

What Are Community Schools?

Community Schools are a national model for public elementary or secondary schools that partner with community organizations to create a nurturing place where students can learn and grow.

Parents and community members work together to meet students' social, emotional, physical and mental health needs. Often located in underserved urban areas, Community Schools become true **neighborhood community centers**, leading to better student learning and stronger, healthier communities.



Here in Trenton, Mercer Street Friends has partnered with the Trenton Public School District and other local organizations to create Community Schools. These schools provide the best education for our students, while supporting them and their families with expanded learning opportunities.

With the support of the community,
we create student success.



“After struggling in the classroom and at home, one student’s behavior improved dramatically... He has been able to sustain friendships with peers, get more involved in after-school activities, and [has] less, almost zero, altercations with classmates... His behavior has led to grade improvement, as he has currently made Honor Roll for the third quarter.”

—Site coordinator at
Gregory Community School

MERCER STREET FRIENDS
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

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Find resources including preschool, food pantries,
family services, adult education and more at
www.mercerstreetfriends.org

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Mercer Street Friends



Building Bright Futures
Together

www.mercerstreetfriends.org

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN TRENTON

2014 — Mercer Street Friends approaches Rivera Middle School about becoming a Community School.

2015 — After much planning and cooperation with the Trenton Board of Education, Rivera officially becomes the city's first Community School.

2018 — Mercer Street Friends begins providing support to Gregory Elementary School.

2020 — Gregory becomes a Full Service Community School, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School begins planning to become a Community School.

2021 — Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School officially becomes a Community School.

Students thrive when communities support them.



Parents, teachers, case managers, the School District, community leaders and mission-driven nonprofits come together to help students succeed. Community schools become **neighborhood hubs**, where students learn not only excellent academics, but also real-world skills they can use to give back to their community.

The Community School team effort leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities by focusing on:

- Supporting parents and families, including parent education and school food pantries
- Mentoring and supporting young people
- Providing opportunities for youth enrichment and development
- Offering referrals to additional services including housing and case management
- Supporting students who are often absent, and understanding the reasons for absenteeism, such as bullying, trauma and abuse, food and/or housing insecurity and other barriers to learning

Our amazing partners help our students succeed and make Community Schools stronger:



PARTNERS

- Arm in Arm • Boys & Girls Club • Childcare Connections • Henry J. Austin Health Center • Homefront • Isles, Inc. • Kidsbridge Center/Children's Home Society of New Jersey • Kinder Smiles • McCarter Theatre Center • Mill Hill Child Development • NJ Tennis League • NJ State Golf Association Youth Program • PEI Kids • Princeton Area Community Foundation • Princeton-Blairstown Center • Rider Bonner Community Scholars • Rutgers Cooperative Extension • TASK (Trenton Area Soup Kitchen) • The College of New Jersey (Bonner Institute & College Mentoring Union) • The Community Foodbank of NJ • Thomas Edison State University • Trenton Health Team • Trenton Youth Soccer •

NATIONAL PARTNERS

- Netter Center for Community Partnerships - University of Pennsylvania • Institute for Educational Leadership • Coalition for Community Schools •

COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

B.C. Gregory Elementary School

500 Rutherford Avenue, Trenton, NJ 08618
Jeannette Harris, Principal

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School

401-411 Brunswick Avenue, Trenton, NJ 08638
Victor Farnath, Principal

Luis Muñoz-Rivera Elementary School

400 North Montgomery Street, Trenton, NJ 08611
Dr. Olivia Russo, Principal

EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

After-school, weekend and summer opportunities provide individual support for Community School students:



Bridge programs
to keep kids sharp during summer break



STEM & Arts
afterschool clubs



Reading Intervention Program, which provides support and instruction for students reading below grade-level

"One of our seventh graders joined our program for emotional support. She was showing signs of anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. She struggled to interact with her classmates and make friends. After working with one of our case managers, this student [now] participates in all the groups we offer (Zones of Regulation, Lunch Small Groups and Girls Group). The hard work of her case manager has led to both increased positive peer interactions and parental involvement. This student ended the second quarter with a 94% semester average!

—Case Manager at
Rivera Community School