



Lehigh Valley Community Schools

For 15 years, Community Schools have supported student success in the region's highest need schools by supplying basic necessities and building trusting relationships with children and their families. When the pandemic extended into the 2020-21 school year, Community Schools remained lifelines for students, families and their surrounding neighborhoods.

Community School Coordinators and educators kept kids safe, connected and learning by caring for their basic needs, providing enrichment opportunities, and supporting students' academic needs in remote, hybrid and in-person environments. They mobilized partners to connect students to devices, technology and tutoring opportunities. Having an established and strong Community Schools Network was critical to helping thousands of families access food, transportation, rental and utility assistance as well as health care to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Despite the network's best efforts, many students have sustained significant learning loss, falling anywhere from several months to several grades behind. Community Schools will remain a key strategy to student and family success as the region continues to recover, rebuild and reimagine.

Financials

The vast majority of United Way Education investments focus on services in Community Schools and surrounding neighborhoods.

Total Education Investment: \$6,415,915

including Community Schools Investment: \$1,513,128

Donated products and services: \$1,200,000

⇒ Highlights

Highest summer learning enrollment in three years

Improved parent and family engagement

All-time high student and family stability rates

⇒ Challenges

Attendance dipped dramatically in many schools

Increased demand for behavioral and mental health care

Limited access to in-person dental and vision services





By the Numbers



18,888 students served
31 Community Schools
4 School Districts

Allentown School District

Brigadier General Anna Mae
Hays Elementary School*
Central Elementary School*
Francis D. Raub Middle School* •
Harrison Morton Middle School
Hiram W. Dodd Elementary School
Jackson Early Learning Center
Jefferson Elementary School
Mosser Elementary School*
Roosevelt Elementary School*
Sheridan Elementary School*
South Mountain Middle School
Trexler Middle School
Union Terrace Elementary School* •
Washington Elementary School* •

Bangor Area School District

Bangor Area High School*
Bangor Area Middle School*
DeFranco Elementary School*
Five Points Elementary School*
Washington Elementary School*

Bethlehem Area School District

Broughal Middle School*
Donegan Elementary School*
Fountain Hill Elementary School
Freemansburg Elementary School
Lincoln Elementary School
Marvine Elementary School*
Northeast Middle School*
Thomas Jefferson Elementary School*
William Penn Elementary School

Easton Area School District

Cheston Elementary School*
Easton Area Middle School
Paxinosa Elementary School*

*Partner-funded Community Schools
(Community School Coordinator)

• Full-service Community Schools
(Community School Coordinator, Activities
Coordinator and behavioral health staff)

Food Assistance

2,587 families connected with food assistance

⇒ 220% increase since the pandemic

Housing, Rental and Utility Assistance

495 families provided with housing or financial referrals

⇒ 150% increase since the pandemic

Summer Learning

2,135 students enrolled in summer programming

⇒ 52% increase since the pandemic

Engagement

2,151 families participated in teacher conferences

4,375 families attended school-based activities

⇒ 30% increase since the pandemic

Volunteering and Partnerships

1,021 people volunteered 7,471 hours

⇒ Valued at \$193,333

Community School Partners

Air Products
Dan and Susan Barnes
Capital Blue Cross
City Center Allentown
Communities In Schools
of Eastern Pennsylvania
Crayola
Follett Corporation
Just Born Quality Confections
Lehigh University
Bob and Sandy Lovett

Moravian University
Northampton Community College
PPL Corp
Bill and Denise Spence
St. Luke's University Health Network
The Century Promise
U.S. Department of Education
UWGLV TeenWorks
UWGLV Women United
Victaulic



Community School Highlights

Food Assistance

Throughout the year, Community Schools remained key sites for breakfast and lunch distribution as districts expanded free meals to all youth aged 18 and below.

Thanks to Second Harvest Food Bank and other community partners, Marvine Elementary School in Bethlehem Area School District provided families with food year-round. They expanded their food pantry by creating a “Mobile Market” in collaboration with the Northside Network of Community Schools, distributing food to families from Lincoln Elementary, William Penn Elementary and Northeast Middle schools.

In Easton Area School District, Paxinosa Elementary School hosted highly attended, outdoor events in which fresh fruits and vegetables were distributed each week. As word traveled, the school started to see many families returning on a weekly basis, and this trend has remained consistent.

Family Engagement

Hosting events and teacher conferences in the virtual environment proved to foster greater engagement among parents and families. Even with fewer events offered, schools reported significant increases in the numbers of parents and families participating. In Allentown School District, Roosevelt Elementary School reported an all-time high engagement rate with 88% of families attending virtual activities. In nearby Hays Elementary School, a Black History Month virtual event drew more than 200 attendees, as they focused on the book *Hidden Figures* and featured a STEM activity where students created their own space capsule.

Staff Mental Health

Schools recognized the need to support faculty and staff during this challenging year. In an effort to help the helpers, several schools partnered with businesses and nonprofits to transform faculty rooms into mindfulness retreat spaces such as the *Launch Pad* at Broughal Middle School and the *Zen Zone* at nearby Donegan Elementary School in Bethlehem Area School District. The peaceful rooms provide educators a dedicated space to refresh, recharge, relax and reset in order to best serve their students.

Student and Family Stability

In high-need schools where families often move frequently, schools reported that more students than ever stayed in the same school for the entire year. In Allentown School District, Sheridan Elementary School’s stability rate increased to 93.6% while Central Elementary School’s jumped to an all-time high of 90.3%. School staff attributes this increase to the eviction moratorium along with connections to housing and basic needs supports that reached almost every family in the school.