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# Effectiveness Evaluation Analysis Memo

**Date:** September 8, 2023

**To:** Amy Ellis

**CC:** Alexius Ferguson

**From:** Dominique Bradley, Vanessa Hoffman, Nicole Sochaczewski

**Re:** **Analysis for Task 1. Effectiveness evaluation: What did implementation look like in schools that descriptively were shown to demonstrate improvement on specific student outcomes?**

## Overview and Summary

In 2022, the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) conducted an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the Community Partnership Schools (CPS) model on a series of student outcomes during the early years of model implementation (2015–16 and 2018–19 school years).<sup>1</sup> The descriptive review of school-level data sets assembled for the effectiveness analysis identified three schools that demonstrated notable improvement on disciplinary incidents, performance on state assessments in reading and mathematics, and cumulative grade point average (GPA). To build on these findings, AIR was asked to conduct additional qualitative research to better understand what implementation looked like in these three schools and what promising practices might be capitalized on for other schools in the initiative. The information summarized in this memo is drawn from interviews with key stakeholders in three targeted schools and affiliated core partners, as well as relevant documentation (e.g., budget narrative, statement of work, CPS readiness assessment, certification or affirmation review, quarterly reports, cabinet-meeting agendas and minutes) collected during the evaluation in 2022 or more recently. In reviewing these data sources, we sought to draw out elements of CPS model implementation that may be connected to improvement in student outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> The executive summary from the 2022 evaluation is reproduced in the appendix.

Across the three schools, we found promising strategies and key barriers for implementing the CPS model in the areas of vision for CPS model implementation, roles and relationships, decision-making, data collection and analysis, certification process, and programming provided.

**Promising Strategies.** Successful practices included developing strong, engaged, and committed partnerships; fostering a good school climate with trust and respect; strongly integrating the CPS director into the school environment; promoting community engagement; and providing robust academic programming. Regarding the improvement in specific student outcomes in these three schools, there was clear investment in academic programming with tutoring and mentoring, which could improve students' performance in reading and mathematics as well as the cumulative GPA. Additionally, focusing on the whole child and providing referrals for services, resources, and programs could help reduce disciplinary incidents.

**Necessary Structures for Implementation.** It was critical for all partners, staff, and teachers to have a shared understanding of the vision for CPS model implementation, despite varied themes. In examining roles and relationships, we found three critical needs for successful CPS model implementation: (a) hiring someone with the necessary qualifications as the director, (b) ensuring that all four dedicated CPS staff positions are filled, and (c) fostering good relationships between directors and principals. In our analysis of decision-making bodies, we found that a functional model of operation relied on active participation of the four core partners in cabinet meetings, an active operations team to oversee daily management of tasks, the CPS director sharing information between governing bodies, and facilitation of additional committees to gain input from other stakeholders. All three schools conducted needs assessments, and two had formal processes in place to use the resulting data to inform programming. Additionally, all of the schools were working toward formal data sharing agreements with partners. All of the schools were certified, and respondents noted that despite the substantial documentation and effort needed for the process, they found that the standards provided a helpful framework for decision-making bodies, such as the cabinet, to create goals. The three schools focused on academic and enrichment programming, as well as wellness services and direct provision of resources.

**Challenges.** Across all of these areas, we found that the main challenges included staffing retention, hiring, onboarding, and relationship building; developing partner investment and promoting shared leadership; clarifying roles for all staff; and increasing parent and student engagement.

In the fall of the 2023–24 school year, AIR will interview CPS directors and core partners in the first cohort of CPS schools to examine two additional evaluation topics to support (a) enhancing data sharing among partners and (b) processes and resources to enhance shared partner roles.

We begin by providing an overview of and main findings from the current 2023 evaluation, which analyzed new and previously collected documents as well as previously conducted interviews. In the next section, we briefly describe our methodology. Then we provide findings on primary themes and highlights of our analysis related to the vision for implementation, roles and relationships, decision-making, certification, and programming. Afterward, we discuss overall successes and challenges. Finally, we present conclusions from this evaluation.

## Method

The evaluation team analyzed qualitative data from three schools found to have sustained improvement on student outcomes: C. A. Weis Elementary School, Edward H. White Academy of Leadership High School, and Endeavour Elementary School. Each of the schools sustained at least one of the following student outcomes: disciplinary incidents, performance on state assessments in reading and mathematics, and cumulative GPA. The evaluation team reviewed documents and interview transcripts with district representatives, school principals, school CPS directors, and focus groups (the latter consisting of parent, health, and student activities coordinators) from the previous 2022 evaluation. We also included more recent documents from schools from 2022 and 2023, such as scope of work, budget narrative, certification assessment, and quarterly reports. Exhibit 1 lists the types of documents reviewed and role of interviewees for each of the three schools.

**Exhibit 1. Data Sources**

Document	Year	C. A. Weis Elementary	Edward H. White Academy of Leadership High School	Endeavour Elementary
Budget narrative	2022–2023	X	X	X
Statement of work	2017–2018, 2018–2019, 2019–2020, 2022–2023	X	X	X
CPS readiness assessment	2018, 2019	X	X	X
Quarterly reports	Q1 2022, Q2 2022	X	X	X
Certification or affirmation review	2019, 2021	X	X	X
Cabinet-meeting agendas and minutes	2018, 2022	X		X
Interviewee role				
CPS director	2021	X	X	X
District partner representative	2021	X	X	X
Principal	2021	X	X	X
School-based coordinator	2021	X	X	X

Documents and interview transcripts were coded using qualitative software. We used a blended deductive and inductive approach to develop our coding structure. Our codebook was, in part, predicated on the coding structure used in the evaluation of CPS schools in 2020–22. This coding approach allowed us to build on what has been learned from the evaluation of implementation to date and to identify new themes as we reanalyzed these data sources and added new documents for review. The 2022 evaluation focused on implementation and effectiveness to understand key drivers and challenges associated with implementing the CPS model and how CPS schools performed on a series of school-related outcomes. This evaluation

is different in that we limited our analysis to focus on documents and interviews for three CPS models showing sustained improvement on student outcomes to better understand elements of CPS program design and implementation that could be connected to the observed improvements in student outcomes.

Our analytic approach to conducting a more targeted analysis of implementation has important limitations that should be kept in mind when reviewing the findings in this report. First, by selecting the three schools that sustained improvement on specific student outcomes, we were able to examine implementation in these schools, but we could not make comparisons with approaches, services, and strategies in other schools. Second, we examined implementation in schools that demonstrated improvement in specific student outcomes from the 2015–16 to 2018–19 school years but do not have student outcome data to show whether the outcomes were sustained in subsequent school years.

In the following sections, we provide detailed analysis of the primary areas related to what implementation looked like in schools that were shown to demonstrate improvement on specific student outcomes.

## A. Vision for CPS Model Implementation

Respectively, representatives from the three schools expressed a vision for CPS implementation to make the school the central hub of the community, to improve academic and social supports for career and college readiness, and to address the needs of students to close the achievement gap. Within each site, the four core partners (nonprofit, school district, university, health care) shared the same general vision, although the nonprofit and school partners were more up front about the need to share this vision more widely among the community. Although visions across the three schools differed, all three reflected the four pillars of community schools.<sup>2</sup> Stakeholders at each site also expressed the desire for sustainability through the initiative.

**Vision Themes.** Interviews with directors, principals, and district personnel at each of the three schools revealed that stakeholders held related visions for implementing CPS. For example, at School C, the director described the vision as working in partnership to provide resources and improve outcomes for students and the community. The director shared that “all stakeholders would work collaboratively towards the betterment of our students and the community.” Similarly, the principal from this school shared a vision to have the school be a central hub of resources for the community. “My vision for community school is to let the community itself know that we are here and what we’re doing . . . [and] know we’re here to help.” At School B,

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<sup>2</sup> According to the CPS model, the four pillars of community school success are (a) collaborative leadership, (b) expanded learning, (c) wellness supports, and (d) family and community engagement.

the vision was less community centered and more focused on improving academic and social supports for career and college readiness. According to the principal, the vision at School B was for students to “function independently, mentally, academically, and socially” to prepare them for life after high school graduation. This vision could potentially be a driving factor in supports for stronger student academic (cumulative GPA) and behavioral (disciplinary incidents) outcomes at this school. At School A, the vision revolved around a theme of equity. The core partners at School A came up with the vision to “unite families and communities in a shared partnership for success,” and the director added that success in this case refers to removing barriers and addressing the needs of students to close the academic achievement gap.

One of the goals for our district is closing the achievement gap and driving proficiency levels of learning to higher levels than ever. And so, for us to do that, we really have to address some of the pressing challenges and needs of our kids who don't have many resources and lack supports outside of the school.

– *District Representative*

**Evidence of a Shared Vision.** There did not appear to be any disagreement or divergence in vision among partners at each site. For example, certification documentation revealed that the vision at School A was developed with and shared by all stakeholders and that programs and services are strongly aligned to the mission. However, it was apparent that at all three schools, the nonprofit and school partners felt a responsibility to share and explain the vision to teachers, students, parents, and the community. It was less evident whether university and health partners shared this feeling about the vision because we did not review interview transcripts with them.

**Desire for Sustainability.** Recognizing that CPS funding was limited and not guaranteed in perpetuity, these sites' visions included a theme of initiative sustainability. At all three schools, stakeholders mentioned looking for sustainable funding sources and more ways to engage donors in the community.

Really what I'm looking at in my long-term goal is expanding the services through becoming more of a community name . . . So, that is a public relations push because I won't be able to continue to sustain my programs that I have now, without more donors, without more advocates within the community finding those donors. I would like it to be where we have cash flowing in all the time, consistently, and people see our face and they know, "Oh, those people need cash." And they just throw donations at us. That's really what I would like.

– *Principal*

## B. Roles and Relationships

Examining how the role of CPS directors and other dedicated CPS staff positions were described across the three schools and exploring the relationship among the CPS directors and principals, we found that CPS implementation was more successful under three conditions. First, CPS directors have many duties, which makes hiring the right person with the needed qualifications more difficult and more crucial. Sites that were able to hire and retain a CPS director capable of handling the diverse workload appeared to be more successful with CPS implementation overall. Second, it was just as important for schools to have a high-quality director as it was for them to place importance on working to fill coordinator positions. When all the coordinator positions were filled, the four dedicated staff positions worked closely together through and

The importance of that director position is essential . . . Everything is made or broken in that director role.

– *District Representative*

with the operations team to oversee day-to-day activities associated with the four CPS pillars. However, when not all the positions were filled, the director and existing staff were overburdened and struggled to provide high-quality planned services and activities.

Third, when the CPS director, as well as other

core coordinators, were well integrated into the school environment, implementation of the CPS model was more successful.

**Role of the Director.** At all three sites, directors were known to (a) oversee the day-to-day operations of social service provisions, (b) work and communicate directly with school administration and representatives from core partners, (c) manage all operations and resources associated with CPS, (d) seek funding, and (e) manage the overall CPS budget. At School B and School C, the directors were reportedly also responsible for analyzing student outcomes and program quality data as well as building connections with the community and encouraging family engagement. At School A and School B, directors were reported as having the additional duty of running after-school programs and ensuring high programing quality. Hiring a competent person for the director position is both difficult and critical given the large number



of diverse responsibilities that fall to that role. For example, the director at School B remarked that frequent turnover in key roles interrupted community member involvement and hindered the ability to create efficiencies among processes and partners.

## Exhibit 2. The Four Dedicated Staff Positions of Community Partnership Schools



In accordance with the CPS model, aside from the director, each of the three sites should have a family and community engagement coordinator, a wellness coordinator, and an expanded learning coordinator (see Exhibit 2). When all the coordinator positions are filled, the individuals in the four dedicated staff positions work side by side to manage activities associated with the four CPS pillars. However, when coordinator positions are vacant, the extra responsibilities land on the director, making his/her job overwhelming and inefficient. At School A and School B, certification reports revealed that all three coordinator positions were filled and well integrated in school day operations. However, interviews during 2021 with School C staff revealed that School C had difficulty hiring and retaining a family and community engagement coordinator and an expanded learning coordinator, which left the director and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) supervisor<sup>3</sup> struggling to cover the responsibilities of these two roles. As the School C director shared,

<sup>3</sup> The [Nita M. Lowey 21st CCLC program](#) is a federal formula grants program that supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.



In theory, I would love to just . . . I am [a] networking queen. I know everybody in this county, and everybody knows me. I'm sure that I can get the word out about [CPS] and find money. However, I have 16 homeless families right now that I'm helping to try to find a home, and it inundates my whole day.

– School C Director

Speaking about the need for having adequate staff, one director stated the following:

If you have a great foundation, those four people that represent the four pillars, and those four people work together towards the same goal, then you're going to be in a really good operations team that builds off of those four people, then it'll be so easy. But it's just keeping and retaining. Initially, I didn't have a wellness coordinator until January of this year, so for the first part of my career here, I was a director, and I was a wellness coordinator, so when I get the wellness coordinator in, then I lose my family and community coordinator. If you have those strong four that are there in place, everything else will work out.

– CPS Director

**Principal and Director Relationships.** Interviews with the directors and principals at each of the three schools revealed close relationships and the way in which constant communication helped support decision-making, data sharing, and a strong, integrated partnership between the nonprofit and school. At all three sites, the director and principal met formally once a week but spoke informally multiple times a day as the need arose. At School A and School B, the directors and principals have offices that are physically close together, which eases their communication. At School C, the certification report notes, “Though there is significant [physical] distance between the hub and School C’s administration offices, there is a strong alliance and fluid communication between the principals and CPS director.” Being able to connect informally, often by text message or spontaneous office visits allows directors to get quick approval from the principal for necessary services, programs, et cetera. Strong integration of the CPS director—for example, high visibility, involvement during the school day, and multiple pathways for collaboration and communication with school administrators—as well as the integration of other core coordinators into the school environment was a key strategy for successful implementation of the CPS model. At School B, the principal noted that the CPS director was also an assistant principal at the school, implying that the director took on even more responsibility during the school day and was more directly linked with the school.

I mean, it's great, they're [CPS staff] embedded here... Our director is one of my assistant principals. His employees, they have duties within the school day as well. When the bell rings they have duty posts, they have positions, they have things, so it's not like an us and them, it's a we. . . Sometimes when the front desk staff are out there, they step right in. They're assisting walking students to class. If there's discipline issues, they'll sit down, they'll counsel with some of the kids to get them back on track. I mean, whatever's needed, they're out doing parking lot duty, bus duty. They're us, they're a part of us.

– *School Principal*

### C. Decision-Making Bodies

Although there were several common decision-making bodies across all three sites, the way the committees operated differed depending on engagement from the four core partners and the groups' commitments to sharing decision-making power among stakeholders. Through our analysis, we found that a functional model of operation relied on (a) the active participation of the four core partners at cabinet meetings, (b) an operations team with core staff to oversee day-to-day management of the CPS, (c) the ability of the CPS director to relay information between governing bodies, and (d) additional committees to secure input from different stakeholders. None of the three sites exhibited all four of these conditions.

**Differences in Composition.** At each school, there was an established CPS leadership cabinet that oversaw the governance of the CPS model at the school overall and focused on vision, strategic planning, evaluation, and sustainability. The cabinet at each site consisted of one representative from each of the core partners (nonprofit, health, university, and school district) and the school principal. At School A and School B, documentation revealed that one parent and one student sit on the cabinet as well. This inclusion was noted as a strategy for increasing parent and student engagement in decision-making and successful CPS model implementation overall. At all sites, the director took responsibility for scheduling the cabinet meetings and taking notes.

**Variance in Meeting Cadence and Engagement.** Attendance and active participation at cabinet meetings appeared to be a recurring challenge at all three sites. At School C, the cabinet met monthly. According to the director, it was difficult to get a quorum at cabinet meetings during 2021 and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. However, according to quarterly reports, the attendance issue was resolved in 2022, when all core partners were actively engaged. Also in 2022, the School B cabinet was meeting quarterly, but the director shared that their goal was for the cabinet to meet once a month moving forward. The director noticed that attendance at

meetings was again starting to wane so, “in conjunction with the monthly meetings, the Director is reactivating cabinet members by meeting with them one on one on a monthly and bimonthly basis.” The director described this strategy as a way to engage partners more easily with less pressure to align multiple schedules. At School A, the cabinet met every other month. According to the district representative, the meetings were very engaging at the start but slowly became less productive. The certification report from School A revealed that there was no clear process in the cabinet for resolving partnership concerns and some confusion over who among the partners should be leading these meetings. The affirmation review added that Children’s Home Society of Florida (CHS; the nonprofit) was more visible than other partners at the school, with many individuals even referring to CPS as CHS. On the basis of this finding, CPS review staff recommended focusing on “communicating the core-four throughout” and continuing “authentic engagement of [all core-four] partners long-term with responsibilities transferred to the collective rather than on one or two [partners].”

**Promising Practices.** In a 2022 interview, a district representative commented that the School A cabinet had decided to vote for a new chair every 2 years, rotating between the partner organizations, in a conscious effort so that one agency does not have more visibility, responsibility, or leadership power over the others. Additionally, whereas one school described challenges engaging the university partner, two schools described strong engagement with university partners, with one sharing that the university partner played an active role in committees. All the schools described having strong partner organization collaboration, with an emphasis on having a long-term memorandum of understanding with core partners to promote commitment and engagement regardless of changes in individual staff members.

Aside from the CPS leadership cabinet, each of the sites also established operations teams charged with operationalizing the goals set by the CPS cabinet. As the operations team, the CPS director and other CPS staff worked with school-based staff to plan student and family programming, coordinate community services, and review data to report back to the cabinet. The CPS director at each site played a critical role in decision-making and sharing leadership across partners by acting as an intermediary between the operations team and the leadership cabinet. The director at School B shared the following:

I am a facilitator of resources. So, as I understand my cabinet’s objective and goals for this school year, I take those to the operations team, which consists of my core staff and a representative from each partner, and we write out action steps or plans for how we’re going to reach those goals throughout the school year.

– School B Director

The CPS director also noted that

The cabinet makes the goals and kind of tell us what direction they would like us to go at. The operations make the actual plan to get to those goals. So, at the operation level, we are the rollers, we are rolling to that goal. Their cabinet set sail to like, hey we're going this way. And then the operation team, we roll in the direction that they tell us to go in.

– CPS Director

**Authentic Decision-Making Power.** To ease implementation of the CPS model and ensure stakeholder input from parents, students, teachers, and community members, the CPS director at each school also convened a community leadership council (CLC), a student leadership council (SLC), and other decision-making bodies (Exhibit 3) at each school. Although the intention of the CPS framework was to engage a variety of stakeholders in the decision-making process, the CLCs and SLCs appeared to act as advisory boards as opposed to decision-making bodies. At each school, the CLCs and SLCs (except for School C, which was still recruiting students to the SLC) met regularly to share thoughts and ideas around enrichment and academic programming as well as ways to engage families and the community more broadly. Although much insight was gleaned from these meetings, no decisions could be made or carried out without approval from the operations team and the cabinet, potentially limiting the power of other stakeholder voices. Regarding other decision-making bodies tracked in the quarterly reports (data team, communications team, behavioral team, and grants team), there was variation across the three sites and no reported operational differences. More research and analysis should be done around the roles of each of these teams and how they contribute meaningfully to the operational model at each site.

Exhibit 3 lists the decision-making bodies at each school that were mentioned in the documents and interviews reviewed. It is possible that data do exist for empty cells in the table, but they were not referenced in the data reviewed. In the cases where “recruiting” was included, it means that the committee was actively seeking members and not yet fully functioning.

**Exhibit 3. Decision-Making Bodies at Each Community Partnership Schools (CPS) Site in 2022**

Decision-making body	School A	School B	School C
CPS leadership cabinet (hub team, leadership team, executive committee)	X	X	X
Operations team	X	X	X
Community leadership council	X	X	X
Student leadership council	X	X	X – recruiting
Data team	X	X – recruiting	X
Communications team	X	X – recruiting	
Behavioral (discipline) team			X
Grants team	X – inactive	X – inactive	X

*Note.* “Recruiting” means that the committee was actively seeking members and not yet fully functioning.

**D. Data**

From previous evaluations of community school initiatives, we have identified that data collection, sharing, analysis, and use in decision-making are key to successful implementation and continuous improvement of the CPS model. Directors at all three sites mentioned conducting at least one needs assessment and collecting data on certain metrics to monitor program quality. However, there was variation in the standardization of needs assessments in terms of quality, regularity, and use of the needs assessment in decision-making.

**Conducting Needs Assessments.**

All three schools reported relying on their university partners to conduct needs assessments. Across the sites, stakeholders reported a lack of standardization on how and how often the needs assessments were conducted and how the resulting data were used. School B and School C each reported conducting two needs assessments since their respective founding years. School A and School B appear to have strong processes in place to use the data program quality metrics, whereas School C appears not to have a formal process in place. However, the principal at School C reported regular monitoring of program enrollment data. At School C, the data team also reported collecting evidence regularly to track attendance, discipline referrals, student learning, and community participation in health services. The School A operations team reported regularly collecting data from after-school satisfaction surveys, attendance records,

student behavior referrals, and academic records to review the effects of programming on students.

[Data] drives everything. So, it's not a subset of our decision making, it is the decision making. So when we're looking at our students data academically, that's easy to make academic decisions. When you're looking at our student's data for let's say, behavior referrals, anything that's going to drive a lot of [discussion]and a lot of what we're asking. If we know that we've heard from 100 parents that say they can't afford eyeglasses, then we know we need to find the copay money for at least 100 students. So, all of that data is driving the decision-making admission. And of course, improvement every school year. So, if we took 50 kids to the eye doctor last year, then we're going to up the ante this year, because we know the need is still there.

– *School Principal*

**Use of Data in Decision-Making.** We lack evidence in this analysis to report on how data analysis was handled at each site, but the schools all used data to some extent in their decision-making processes. School A conducted a needs assessment every other year and reported using the data to inform programming. For example, School A used needs assessment data to confirm that their efforts toward providing health care were helping the community; over the course of 2 years of needs assessment data, health care dropped from the number one need in the community to the fifth. In addition to the needs assessments, At School B, the data team captured information on parent engagement, needs requests, participation in expanded learning activities, student behavior, and academic grades. The data were reported to the operations team and cabinet so they could subsequently make programming and funding decisions. For example, the needs assessment revealed that students were not playing sports because they could not get to a physician's office for the required physicals and/or vaccinations. To address the concern, CPS staff at School B worked with coaches to provide transportation assistance to medical appointments for students. By contrast, the School C director reported no formal process for assessing satisfaction or success of programs. However, the principal confirmed that the number of students and families accessing services was monitored and used for decision-making.

**Data Sharing.** At the time of the interviews with stakeholders in 2021, none of the three schools had established formal data sharing agreements among partners. However, stakeholders from each site did express how useful a data sharing agreement would be for allowing coordinators to report more accurately on student outcomes and adjust programming and services as needed. As the principal at School C stated, "there definitely could be some improvement upon the data sharing piece and making sure that the Director of the Community

Partnership School has the same level of access as the principal and vice versa. So, we're all having the same platform data consistently." Data collection, sharing, analysis, and use at all three schools might have improved over time, as there have been subsequent executed data sharing agreements between school districts and the UCF Center for Community Schools and Learning Circle Software. AIR will further explore data practices at CPS sites in Task 2 of this project.

## E. Certification

Stakeholders from all three sites expressed concerns about the intense work involved in completing the certification process yet acknowledged how helpful the standards were in creating goals for CPS. All three schools were certified Community Partnership Schools. School A also had an affirmation certification review in 2021. During stakeholder interviews, all three CPS sites discussed undergoing the certification process and preparing for or undergoing affirmation review. One concern from the School A district partner was that having so many requirements for certification would lead to more of a cookie-cutter kind of program versus individualized Community Partnership Schools. During the interview, the district representative shared the following:

I felt like this last year that I was at [school], we spent so much focus and time in our cabinet meetings talking about what we had to do to become certified. And to be honest, a lot of that stuff I didn't care about, I wanted to help my families. And when doing that, we meet those requirements, but I hated to feel like we were talking about what we had to do to become certified. That's not what the program was ever meant to be in my opinion.

– District Partner

The School B district partner suggested it might be helpful to visit other schools for mentorship to understand their experience with the certification process and meeting the standards.

Despite some frustration with the intensity of the certification process, when asked how the standards are useful, all three of the site directors noted that the standards for certification were helpful in providing a framework for the cabinet to create goals. The director at School C added that the certification process offers an ideal opportunity for shared leadership and co-ownership of supporting the standards, suggesting that with 12 standards and six partners, each partner could take ownership of two standards. However, this type of collaboration did not take place at School C; instead the nonprofit partner took on more of the standards than the other partners. This is an indication of a potentially unbalanced partnership at School C, yet outcomes for students remained positive.



## F. Programs

At all three schools, principals and directors shared that they believed students would be more successful in the classroom if they and their families were well cared for outside of school hours. Robust academic and enrichment offerings for students and parents (positive adult interactions with the school) at each site might have also contributed to improved student outcomes at these schools. Sites that could rely on school day staff to support after-school programs and those that benefited from integrated funding sources appeared to be able to provide more enrichment activities and programming. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, sites that leveraged school day staff, such as teachers, and braided funding sources reported more resilience in programming than those relying more on volunteers.

Partner agencies at each of the three schools offered different types of programming, with the community nonprofits focusing primarily on offering expanded learning and enrichment opportunities and health partners focused on providing health services. The school, nonprofit, and university partners shared responsibility for providing academic supports. University and district partners contributed to programming primarily by providing ancillary supports (i.e., volunteers, transportation, and space) for schools to carry out services and programs. We describe the specific programs offered in each focus area below.

**Enrichment Activities.** All three schools offered robust after-school enrichment activities for students. At School C, volunteers and staff from partner organizations, such as Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, and the United Way; city officials; and church representatives ran programs for sports; science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM); tutoring; and more. A local college also provided funding so students could attend a week-long camp to support social and emotional learning during the summer. At School B, the Boys and Girls Club handled the responsibilities of expanded learning programming until the nonprofit partner secured funding to hire a part-time expanded learning coordinator. This partner also raised funds to support the renovation of a space exclusively for expanded learning. Programs offered at School B included mentorship, athletics, STEAM, volunteering opportunities, and an initiative where local law enforcement officers met with students to find common ground and address concerns in their community. School A offered after-school academic and enrichment programs. Typically, at School A, volunteers led enrichment activities such as step team, drum line, running team, art, musical theater, baseball, and Spanish language lessons. Overall, the enrichment opportunities for students were designed to instill transferrable skills that would equip students for current and future applications.

**Academic, Preschool, and Adult Offerings.** Academic programming at all three sites included tutoring (specifically in math and reading) and student mentorship. At all schools, students

were grouped based in their level of need and tutored in small groups. Sites differed in academic programming for preschool-age children and adults. School C offered universal pre-K for 4-year-olds and a program from 3-year-olds with special needs who might require extra support to be on track with others starting kindergarten at age 5. For adults, School C supported parents and community members in gaining full-time employment and offered several adult education courses, although the school had not had much participation. School A offered preschool care for 3-year-olds through district funding as well as a suite of programs geared toward adults, including financial literacy classes and a GED program. School A also had an incentive program that rewarded parents for participating in adult education workshops, parent teacher conferences, family nights, and meetings with the wellness coordinator to establish personal goals. School B did not offer early learning programs; however, it did have academic opportunities to explore postsecondary education and offered related parent programming such as financial aid night and a college kickoff event.

**Wellness Services.** The three schools reported leveraging their health partners to provide wellness services; principals and directors noted the positive impact that access to health services had on the community's physical and mental well-being as well as on student learning outcomes. The health partners for each of the three sites provided free general medical, dental, vision, and mental health services for students and the community. At School A and School B, CPS established on-site clinics to serve students and families more easily. At School A, students also had access to a student health ambassador program to learn about the medical field and health and wellness at the on-site health clinic. School C's goal is to offer on-site health services, but in 2022 it provided transportation for students to their health partner's off-site clinic. Principals and directors at each site noted the positive impact that access to health services had on the community's physical and mental well-being and student learning abilities.

I can remember when I first started this summer, we did an immunization drive and wellness checks . . . not only were our students utilizing it, but it was students from nearby schools that actually came and got their wellness check and their immunizations done. So, I mean, it impacted on a larger scale, which was very encouraging, and I thought it was a neat idea.

*– School principal*

**Community Support.** Beyond academic and health services for families and community members, nonprofit, school, district, and university partners at each of the three schools offered a myriad of tangible resources to support families. On the basis of the results of needs assessments, families asking directly for support, and referrals from others, the three schools assisted in the following areas: transportation, food, housing, finances, clothing, and other

material necessities. In addition, the CPS directors and family engagement coordinators provided referrals for and information on accessible government programs (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]) and community resources.

**Challenges.** Sites reported experiencing two primary challenges to offering robust programming: (a) communicating about available programs and services and (b) staffing programs, particularly during the pandemic. Directors and principals shared difficulties communicating with teachers, students, and families about the full range of CPS services available. The School B director shared a potential strategy to address this lack of awareness: “with more work towards ensuring staff, teachers, students and administration are well-informed of the [CPS] offerings, utilization will increase, trust will grow, and integration will deepen.” Lack of awareness about CPS offerings was also identified in certification documentation, with reviewers recommending a dedicated and identifiable permanent space for CPS programs, services, and staff to improve understanding and partnership visibility. In addition, schools relying largely on volunteers prior to the pandemic were left with minimal capacity to continue operations. Because of stricter school access policies during the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers and other community mentors were not allowed on campus. School A asked teachers to fill the after-school vacancies; however, asking teachers to fill in after school for volunteers was overly taxing on teachers, and programming suffered, according to a district representative.

You can only ask your teachers to do so much. I think that when we start draining them to the point where we're asking them to stay until five o'clock and teach things like ballet and gardening. And so, a lot of our enrichment activities took a big hit during the pandemic. And then the problem is a lot of those people that were volunteering, now are working different kinds of jobs that didn't allow them to come back when we did open back up.

– District Representative

## G. Implementation Challenges

When focusing on how the three schools implemented the CPS model, five overarching challenges emerged from our analysis of qualitative data:

1. Managing staffing issues of retention, hiring, onboarding, and relationship building
2. Developing partner investment and promoting shared leadership
3. Clarifying roles for all staff
4. Increasing parent and student engagement
5. Ensuring access to data and capacity for data analysis

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of these challenges during the 2019–21 school years, especially regarding parent engagement, as well as preventing visitors from coming to schools for after-school programming. We describe these challenges in more detail below.

**Staffing.** Across the three schools of focus, all mentioned staff hiring and turnover as major implementation challenges resulting in difficulties building relationships, onboarding, promoting buy-in for the CPS model, and providing all programs and services. Interviewees from all three schools discussed turnover among staff as well as challenges with turnover at the administration and partner agency level. Turnover at the administration and partner agency level created challenges for the schools in building relationships across partners, which take time to establish, whereas turnover at the staff level necessitated onboarding for new staff and promoting buy-in to the CPS model.

Respondents underlined lack of adequate staff as affecting all parts of implementation, especially providing programs and services that overburdened existing staff. Respondents also noted the importance of recruitment and that it can take time to find the right person for each role. They emphasized that having open positions put a strain on directors to cover multiple roles, which was not sustainable. For one school, respondents emphasized the need to find the right person to serve as CPS director, highlighting the need for experience in education and challenges when a director does not have experience in how a school operates. For example, one CPS director discussed delays in hiring a family and community coordinator because of the need for an individual who spoke Spanish and English. Although the director stressed the importance of having bilingual staff to communicate with families in Spanish and complete necessary forms in English, the prolonged recruitment process resulted in the director taking on multiple roles. In another case, a parent outreach coordinator was also expected to coordinate all services, which was described as not sustainable in a readiness assessment. Furthermore, with staffing turnover, respondents discussed the need for constantly onboarding and reorienting new staff to understand the existing vision and mission of the CPS model.

**Developing Partner Investment and Promoting Shared Decision-Making.** Respondents discussed the need for greater investment from partners. Although two of the schools said they have very deep and established partnerships, at School B, the CPS director shared disappointment regarding engagement of the university partner. The director described an uneven partnership, with expectations that the university partner would contribute to writing grants for funding for the school, as well as providing interns and volunteers, but ultimately the university partner did not provide these supports. As discussed in the section on decision-making, there was uneven engagement from partners in cabinet meetings and in decision-making at all schools. In one case, a certification assessment revealed that there was not a clear

process in the cabinet for resolving partnership concerns and confusion over which partner should lead the meetings. The affirmation review added that the nonprofit was more visible than other partners at the school with a lack of clear authentic engagement of all four core partners. A subsequent interview with a district representative revealed a strategy to rotate the chair between the partner organizations to promote shared leadership and managing partner relationships.

**Clarifying Roles in the CPS Model.** At two schools, respondents shared a need for better understanding of the CPS model vision and roles among staff and teachers. In addition to partner investment, there was a lack of understanding of the CPS model among teachers and staff at each school. Respondents at two schools noted the need for good onboarding for staff and teachers to ensure that staff understand the roles of each partner as well as the four core positions. Some staff noted confusion regarding referrals to social workers and guidance counselors as opposed to CPS positions.

**Parent and Student Engagement.** All three schools experienced challenges with parent engagement. Respondents from two schools discussed poverty as a major barrier to parent engagement, explaining that many parents had to prioritize employment and meeting basic needs over participating in school programs. For example, despite promoting adult education services, one school reported challenges with participation, with respondents noting that parents were focused on working and did not have time to attend events or workshops. Another school highlighted mobility of families as a barrier to engagement, as well as serving a population with many Spanish speakers but not having bilingual staff in all roles. Readiness assessments for two schools focused on parent engagement, with one suggesting intentional recruitment of parents and another advocating for ensuring the parent liaison position be filled on the operations committee. The three schools appeared to be focused more on challenges with parent engagement than student engagement but did note some difficulty in getting students to access health services. Although this was not an issue for the school with an on-site clinic, respondents there said that utilization would increase even more with additional health staff, such as another doctor and a full-time nurse, or more rooms. As mentioned in the section on data use, respondents at another school described a finding from their needs assessment that revealed that many students were not playing sports or participating in after-school activities because they lacked transportation to get their medical physical exams. This improved after the school established an on-site clinic. At a third school, medical services were offered to students through a mobile unit, but utilization was reported to be low, even more so after the clinic moved to a new facility off site, despite the health partner providing transportation.

**Data Sharing and Analysis.** Respondents from the three schools also discussed challenges related to data tracking and sharing, funding for programming, and the COVID-19 pandemic. As discussed in the previous section on data, respondents from the three schools shared data-related challenges (e.g., establishing data sharing agreements and ensuring access to data between the school district and core partners). For School B, a statement of work noted that some partners providing after-school programming had separate data sharing agreements with the school district but did not share data with the CPS director. However, the school and CPS director were working to reach agreements with the after-school programming providers to allow for examining the impact of consistent after-school programming on student outcomes. At School C, respondents noted that the CPS director had access to programming and referral data, whereas the principal had access to academic data, but it was difficult for the director and the principal to share the information with each other. The CPS director also noted wanting to look beyond descriptive information on student attendance to further analysis and trends to see what was working well and what could be improved but lacked the data and staff support to do so.

**Other Challenges.** Regarding funding, respondents from all three schools discussed looking for additional funding, primarily to sustain programming after the grant ends. This was seen as the biggest challenge to sustainability. Last, as noted earlier, interviews were conducted during the 2019–21 school years, when all schools were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents from the three schools described how the pandemic exacerbated challenges with parent engagement and created difficulties with programming, given that visitors were not allowed on school campuses.

## H. Implementation Successes

Although there were many challenges, respondents at the three schools discussed the strategies they used to successfully implement the CPS model. We identified five strategies and provide more detail on each one below.

Using these strategies, we identified the following primary areas of success in our analysis:

1. Developing strong, engaged, and committed partnerships
2. Fostering a good school climate and culture with trust and respect
3. Integrating the CPS director into the school environment
4. Engaging communities and students
5. Providing consistent academic programming, including tutoring and mentoring



**Strong Partnerships.** All of the schools described strong collaboration with their partner organizations, with respondents at two schools emphasizing that having a long-term memorandum of understanding with core partners promoted commitment and engagement despite changes in individual staff members. Although one school noted challenges with engaging the university partner, the other two schools described strong engagement with the university partners. One school, for example, shared that the university partner played an active role in committees and in providing tutoring, capacity building, and a teacher pipeline; this school emphasized the strong role of core partners in shared governance. One school emphasized strong partnerships with the district as well, especially providing support with new programs and activities. One CPS director described the biggest success as being the partnerships:

*The partnerships with CHS, the partnership with community health, and the district's commitment to make this work. It's a win-win for everyone. It really is.*

*– CPS Director*

**Positive School Culture and Climate.** Across the schools, respondents described having a culture of trust and respect within their schools (e.g., improving staff morale by acknowledging individuals for their contributions and ensuring that teachers feel supported and recognized). Respondents at School A noted the importance given to promoting self-care for students, teachers, and administrators; embedding mental and physical health for students into school culture; and providing training and professional development for staff.

**Strong Integration of the CPS Director and Staff Into the School Environment.** Building on the school culture and climate, respondents noted the importance of assimilating the CPS director into the school through building good relationships among the director, principal, and other school staff; joining traditional school meetings; and having formal and integrated processes, such as those for service referrals. Respondents described successful implementation of the CPS model at one school as being in part due to a supportive principal, a good relationship between the principal and the CPS director, and having the CPS director participate in traditional school meetings and weekly school leadership team meetings to promote inclusiveness and working well together. In addition to the principal supporting the CPS director, at this school, respondents noted that the CPS director recognized teachers and worked to build good relationships with school staff. In another school, the affirmation review described strong integration of the CPS model with school and CPS staff working together without barriers, with a team culture of everyone working together for the common good, and where processes such as those for service or resource referrals, or parental consent, are clear and formalized in a central system. At School B, respondents said that the CPS director built



good relationships with the principal and other colleagues and that the director had a good understanding of the partnership and structures in the CPS model.

**Community and Student Engagement.** Respondents from all three schools highlighted the role of community engagement in supporting the CPS model (e.g., having support from local churches, volunteers and mentors from the community, and community members participating in food drives and other events). In one school, respondents discussed strong engagement with the local government, with the city investing in the CPS model at the school by providing funding and in-kind resources. Additionally, at another school, respondents noted a strong student leadership council with students engaged and energized about offerings with CPS model implementation. Schools reported having both challenges and successes with promoting student engagement.

You see so much more student interaction. I get emails from students when I did school of the month, I had over a hundred students from [school] telling me why they thought that their school was full of heroes. Just I get so much more communication from the schools, from the students. So that's been really, I think the students really feel empowered. They just had an election and one of the students didn't feel like everything was done as it should have been done, and that student was empowered to email the superintendent and the principal to say my name is, they gave a really rational argument about the whole process and how they thought it could be done differently and how they were disappointed with the outcome. . . . I mean it was just this really mature student advocacy on behalf of himself. And that's what we really want, right? And so seeing the difference in the students and the students seem so much more engaged and proud of their school. Everybody's very proud of what's happening there and it seems like the trajectory . . . and graduation rates increased. Student recruitments increased. They don't have trouble filling vacancies for the most part. It's been transformational, this partnership has been.

– *District Partner*

**Consistent Academic Programming.** All three schools provided robust academic offerings for students, which might have contributed to improved student outcomes at these schools. The schools, nonprofit partners, and university partners shared responsibility for providing academic supports. At the three sites, academic programming included student mentorship as well as tutoring in math and reading. Students were grouped by level of need and tutored in small groups.

## I. Conclusion

Overall, we examined what implementation looked like in schools shown to demonstrate improvement on specific student outcomes, including disciplinary incidents, performance on state assessments in reading and mathematics, and cumulative GPA.

Overall, the successful practices identified included developing strong partnerships, fostering a school climate of trust and respect, good integration of the CPS director into the school environment, promoting community engagement, and providing robust academic programming. Fostering a positive school culture of trust and respect could improve morale and promote staff retention to ensure optimal provision of services for CPS model implementation. Building strong relationships between directors and principals as well as school staff could result in more effective referral processes and use of programs and resources in the CPS model. Engaging community members and organizations could enhance resources available, as well as energize students about the programs and offerings with the CPS model implementation. The investment in academic programming with tutoring and mentoring could be related to improved performance in reading, mathematics, and cumulative GPA. Additionally, focusing on the whole child and providing referrals for services, resources, and programs could help reduce disciplinary incidents.

In reviewing the three schools, we found key challenges to overcome as well as necessary structures for successful implementation. It was critical for all partners, staff, and teachers to have a shared understanding of the vision for CPS model implementation. We found three critical needs for roles and relationships: (a) having a director with the necessary qualifications, (b) making sure all four dedicated CPS staff positions are filled, and (c) promoting good relationships between directors and principals. We found that a functional model of operation for decision-making bodies relied on active participation of the four core partners in cabinet meetings, an active operations team, the CPS director sharing information between teams, and facilitation of additional committees to gain input from other stakeholders. Although all of the schools were conducting regular needs assessments, they were still in the process of finalizing data sharing agreements with partners. All of the schools were certified and shared that despite substantial documentation and effort required, the standards provided a helpful framework for leadership bodies to set goals. All three schools provided academic and enrichment programming as well as wellness services. Across the three schools, the key challenges included staffing retention, hiring, onboarding, and relationship building; developing partner investment and promoting shared leadership; clarifying roles for all staff; and increasing parent and student engagement.

Through a targeted analysis of qualitative data sources from the 2022 evaluation as well as more recent documents, we identified potential promising strategies, necessary structures for implementation, and critical challenges across three schools that showed improved student outcomes. Although we are not able to definitively determine that these promising practices led to improved student outcomes, we believe that it is useful to detail these findings for consideration among schools implementing the CPS model and for future research. Although we included three schools with improvements in certain student outcomes from the 2015–16 to 2018–19 school years, these findings should be viewed with caution in terms of consideration for replication, because we do not have student outcome data for subsequent years to determine whether these outcomes were sustained.

## **Appendix. Executive Summary from 2022 Report**

# Community Partnership Schools

## An Implementation and Effectiveness Evaluation: Key Findings

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*American institutes for Research*

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## Introduction

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Starting in the 2014–15 school year, the Florida legislature began providing state funding to support the replication and sustainability of the Community Partnership Schools™ (CPS) model. The purpose of the CPS model is to provide approximately \$400,000 to \$500,000 annually in additional funding to participating schools to support the implementation of a comprehensive community schools model. The CPS model is predicated on providing students and their families with access to a wide variety of learning opportunities and health and wellness supports provided through a defined set of key partnerships involving the school district, a lead social service agency, a health care provider, and a university. Leveraging the principles established by the larger community school movement (Blank et al., 2021; Maier et al., 2017), the CPS model seeks to promote student growth and development by removing barriers to learning and providing access to new, integrated learning opportunities oriented toward supporting whole child development. The CPS model—initially developed in 2010 at Evans High School, in Orlando, Florida, and based on the success of that effort<sup>4</sup>—has been replicated in 26 schools across 17 school districts in the state.

### AIR's Scope of Work Involved:

1. Developing a set of key performance indicators for the Initiative.
2. An implementation study that included 15 CPS sites that began implementation during the 2019–20 school year or earlier
3. An effectiveness evaluation of 11 CPS schools that were in at least their second year of implementation as of the 2018–19 school year.

The University of Central Florida's (UCF's) Center for Community Schools (the UCF Center) plays a key role in administering the CPS grant program, providing technical assistance (TA) and professional development related to supporting implementation of the model at new CPS sites and managing a certification process for schools enrolled in the Initiative.

In spring 2020, the UCF Center contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct an implementation and effectiveness evaluation of the CPS model. This brief details findings specifically from the implementation and effectiveness evaluation conducted by AIR.

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<sup>4</sup> Information taken from the University of Central Florida Community Partnership Schools website: <https://ccie.ucf.edu/communityschools/schools/>

## Evaluation Questions and Methods

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The study conducted by AIR addressed evaluation questions related to both CPS implementation and effectiveness.

### **Questions related to implementation included:**

1. To what extent are CPS schools implementing the model with fidelity?
2. How does implementation of the CPS model in schools that have received certification or are seeking certification compare with the level of implementation fidelity in schools that are not certified?
3. What strategies and supports for implementation of the CPS model are associated with high-quality implementation in schools?
4. To what extent does the TA provided by UCF support the implementation of the CPS model, and what types of services are most useful in supporting implementation with high fidelity?
5. What experiences are students having in afterschool and expanded learning programming being provided by CPS-funded schools?

To answer these questions, the evaluation team relied on three primary data sources:

1. Interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders associated with CPS model implementation, including CPS school directors, school administrators, school-based coordinators, partner agency representatives, and UCF Center technical assistants.
2. A qualitative analysis of extant documents, including CPS grant scope of work documents, certification assessments, and quarterly reports provided by schools receiving CPS funding.
3. A survey to obtain information about the types of activities students were participating in after school, the experiences they had in programming, and the way they perceived they had benefited from their participation.

### **Questions related to effectiveness included:**

1. What effect did attending a CPS have on student outcomes compared with outcomes of students attending similar schools not implementing the CPS model?
2. What effect did attending a more mature CPS have on student outcomes compared with outcomes of students enrolled in similar schools not implementing the CPS model?



3. What effect did attending a CPS have on student outcomes among certain subpopulations of students compared with outcomes of students from the same subpopulations attending similar schools not implementing the CPS model?

To answer these questions, the evaluation team conducted a *comparative interrupted time series analysis*, relying on school- and student-level data provided by the Florida Department of Education. In light of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a decision was made by the evaluation team in conjunction with the UCF Center to assess model effectiveness for the model implementation period ranging from the 2015–16 to 2018–19 school years. In this sense, the effectiveness analysis conducted by the evaluation team represents an examination of effects from *early implementation of the CPS model* at a subset of early adopting schools.

## Implementation Evaluation Findings

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### Shared Vision

**Summary:** The vision for implementation shapes the services and opportunities that are instantiated as part of the initiative. Understanding of the CPS model by all partners is key to ensuring that the vision aligns with the standards and is contextually appropriate for the school and community.

**Challenges to establishing a shared vision include:** (1) Turnover in key stakeholders (e.g., partner representatives, school administration, directors); and (2) When any one partner dominates the vision OR is not fully committed, resulting in a *one-legged stool* to signify the unequal nature of the partnership.

**Promising practices include:** (1) Implementing additional structures to ensure equal representation (i.e. partners taking turns in establishing meeting agendas); and (2) Proper onboarding of partner stakeholders to understand the CPS model and context and needs of the school and community.

### Shared Decision Making

**Summary:** Establishing regular formal structures for authentic shared decision making among partners is a key driver of effective implementation. Ensuring shared decision making requires additional support in communication structures, formal processes for guaranteeing that the agenda is not dominated by any single partner and that frequent touch points exist among all key stakeholders.

**Challenges to shared decision-making include:** (1) When one partner is given the opportunity to dominate the agenda for meetings and decisions; (2) An excessive amount of formal meetings and decision-making bodies that can overburden and confuse partners; and (3) Lack of clarity around the expectations and roles of each partner according to the CPS framework.

**Promising practices include:** (1) School principal investment in the model and frequent collaboration with the director; (2) Having a centralized location for meeting notes, agendas, and supporting documents; and (3) Additional formal structures in place to support shared decision making, including voting rules for decision making and establishing a cadence for times when each partner leads the agenda and facilitates meetings.

## Communication

**Summary:** In schools in which consistent formal and informal communication takes place between the school administration and director, respondents reported that the initiative was embedded in the school day. Directors who facilitated communication among partners through formal means reported greater partner cohesion.

**Challenges to effective communication include:** (1) Lack of opportunities to share information between directors and school administration, which can lead to a model of separate services in one school rather than a cohesive school initiative; and (2) Lack of means to share information and communicate regularly with partners, which may lead to disinvestment.

**Promising practices include:** (1) An “open-door policy” between the director and administration, including frequent formal and informal communication; (2) Including the director in school administration and staffing meetings regularly (e.g., administrative team, grade-level meetings) to facilitate integration; (3) Structured regular communication pathways with key partner agency stakeholders; and (4) A robust communication plan for caregivers in place via both formal methods (e.g., social media, fliers, text message) and informal (e.g., conversations at drop-off and pick up) to ensure engagement and development of trusting relationships with families..

## Data Use in Decision Making

**Summary:** The use of data to drive decision making is built into the process of certification. All respondents noted that important data on needs, as well as progress, and program/service quality were key to ensuring successful implementation of the model.

**Challenges to data use include:** (1) A lack of data-sharing agreements between districts and other partners, which leads to many sites’ being unable to access key data points, such as student-related indicators; and (2) Directors’ who may lack training or background knowledge of the types of data from each partner and lack capacity and knowledge to analyze and understand data.

**Promising practices include:** (1) Directors leveraging the additional capacity provided by key partners in order to collect and understand related data and incorporate it into the needs assessments; and (2) School-day and program staff' having mechanisms to contribute data (e.g., referrals, observational notes, surveys), leading to more robust understanding of needs and implementation progress and engaging a broader group of stakeholders in continuous improvement.

## Certification Process

**Summary:** The standards and guiding indicators in the certification process generally serve as a roadmap for schools, which then allows schools to stay focused on the key components of implementing the CPS model with fidelity. The standards were also reported in some schools to be key drivers of the vision for CPS implementation.

**Challenges with certification include:** (1) The large number of standards and aligned indicators and associated paperwork and evidence requirements can be onerous to compile and complete and require additional supports in order to complete the process successfully; (2) If partners are not aligned in vision or investment in the model, the certification process will be more challenging and less meaningful in driving implementation; and (3) The lack of variation in standards and requirements to better account for local context and needs, which can result in some level of disinvestment from partners in the process.

**Promising Practices include:** (1) Mentorship from schools that had been through the certification process; (2) One-on-one support from the UCF Center, which was noted as helpful by interviewees; (3) Partner agencies with additional internal capacity to provide directors with one-on-one supports and documents to assist with planning for certification; and (4) Directors who participated in the peer review process.

## Afterschool Activity Survey Findings

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### Opportunities for Programming

**FINDING:** Students are largely being given opportunities to engage in a wide variety of programming that addresses their academic and social and emotional skills and supports growth in their postsecondary pathways. Students reported most commonly participating in activities specifically related to sports/recreation, the arts, and STEM. A smaller subset of students (approximately 20% of survey respondents) reported receiving a lot of extra help in mathematics and reading/ELA coursework.

## Programming Experiences

**FINDING:** Most students reported having skill-building experiences while participating in afterschool programs and a positive perception of the activity leaders providing the activities they participated in during the school year. However, perceptions of other youth participating in programming were generally less positive, which is important because students were also more apt to report an inclination to continuing participating in afterschool programming in the next school year if they reported more positive experiences with the other students attending afterschool activities.

## Programming Benefits

**FINDING:** The most common ways students reported benefiting from participating in afterschool programming was (1) Having positive social interactions; (2) Developing new interests; and (3) Developing a better self-concept.

## Key Effectiveness Evaluation Findings

**FINDING:** The most consistent significant, positive effects (meaning in the desired direction) associated with being enrolled in an CPS school were related to outcomes in school day attendance and discipline-related outcomes during the first year of CPS implementation. Overall, receipt of CPS funding was associated with more school days attended (2% to 6% more days or an additional 4 to 11 days of school day attendance in CPS schools) and fewer disciplinary incidents (9% to 24% fewer incidents) than in the matched comparison schools.

**FINDING:** Positive academic outcomes were also found for Black students in mathematics performance (+8% difference in scores) and white students in ELA assessment performance (+9% difference in scores) during the first year of CPS implementation relative to comparison students.

**FINDING:** Some significant negative effects were also observed in CPS schools in the first year of initiative implementation, particularly among female students in relation to school day absences and mathematics performance when compared with female students in the matched comparison groups. These findings may warrant further attention in future evaluation efforts.

### Outcomes Examined

#### Attendance

- Days present
- Days absent
- Unexcused absences

#### Behavior

- Number of disciplinary incidences
- School days missed due to incidences

#### Academic Performance

- Mathematics assessments
- English/Language Arts assessments

## Recommendations

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1. **Ensure that all four partners are equally engaged in setting the vision and driving implementation of the CPS model.**
2. **Work to facilitate data sharing agreements between districts and partners because the absence of these agreements and a lack of means to easily share data among partners creates significant barriers to implementing a model that is aligned with data-driven decision making.**
3. **Strengthen opportunities to share best practices and strategies for addressing challenges among all partners and directors.**
4. **Increase approaches that support the uptake of the supports that the UCF Center offers to better ensure all directors are receiving the same level of interaction and support.**
5. **Consider adopting a point-of-service afterschool quality measure to support efforts to enhance the quality of expanded learning offerings.**
6. **Adopt measures that will allow for the assessment of broader possible outcomes derived from implementation of the CPS model.**
7. **Continue to take steps to capture dosage data and use this information to evaluate program effectiveness.**

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