



THE 4TH "R": READING, WRITING, 'RITHMETIC ... AND RESILIENCE

INVESTMENTS IN SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS ARE CRITICAL IN ENSURING STUDENT SUCCESS

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Good Shepherd Services is a leading youth and family development and educational support agency that works with over 26,000 program participants a year. [We give young people in New York City the opportunity to take ownership of their future, making a difference today and for the next generation.](#)

Good Shepherd Services works in 42 public schools in high-need Brooklyn and Bronx communities, to which we bring a profound belief in the strengths inherent in youth and the ability of individuals and families to transform themselves. Incorporating the most current thinking and research on effective practice, we surround youth and families with impactful individual, family and school-based services and support. We employ a rigorous business approach that emphasizes partnerships and optimizes public and private resources.

Good Shepherd Services has long been at the forefront of innovative programming in New York City. Exemplifying our efforts in education over the past three decades, we have led effective initiatives to establish long-term embedded partnerships within schools and communities, successful work-readiness and internship opportunities for youth, and high-traction educational pathways for off-track students, getting them back on track to a high school degree.

At the dawn of a new City administration, new leadership at the Department of Education (DOE), Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), and other key City agencies and offices serving children, youth, and families, as well as the second year of Common Core implementation, we are excited and ready to partner in prioritized efforts to achieve a critical goal for the youth and families of our city: college and career readiness for all students.

We know our schools have much more work to do to realize this goal. Still, there is progress and momentum upon which new strategies must continue to build. Drop-out rates have fallen while graduation rates, college and career readiness rates, and our schools' performance relative to the rest of the state are higher than ever before. We believe that these efforts can succeed by building upon and further leveraging existing, high-traction strategies and by introducing new approaches that are strongly supported by evidence-based research and practice.

GOALS

Through our long-standing presence and investment in New York City's most under-resourced communities, Good Shepherd Services has built its expertise in developing and implementing educational programs that play a critical role

in closing the achievement gap. We believe that a successful effort to improve the educational prospects of all New Yorkers must include:

1. [STRENGTHENING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY.*](#)
2. [EXPANDING HIGH-TRACTION STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN EVERY SCHOOL.](#)
3. [SCALING UP EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TARGETING STRUGGLING AND OFF-TRACK STUDENTS.](#)

These recommendations are described in greater detail in the paper that follows, along with a set of strategies that are aimed at accomplishing the following goals:

- Support students' social and emotional learning and attainment of Common Core competencies, complementing the instructional program in schools.
- Ensure that all schools have embedded CBO partners and embody their key role of critical community institution that supports the overall healthy development of children.
- Ensure that all families have access to high-quality early childhood and out-of-school time options for their children – from early childhood through high school.
- Ensure that schools serve all students including those who are falling behind or off-track.
- Understand that community involvement includes: parent access to information and feedback about their children; parent and community stakeholder involvement in schools and key school and district decisions; and

*Community encompasses a range of partners including CBOs, parent organizations, faith communities, local businesses, etc.

community-based providers' ability to leverage a wide range of resources to partner with schools in supporting student success.

We welcome the opportunity to explore and implement these ideas in partnership with the de Blasio administration and our colleagues in the many community-based organizations that, like us, work daily in deep partnership with schools throughout New York City.

1. STRENGTHEN THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

There have been key accomplishments in the past decade that have widened the choices of solid New York City schools for students and families: deep system-wide investment in instructional work energized by the move toward the Common Core; improved dissemination of information to teachers, principals and other school leaders through networks; students and families have options previously unimaginable (by anyone but the most wealthy) including a range of new and smaller schools at the secondary level and powerful new "Multiple Pathways" models for overage/under-credited students; and establishment of a citywide out-of-school time network of after-school, summer and expanded learning programs.

At the same time, in far too many places during these same years, some communities experienced a widening disconnect from the schools that served them. This wasn't true everywhere, but it was true in enough places to be problematic because we know that schools are strongest when they are well connected to the communities they serve. The next stage of our work needs to bring the power of choice and the power of community in concert with each other in all of our communities and for all of our children.

- Strengthen and rebuild connections – with aligned and focused resources - at the community level.
- Open school doors to community in deep, embedded ways including through expansion of such deep partnership models as Community Schools, Beacons, Out-of-School Time/Expanded and Summer Learning (including Summer Quest), and Multiple Pathways/Learning to Work. (These areas are discussed further in the following sections.)
- Staff each school with a Community Manager charged with such responsibilities as leading community relations with CBO partners, parent organizations, and other local stakeholders; providing support jointly to schools and their partners; working with the program directors and education specialists of CBO partners to ensure pro-

grammatic alignment and coherence; ensuring school operations (budget, hiring, facilities) are responsive to community needs as expressed by school leadership teams; supervise the parent coordinator; and assist the guidance counselor in students' transition planning.

- Ensure that superintendents also have a Community Manager who, in addition to working with school leadership teams and school support networks, is charged with such responsibilities as coordinating district-level events focused on alignment of community resources; ensuring community families have access to the information they need to make effective choices for their children including by working with CBO partners to support students and families in effective transition planning.
- Implement quarterly community meetings working with the Community Managers of districts and all schools in the district to strengthen ties among schools, parents, community partners and other local stakeholders. We suggest looking closely at Cincinnati's StriveTogether effort (www.strivetogether.org/approach).

2. EXPAND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

This work begins in early childhood with effective early childhood education and continues through high school and into early adulthood – and must include both preventive and recuperative strategies to ensure that all students have the supports they need for school, college, career and life success.

- All children should be prepared and ready to start school through effective early childhood education and all schools should provide comprehensive out-of-school time programming from kindergarten through high school. Early childhood education and after-school programs are proven strategies to help close the achievement gap and set children on a path to success, plus



they provide crucial economic stability to families.

- We fully support the recommendations contained in the transition plan of the Campaign for Children, on which we serve as a Steering Committee member: (www.campaignforchildrennyc.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Transition-Plan-FINAL.pdf). At a time when the demand for these services is far outstripping the supply, we must expand these programs to serve more children and families.
- For students who fall behind or off-track to graduation, now is the time to scale up effective recuperative strategies – most notably the Multiple Pathways/Learning to Work models currently operated through the DOE Office of Post-Secondary Readiness (discussed more thoroughly in the next section below) – but also a broad range of partnership strategies, including attendance-improvement and dropout-prevention efforts.

3. SCALE UP EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR STRUGGLING AND OFF-TRACK STUDENTS

There are a number of effective strategies in place at a relatively small scale that can be expanded and more pro-actively leveraged to keep more young people on track to graduation (notably Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention) and bring off-track students back on the path to successful graduation.

One extraordinarily powerful and high-traction strategy is the Multiple Pathways schools with embedded “Learning to Work” CBO partnerships. These schools have already shown substantial success in re-engaging and graduating students, who, by definition, are more than two years off track, have dropped out or become “overage and under-credited.” Multiple Pathways schools can now be further leveraged to help these same students meet the raised [Common Core](#) bar of college and career readiness.



THE VALUES WE BRING TO OUR WORK WITH SCHOOLS

We believe that New York City’s future rests in the hands of our children. Our responsibility today is to educate them and provide every possible opportunity for success: so that they and their families and communities will thrive and so that the city they lead one day will become even stronger than the one we leave to them.

We embrace the dream of opportunity promised to all Americans and believe that education provides the primary ladder and path to attain it. For far too many students, this opportunity has remained out of reach.

We believe that our public schools can be successful with vastly more students by strengthening classroom instruction to meet our students’ educational needs while simultaneously aligning and leveraging a larger array of resources to better support their social and emotional needs, by incorporating new strategies and technologies, and by using time (both in-school time and out-of-school time) more effectively.

We believe that we must work harder to reach the students who are struggling the most. We must further scale and leverage the structures and strategies that have proved effective and continue to innovate and pursue new initiatives of promise.

We believe that we must work harder to open school doors to draw parents and community organizations in as critical partners in this endeavor. Thriving schools and thriving communities go hand in hand.

We believe that data and accountability are a means to the end, but not an end in itself.

Our goal is to effectively educate each and every student and we must mobilize every possible resource toward it.

We believe that strengthening the connection between school and community and leveraging a robust range of community resources and social and emotional support strategies - particularly those aimed at supporting struggling students - directly promotes the critical competencies highlighted above and enables students to meet the goal of readiness for college and career represented by the Common Core. To that end, we recommend the following steps to scale up strategies and supports for struggling and off-track students:

- Expand Multiple Pathways schools with embedded Learning to Work programs through partnerships with CBOs like Good Shepherd Services to ensure that all students who need these life-changing opportunities will be able to access them.
- Implement a focused strategy to ensure that CBO partner organizations are able to provide deep social and emotional learning, in-school counseling, and youth development work in all high schools, working more intensively with those young people with low rates of attendance and credit accumulation. Existing models such as Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention (which has historically been implemented through a

DOE-United Way collaboration), the Out-of-School Time high school model, and the City Council Dropout Prevention Initiative should be expanded to become a core part of the DOE's system-wide high school strategy.

- Include high schools in Community Schools (including New York City's Beacon model) expansion efforts. As an example, Good Shepherd Services' partnership at Bronx Bridges High School embeds social and emotional development supports into the life and fabric of the school, our staff working as peers with school staff to create a school-wide structure of support that shapes students' academic experience and supports their development.
- Simultaneously expand apprenticeship and trade programs that train students in a particular skill or trade with embedded CBO partners. More such programs like Good Shepherd Services' at Automotive High School in Brooklyn, should be established to give student experience in particular trades such as construction, electrical, plumbing, automotive.

Good Shepherd Services stands ready to work with the de Blasio administration to ensure that all of New York City's children are able to attain success in school, college, career and life. ■





“The Common Core State Standards ... are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.”¹

THE COMMON CORE

The Common Core, now in its second year of implementation in New York City and throughout the country, provides both touchstone and spotlight: setting the bar that our students and schools must reach while also illuminating how far there still is to go to meet it.

Here in New York City - similar to experiences throughout the country - teachers, principals, parents, and students have struggled to understand, implement and meet the Common Core standards. Last year, achievement test scores, now aligned to the new standards, dropped dramatically in New York City and across the state. In New York City for grades 3 through 8, only 26 percent of students showed proficiency on the tests in English, and only 30 percent showed proficiency in math. The results were far worse for black and Hispanic children. In math, 15 percent of black students and 19 percent of Hispanic students passed the exam, compared with 50 percent of white students and 61 percent of Asian students.

Clearly we still have far to go to achieve our most ambitious goals for our students and schools.

¹ National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers. “Common Core Standard”. National Governors Association for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington, D.C., 2010

ELEMENTS OF THE COMMON CORE: BEYOND ACADEMICS

Many elements of the Common Core naturally focus on academics; however, it also incorporates those competencies once called “soft-skills” and now more commonly referred to as “essential” or “overarching skills”: the range of holistic, social and emotional skills that children need in order to learn and develop effectively. There are a number of competency areas that the recommendations contained in this paper directly promote.

Resilience²

This domain includes the learning habits and skills that support academic readiness and includes non-cognitive, socio-emotional qualities that support resilience and college/career persistence.

| Persistence | Persistence is needed to support long-term commitment to educational goals through a positive mindset and self-efficiency. |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Engagement | Engagement supports achievement in school by increasing students’ social-emotional connection to the environment and their social confidence. |
| Work Habits/Organizational Skills | Strong work habits and organizational skills support successful navigation of college and careers. |
| Communication/Collaboration Skills | Communication and collaboration are essential skills in successful college and career transitions. |
| Self-Regulation | Self-regulation is key to resiliency. Students must develop coping skills, self-control, and confidence to work through challenges. |

While the Common Core focuses strongly on academic skills, it also includes many elements that involve the development of the “habits of mind” critical to academic and life success. These competencies are described by the Council on Chief State School Officers (a leading organization in developing the Common Core standards and assessments) as “knowledge, skills and dispositions that operate in tandem with the academic... and offer a portrait of students who, upon graduation, are prepared for college, career and citizenship.” These include social and emotional development, a sense of self-identity and agency, teamwork and cooperation, perseverance and persistence, cognition and knowledge of the world, and physical development and health. After-school programs offer young people expanded learning time and a range of activities and opportunities that should be more intentionally leveraged to support the development of both academic and “habits of mind” competencies.³

² “Common Core Academic and Personal Behaviors”. New York City Department of Education, 2011

³ “Strengthening New York City’s Early Childhood Education and After-School Systems: A Transition Plan from the Campaign for Children”. The Campaign For Children, 2013



New York City's after-school system, which includes Out-of-School Time, Beacon Community Schools and Cornerstone model programs as well as a larger range of Summer and Extended-Learning programs, is the strongest and most comprehensive in the country and represents a strong foundation that can be ramped up and extended to all students and all schools throughout the City. Demand for after-school, summer and extended learning continues to dwarf supply, and we must continue to expand these programs to serve the children and families who need them. The de Blasio Administration's commitment to expanding middle school after-school programs beginning in September 2014 is an important first step in building on this foundation.

At Good Shepherd Services, we provide 23 city-funded after-school programs in the communities we serve in Brooklyn and the Bronx. We know that the need for these services in our own communities is far greater than what we are currently able to provide.

In our programs we offer our 4,000+ participants a safe and nurturing environment after school, in the evenings, over the weekend, and during the summer; caring relationships with adults and peers; and a robust range of academic-support, social and emotional development, sports and recreation, arts and culture, civic involvement, community service, leadership, career awareness, and many other engaging activities. Key components include a daily after-school program; youth leadership groups; summer camps; structured, evening recreational activities; and family support services – all designed to promote school attendance, engagement and success; foster self-confidence; and build competencies and skills in literacy, leadership, teamwork, work readiness and civic responsibility.

Good Shepherd Services' after-school programs incorporate research and evidence-based models on several levels, using a tiered structure of frameworks, practice models, curricula and assessments. First and foremost, the after-school programs apply a youth and family development framework, grounded in best practices and research, which demonstrates that strength-based outcomes are fundamental building blocks toward achieving self-sufficiency. At the practice level, Circle of Courage promotes a sense of community among participants and staff through shared language and rituals. Good Shepherd Services' programs then offers a range of evidence-based, skill-building activities including Flocabulary, Robotics, TRIBE, and KidzLit.

MAKING LEARNING FUN: A SAMPLING OF GOOD SHEPHERD SERVICES' AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Flocabulary is an evidence-based literacy curriculum which entails fun, engaging games in which students compete to identify and define challenging vocabulary words.

Theater allows our students to participate in theater productions where they not only prepare for the performance, but also learn about character development, plot, setting, and thematic structure.

STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) activities are essential elements in the core curriculum. Our STEM activities expose students to new technologies through interactive and engaging projects. Through the Robotics program at our Beacon, groups of students engage in project based learning using math, physics and technical skills to produce operational robots. As another example, Good Shepherd Services partnered with the Harbor School on Governors Island, training 75 middle school students and 15 educators in environmental STEM fields including marine biology, ocean engineering, and scientific aquaculture.

Field Trips to places like the American Museum of Natural History broaden our participants' horizons and expose them to interests in the world beyond their everyday neighborhood – where unlike their higher-income peers – they too often would never venture without after-school opportunities. Exposure to new places, cultures, ways of life and ideas are critical to social and emotional development and young peoples' success in building Common Core competency.

Physical Activity like group sports, dance, and yoga encourage students to maintain physical health and nutrition while developing life and social-emotional skills like teamwork and persistence.

Parent and Community Involvement makes a critical difference in a young person's learning. Our staff engage parents during pick up and drop off and also reach out to families through home visits, parent meetings, and community events. Parent and community engagement is a proven strategy for including families in their children's educational development and supporting children's overall well-being.¹



¹ "ELO Research, Policy, and Practice Brief Series". National Conference of State Legislatures and Harvard Family Research Project, 2012



The Multiple Pathways portfolio of schools has been an important part of New York City's strategy to ensure student success and increase the graduation rate. Since the initiative began in 2005, more than 25,000 young people who had dropped out, or were headed towards dropping out, have re-engaged and graduated with a diploma. Thousands more are currently in the pipeline to graduation, supported by Learning to Work programs in partnership with CBO providers like Good Shepherd Services.

Multiple Pathways schools give young people who are overage and under-credited an opportunity, and a more tailored and flexible class schedule that allows them to get back on track with coursework and credit accumulation; social and emotional and youth development support to address non-cognitive barriers that have stood in the way of their success; and the work readiness, job preparation, and paid internships that build the skills and resumes needed to help them secure and maintain employment after graduation.

Multiple Pathways offer differentiated options for overage and under-credited students, including:

- Transfer High Schools – small schools that offer a full-day, academically rigorous structure for students who had fallen significantly off-track in their “sending” high school. Good Shepherd Services partners in two Transfer Schools.
- Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs) – highly-supportive instructional models that allow students to recover credits by concentrating on the credit portfolio they need for graduation through a more-flexible evening program structure. Good Shepherd Services partners in 11 YABCs.
- A new and innovative high school model that the DOE is pioneering together with partners including Good Shepherd Services for students entering 9th grade after already falling two years behind in middle school.

Learning to Work (LTW) is an intentionally embedded partnership with CBOs like Good Shepherd Services to provide social and emotional supports, youth development, employment and career readiness, and the opportunity for young people to work in paid internships. Young people have the opportunity to learn basic job skills such as professional dress and behavior norms, promptness, customer service, organization, and time and mon-

ey management. In addition, LTW provides the opportunity for young people to build social and emotional competencies including self-motivation, responsibility, communication, teamwork, collaboration, problem solving, reasoning, critical thinking, and self-discipline. Young people are assigned a mentor who lends support and guidance, and can help young people navigate the world of work. Through LTW, Good Shepherd Services places young people in internships with companies such as Duane Reade, Target, and other local non-profits and small businesses. The public/private partnership that Good Shepherd Services and other LTW partners devel-

ops with these businesses not only benefits students through work and on-the-job training opportunities, but allows these businesses to get to know the students and consider them for permanent employment. Many of our young people are later offered paid employment at their internship site!

THE SUCCESS OF LEARNING TO WORK

LTW programs have demonstrated dramatic success with overage, under-credited students. According to a 2010 evaluation by Metis Associates, students who were farthest behind (11 or fewer credits after three years in high school) increased their chances of graduating by more than 3.5 times if they attended a Multiple Pathways/LTW program as opposed to a traditional high school.

In just the past 5 years, Good Shepherd Services' Multiple Pathways schools with LTW internship opportunities have graduated more than 6,000 formally off-track students.

At the same time, we know that New York City still has far to go to reach the large numbers of young people who need this intensive support to reach graduation and college and career readiness. With Common Core implementation, it is likely that even greater numbers of students will fall off-track in the next few years. Under the Common Core, "the challenge of educating underprepared high school students is about to grow even sharper. High school teachers face a difficult dilemma: they must strive to hold all students to significantly higher standards for graduation, while at the same time supporting and motivating even the most underprepared students".¹

Now is the time to make these life-changing opportunities available to every New York City student who needs them.

¹ Leah Hamilton and Anne Mackinnon. "Opportunity by Design: New York High School Models for Student Success". Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2013.

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