

1 State of Arkansas  
2 92nd General Assembly  
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SR 25

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5 By: Senators Elliott, J. Hendren

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7 **SENATE RESOLUTION**

8 TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN  
9 IMPROVING ACHIEVEMENT AND STRENGTHENING FAMILY AND  
10 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

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13 **Subtitle**

14 TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY  
15 SCHOOLS IN IMPROVING ACHIEVEMENT AND  
16 STRENGTHENING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY  
17 ENGAGEMENT.

18  
19 WHEREAS, every child should be able to grow up with the opportunity to  
20 achieve his or her dreams and contribute to the well-being of society, and  
21 every community deserves a public school system that fully delivers on that  
22 promise; and

23  
24 WHEREAS, according to the most recent data, 63% of Arkansas students,  
25 and in some schools as many as 98%, qualify for free or reduced lunch, which  
26 means the students live in lower income households; and as a result, some  
27 students may face more challenges than others in succeeding in school and in  
28 life and need additional support; and

29  
30 WHEREAS, so students can reach full potential, community schools  
31 provide comprehensive programs and services that are carefully selected to  
32 meet the unique needs of students and families that may be dealing with a  
33 lack of stable housing, inadequate medical and dental care, hunger, trauma,  
34 or exposure to violence; and

35  
36 WHEREAS, since some families cannot afford to provide their children



1 with enrichment opportunities and additional academic support outside of  
2 school, community schools play a vital role in ensuring that all students  
3 have access to the learning and enrichment opportunities that support  
4 academic and life success; and

5  
6 WHEREAS, according to a report from the Learning Policy Institute, the  
7 4 key pillars of an evidence-based community schools approach are integrated  
8 student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities,  
9 active family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and  
10 practices; and the pillars promote conditions and practices found in high-  
11 quality schools, as well as address out-of-school barriers to learning; and  
12

13 WHEREAS, research shows that community school interventions can result  
14 in improvements in a variety of student outcomes, including better  
15 attendance, academic achievement, reduction of racial and economic  
16 achievement gaps, and higher high school graduation rates; and  
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18 WHEREAS, ForwARd Arkansas, the Arkansas Association of Educational  
19 Administrators, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, and the  
20 Arkansas Coalition for Community Schools support implementation of community  
21 schools as a strategy for school improvement, particularly in areas of high  
22 poverty; and  
23

24 WHEREAS, research shows that these programs offer a strong return on  
25 investment, providing up to \$15 for every \$1 invested in community schools;  
26 and  
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28 WHEREAS, federal funding can be used to support community schools, and  
29 research demonstrates that community schools meet the standard under the  
30 Every Student Succeeds Act for evidence-based approaches to support schools  
31 identified for comprehensive and targeted support and intervention; and  
32

33 WHEREAS, a community school is a school that includes each of the  
34 following:

35 (1) Integrated student supports, which address out-of-school  
36 barriers to learning through partnerships with social and health service

1 agencies and providers, coordinated by a community school director, including  
2 without limitation medical, dental, vision, and mental health care services,  
3 and counselors to assist with housing, transportation, nutrition,  
4 immigration, and criminal justice issues;

5 (2) Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities,  
6 including before school, afterschool, weekend and summer programs, which  
7 provide additional academic instruction, individualized academic support,  
8 enrichment activities, or learning opportunities that emphasize real world  
9 learning and community problem-solving, including without limitation art,  
10 music, drama, creative writing, applied learning experience with engineering  
11 or science, tutoring, homework help, and recreational programs that enhance  
12 and are consistent with the school's curriculum;

13 (3) Active family and community engagement, which brings  
14 students' families and the community into the school as partners in a  
15 student's education and makes the school a neighborhood hub providing adults  
16 with educational opportunities, including without limitation English as a  
17 Second Language classes, computer skills, adult literacy, art, and other  
18 programs that bring in community members for meetings and events; and

19 (4) Collaborative leadership and practices, which build a  
20 culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility  
21 using strategies which at a minimum shall include a school-based leadership  
22 team, a community school director, and a community-wide leadership team,  
23 including without limitation other leadership or governance teams, teacher  
24 learning communities, and other staff to manage the complex joint work of  
25 school and community organizations; and

26  
27 WHEREAS, a community school is also a school that uses the following  
28 mechanisms:

29 (1) An annual needs and assets assessment of and by both the  
30 school and community, including student demographics, academic achievement,  
31 school climate, and other relevant school and community-level information,  
32 and a review of needs and assets in the 4 key pillars;

33 (2) A community school plan that sets forth how educators,  
34 school staff, government agencies, and community partners will use and  
35 leverage all available assets to meet specific student and family needs in  
36 order to improve opportunities and outcomes for students;

1           (3) A school-based leadership team that leads the annual needs  
2 and assets assessment and develops and oversees implementation of the  
3 community school plan; and

4           (4) A dedicated full-time community school director at each  
5 community school site whose primary responsibilities include leading the  
6 needs and assets analysis and facilitating the development and implementation  
7 of the community school plan in collaboration with other members of the  
8 school-based leadership team; and

9  
10           WHEREAS, the Arkansas community and family engagement framework was  
11 developed to support districts, schools, and communities with engagement  
12 opportunities and information to assist schools with implementation  
13 strategies for parent involvement plans that may include the community school  
14 structure; and

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16           WHEREAS, leaders of Arkansas schools understand that community schools  
17 are an evidence-based strategy for improving achievement of all students,

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19 NOW THEREFORE,

20 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE  
21 STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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23           THAT the Senate strongly supports the successful implementation of  
24 community schools as an evidence-based strategy to provide students with  
25 equitable access to a high quality education, effective family and community  
26 engagement, and an improved outcome.