Recruitment/Build</li> </ul>
Sept- Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage Coordinator to share school priorities to Community Leadership Team</li> </ul>
Nov- April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create space for and support the Community School Needs Assessment process</li> </ul>
April - May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Family Asset and Needs Assessment implementation</li> </ul>
June - July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Family Asset and Needs Assessment Results</li> <li>• Support the submission of Results Based Accountability Annual Report</li> <li>• Collaborative, Data Driven School Improvement Planning with Community Leadership Team</li> </ul>

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