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**CCS: Year in Review** 12/27/12 There’s no doubt that the momentum for community schools continues to grow. This was one of the Coalition’s most impactful years. New community schools are cropping up across the country and existing initiatives continue to rejuvenate neighborhoods. Here’s a look back at some of the highlights of 2012 for the Coalition: **Fueling Local Action** · 2012 National Forum: With 1,350 attendees from 36 states, Washington, DC and Canada, six plenary sessions, over 120 workshops, and 25 school site visits - The [Coalition for Community Schools 2012 National Forum](http://www.communityschools.org/2012nationalforum.aspx) in San Francisco (May 9-12, 2012) was the largest community school gathering of its kind. The 2012 Forum featured insightful, inspirational, and thought-provoking panels with California school superintendents and policymakers, national education funders and early childhood education pioneers. This comment captures the perspectives of most participants: "The Community Schools National Forum is an invigorating experience, and I highly recommend this conference to anyone interested in enhancing the educational experience within their communities. You will be challenged, inspired and gain valuable tools and information to help you succeed."[Check out video highlights from the 2012 National Forum](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90RXq568_D4&list=UU6Hr6BAmR30gPRAo-6umHJQ&index=1)**Informing Policy** · Community Schools Study Tour: The Coalition held two of its three anticipated study tours of high-performing community school initiatives this year. The first study tour was held in Portland in February highlighting the [Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Community School Initiative](http://web.multco.us/sun). The other study tour was held in Cincinnati at two of its [Community Learning Centers](http://www.cps-k12.org/community/CLC/CLC.htm). These tours were attended by mayors, city council members, school superintendents and school board members, and dozens other policymakers and local leaders. Check out video from [Portland](http://vimeo.com/55397346) and [Cincinnati](http://vimeo.com/55401554).· U.S. Department of Education Race to the Top – District Competition: This competition was particularly important for the Coalition because it included competitive priority related to our work – rewarding applicants that integrate public and private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools’ core resources. This includes child and youth health programs, safety programs, community stability programs, family and community engagement programs that are systemic, integrated, sustainable, and continue through a student’s transition from K–12 schooling to college and career. The Coalition produced a [publication to help guide](http://www.communityschools.org/policy_advocacy/rttd.aspx) districts applying for the competition that was accessed by hundreds of online visitors. All of the announced winners have some form of integrated partnerships written into their applications. We know of at least three winners that explicitly use the community schools strategy. **Capacity Building: State and Local**· Building and Supporting State Networks: The Coalition helped facilitate an August event in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota as localities there look to replicate the success of Brooklyn Center Community Schools. In addition to supporting statewide efforts in Minnesota, we’re also assisting Connecticut education leaders use the community school strategy. We presented at a state-wide summit, and coordinated an invitation-only webinar with officials from Connecticut’s largest school districts on how community schools provide the wrap-around services mandated in the state’s No Child Left Behind Waiver plan. · Scaling Up Community Schools: To date, The Coalition’s online [Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships Guide](http://www.communityschools.org/ScalingUp/) has been garnered over 7,200 hits. Through the Guide and our local relationships, we now know that 67 places have scaled up community schools for more than five years and a similar number have been scaling up community schools 2-5 years. We’ve held a Scaling Up Seminar in Chicago and have seminars scheduled for [Los Angeles](http://www.communityschools.org/scaling_up_community_school_partnerships_seminars.aspx) and Palm Beach, Florida in 2013.**Media**In the news: Community school initiatives across the country were regularly highlighted in local and national press for the outstanding work they do turning around struggling schools. The Coalition itself has been mentioned in over a dozen stories this year. We take this as a clear indication that more people are interested in and identifying with the community school strategy. In short, we feel like community schools have entered the education reform space in new and highly recognizable ways. Some of the most important media references include:· American Public Media’s Marketplace radio program is taking a year-long look at the Oyler School, a cutting-edge community school in the Cincinnati Public School system. ([One School, One Year](http://www.marketplace.org/topics/wealth-poverty/one-school-one-year/))· NBC News’ second annual Education Nation special featured two community school initiatives in Cincinnati and Chicago. ([Cincinnati Profile](http://www.educationnation.com/casestudies/cincy/index.html). [Chicago Profile](http://www.educationnation.com/casestudies/logansquare/))· Education Week took an in-depth look at SUN Community Schools in Multnomah County, Oregon and how it is providing a blueprint for sustainable and scalable education reform for state and federal policymakers. ([Oregon Community Schools Model Shows Staying Power](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/14/24community_ep.h31.html)). This was an outgrowth of the participation of an Education Week reporter on a Community Schools study tour.Community Schools Messaging Framework: The Coalition unveiled a new messaging campaign that branded [community schools as "smart schools](http://www.communityschools.org/aboutschools/what_is_a_community_school.aspx)." Through the guidance of our leadership networks, we’ve crafted a graphic that illustrates community schools as a smart phone with the many opportunities and supports that community schools offer (ie. health services, early childhood education, etc.) depict4ed as smart phone "apps." Several community school systems, including Cincinnati, Grand Rapids, Ogden, UT, and Kansas City, have used the communications framework in their own communications and presentations to federal officials and local stakeholders.**Looking toward to the Future**· 2013 National Community Schools Awards for Excellence: Three individual community schools and two community school system initiatives will receive Awards for Excellence during our National Education Day event on Capitol Hill June 5-6. Join us in Washington D.C. to celebrate these schools and for our big push for federal lawmakers to adopt legislation that support community-school partnerships.· Upcoming publications include a major synthesis of community schools research, a report on the central role of community schools in other place-based strategies (e.g., Promise Neighborhoods, P20 Councils, Cradle to Career Partnerships), a set of case studies on early childhood and community schools linkages and a report on expanded learning opportunities. We also have a host of new online resources planned for the Coalition’s website.So stay connected with the Coalition as we roll out more and more resources to support the work in your communities in the coming year! |

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