

Americans Want Schools to Help Poor Students With Things Like Health Care, Poll Finds

By [Evie Blad](#) on August 28, 2017 7:03 PM | [No comments](#)

Schools should provide services like after-school programs, mental health supports, and health services for students who don't have access to them elsewhere, a majority of respondents to a national poll said.

And 76 percent of respondents also agreed schools are justified in seeking additional funds to pay for those services.

This year's version of the poll, administered annually by PDK International, asked respondents if schools should or should not provide so-called wraparound services, which are designed to address some needs poor families have that may become barriers to academic achievement. PDK surveyed a random representative 50-state sample of 1,588 adults interviewed by cell or landline telephone, in English or Spanish, in May 2017.

Among respondents, 77 percent said schools should provide after-school programs, 76 percent said they should provide mental health services, and 66 percent said schools should provide health services. Dental services had much less support; just 44 percent of respondents said schools should provide them.

Across all categories, Democrats were more likely to support school services than Republicans, and white respondents were less likely to support the services than people of color. College graduates were also less likely to support wraparound services than those without a college degree.

Community Schools

The poll's findings will provide a boost to backers of community schools, which organize community programs, social supports, and wraparound services to help low-income students and their families.

Denisa Superville recently wrote about [New York City's ambitious community schools effort](#), which has led to "an increase in student attendance and family participation in school activities, a drop in chronic absenteeism, but uneven academic progress." She wrote in her *Education Week* story:

"Flooding impoverished schools with a range of services and resources is not new, and there's still lively debate in education circles about whether it's something schools should take on.

Commonly referred to as 'community schools' or 'whole-child' initiatives, the approach has been used in districts from Tacoma, Wash., to Cincinnati for several years, but the movement has picked up steam more recently amid a backlash against single-measure, test-based accountability and as an alternative to closing long-struggling schools. It's gotten robust support from the nation's teachers' unions. And some states are looking to incorporate the features of community schools in their plans required by the new federal education law, the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#)."

Supports have sought to use ESSA to drum up support for community schools and student services. A survey of existing data suggests community schools could meet the standard of an "evidence-based" [school improvement intervention under the Every Student Succeeds Act](#), the Learning Policy Institute and the National Education Policy Center said in a June policy brief.

Photo: Students at P.S. 188 in New York socialize on the playground during the last week of the 2016-17 school year. The school, which is part of the city's community schools effort, coordinates services like health and mental health supports for its students. --Mark Abramson for Education Week.

Related reading about poverty and community schools:

- [Community Schools Are an Effective School Improvement Strategy, Brief Says](#)