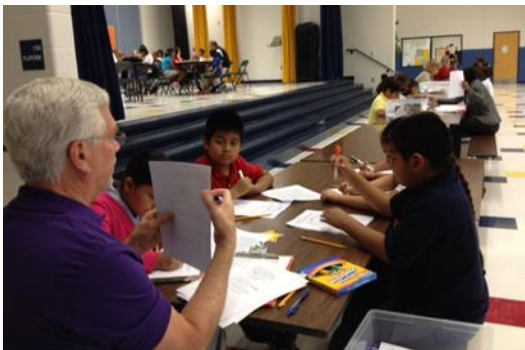


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## Cincinnati Community Learning Centers and Teacher Support



Cincinnati Community Learning Centers (CLCs) serve as hubs for community services, providing a system of integrated partnerships that promote academic excellence and offer recreational, educational, social, health, civic and cultural opportunities for students, families and communities.

These CLCs began in 2001 with the \$1 billion Facilities Master Plan approved by tax payers to construct new buildings. Cincinnati Public Schools engaged a cross section of stakeholders (including the site-based governing body, LSDMC) to develop a shared vision for each new building and to plan for partnerships and programs that would meet the needs of the students, families and communities. This plan became the blueprint for the design of each school as a CLC.

The goal of the CLC is to support student's achievement, revitalize neighborhoods, and maximize the community's return on its investment in public schools. Each Community Learning Center includes a full time Resource Coordinator who knows the needs of the school, families and community. Resource coordination is the key to the success of the CLC, as partnerships must be recruited, developed, and supported to meet the needs of the student, impact the school's success and reflect the community interest. The CLC programs and services are aligned to school goals and are affordable and accessible.

This model supports students, families and neighborhoods and in turn supports teachers. The Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT) President, Julie Sellers, is a supporter of the Cincinnati Community Learning Center Model. Julie describes the advantages of CLCs: "I think it is beneficial for the students and it gives the support to teachers so that they can focus on instruction. I wish we had one (a CLC resource coordinator) in every school."

Teachers working in Cincinnati Public Schools have the same opinion as their leader. Julie Warmack, a 3rd and 4th grade teacher, says that the community school approach has not made all the problems go away, but having the resources right on campus makes it easier to deal with crises when they come along. For example, when a grandmother of a student passed away, Warmack was concerned knowing that this grandmother played a key role in the student's life. She then contacted the Children's Home, which provides counseling at the school, and was relieved when she was told, "No problem, we've got this covered."

Warmack knows that she has partners to support her and her students during crisis situations like this one. But maybe more importantly, she has a relationship and works with the partners on a daily basis. Cincinnati Community Learning Centers' partnerships are very purposeful and intentional. The school teachers work closely with the resource coordinator through formal and informal processes to identify which students would most benefit from which services to show the greatest impact.

Schools have had partnerships for years but one of the most important and cutting-edge aspects of the CLC approach is that the right partnerships are in the right buildings, aligned to common goals, and then the right students are linked to the right partnerships and services.

CFT President Julie Sellers believes that Community Learning Centers create the essential conditions for teaching and learning: "I wouldn't teach in a school that isn't a community learning center," she affirms.