

Community Schools: Implementation Plan

2022 – 23



1. Core Commitment to Community Schools and Alignment with the Fresno Unified LCAP

The shared community schools vision of Thomas Elementary School and Fresno Unified is to create a vibrant and rich hub of aligned, integrated partnerships between the district, school, and community, where each community school organically and seamlessly becomes the nucleus of the community, embodying the Four Pillars and Four Cornerstone Commitments of the California Community Schools Framework. To achieve this vision, Thomas Elementary and Fresno Unified have committed to the following four overarching CCSP Implementation Project goals:

1. Improve students' academic achievement, social-emotional wellbeing, and positive youth development by building school- and district-level capacity to better coordinate and deliver integrated student support services;
2. Build the capacity of parents and family members to support students' academic achievement, social-emotional wellbeing, and positive youth development by connecting families to needed community services and empowering parents to effectively partner in their children's education;
3. Build the individual and collective capacities of teachers, support staff, and administrators to address the academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs of students within a multi-tiered system of supports; and
4. Enhance and expand after school, intercession, and summer learning programming to provide students with new out-of-school-time opportunities that reinforce lessons learned during the regular school day and address targeted academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs.

These four goals explicitly align with the Four Pillars of Community Schools and will advance all eight of Fresno Unified's LCAP goals: (1) Improve academic performance at challenging levels; (2) Expand student-centered and real-world learning experiences; (3) Increase student engagement in their school and community; (4) Increase recruitment and retention of staff reflecting the diversity of our community; (5) Increase inclusive opportunities for families to engage in their students' education; (6) Provide foster youth students with targeted social-emotional and academic interventions to increase graduation rates; (7) Provide special education students and their families/guardians with transition planning resources and options for pathways toward post-secondary and employment opportunities; (8) These investments have direct input and contribute to all FUSD Goals. Further, accomplishing these four CCSP Implementation Project goals will also enable Thomas Elementary to continue to strengthen all Four Cornerstone Commitments of Community Schools from the baseline outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Thomas Elementary developmental phase of Four Cornerstone Commitments

Exploration	Emerging	Evolving	Excelling
1. A Commitment to Assets-Driven and Strength-Based Practice		Evolving	
2. A Commitment to Racially Just and Restorative School Climates		Emerging	
3. A Commitment to Powerful, Culturally Proficient and Relevant Instruction		Evolving	
4. A Commitment to Shared Decision Making and Participatory Practices		Emerging	

In addition to improving the whole-child approach to school improvement at Thomas Elementary School, the proposed CCSPP Project will lay the groundwork for replicating the community schools model to schools and communities throughout the city of Fresno in CCSPP Implementation Round 3. Fresno Unified and its community schools partners will engage in rigorous evaluation, reflection, and cycles of continuous quality improvement throughout the CCSPP Round 2 grant period to determine both fidelity of implementation and the impacts of CCSPP investments and efforts. As a result, Fresno Unified and its community schools will be able to define what works; refine strategies, services, and structures; and leverage lessons learned to inform future community schools efforts that will benefit Fresno Unified students, families, and communities well beyond the initial CCSPP Implementation grant period.

2. Measurable Goals and Activities

The key findings of Thomas Elementary’s Needs assessment and Asset Mapping/Gap Analysis (see Chapters 7 through 10 of CCSPP Implementation Application Attachment III), led Thomas Elementary and Fresno Unified to formalize the four overarching CCSPP Project goals and corresponding activities described below. These four CCSPP Project goals explicitly align with the Thomas Elementary mission and vision, Fresno Unified LCAP, and all Four Pillars and Four Cornerstone Commitments of the California Community Schools Framework.

Goal 1: Improve students’ academic achievement, social-emotional wellbeing, and positive youth development by building school- and district-level capacity to better coordinate and deliver integrated student support services.

The community schools needs assessment found that while Thomas Elementary has access to a wide range of student support services available through Fresno Unified and community-based organizations and agencies, there is a significant need to coordinate and streamline the delivery of student services to ensure students receive the supports needed to address their individual academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs. In order to address this need, Thomas Elementary will hire a site-specific, full-time Community Schools Coordinator at the start of the project period. This Community Schools Coordinator will (1) serve as a site-level lead in implementing the

CCSPP Project and overseeing overall implementation of the community schools process, programs, partnerships, strategies, and performance monitoring; (2) chair the site-level Community Schools Advisory Council and serve as Thomas Elementary's primary community schools representative on the district-level Community Schools Steering Committee; (3) manage partnerships and communications across community school partners and stakeholders; (4) participate in community meetings to build relationships and collaboration with community organizations and to leverage and coordinate all available services that could benefit students, parents, families, and community members; (5) oversee site-level data management related to CCSPP Project goals; and (6) collaborate with the external evaluator to assess the project's success and engage all stakeholders in ongoing project review and continuous quality improvement efforts. These efforts will significantly improve integrated support services coordination at Thomas Elementary School.

In addition to the efforts of the Community Schools Coordinator, integrated support services coordination and delivery will be improved by providing Thomas Elementary teachers and support staff with additional time to engage in Professional Learning Communities and collaboratively identify students in need of targeted intervention, design individualized interventions in partnership with staff specialized in serving special student populations, and deliver Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions within Thomas Elementary's existing MTSS infrastructure. These CCSPP Project efforts will benefit from the project's strong partnership and coordination with the Fresno Teachers Association.

Lastly, Thomas Elementary and Fresno Unified will increase existing contracts with school- and community-based health and academic services providers to expand direct services to Thomas Elementary students and families. While the specific types and levels of service provision will vary throughout each year in accordance with ongoing needs assessment findings in order to effectively meet local needs, Thomas Elementary and Fresno Unified project that services will include behavioral and mental health, vision, and dental services, which will be delivered through a combination of the district's mobile health clinic and school-based care.

Goal 2: Build the capacity of parents and family members to support students' academic achievement, social-emotional wellbeing, and positive youth development by connecting families to needed community services and empowering parents to effectively partner in their children's education.

Throughout the needs assessment and planning process, Thomas Elementary School stakeholders consistently emphasized the need to improve both the frequency and quality of parent and family education and engagement efforts, and the proposed CCSPP Implementation Project will implement several strategies to address this need. First, the Community Schools Coordinator will play a critical role in Thomas Elementary's coordination of parent and family services and will work to leverage existing site and district resources as well as the services offered through Thomas Elementary's partnership with community-based organizations and governmental

agencies. Second, the CCSPP Project will enable Thomas Elementary to increase the number and quality of parent and family educational services. While these trainings will be developed at the start of the project period and based on locally defined parent education needs, Thomas Elementary expect trainings in Year 1 to focus on topics such as fostering positive social-emotional environments in the home, building emotional resilience, and effectively partnering in children’s education and positive youth development. Parent and family education workshops will be delivered by Thomas Elementary and Fresno Unified personnel (e.g., Fresno Unified’s Parent University) as well as trainers from local community-based organizations and family services agencies (e.g., Parent Institution for Quality Education). In addition to providing funding to expanded services and contracting with external trainers, the CCSPP Project will enable Thomas Elementary and Fresno Unified to procure new parent and family education curriculum, materials, and supplies to enhance the quality of parent workshops developed and delivered in house. Third, Thomas Elementary and Fresno Unified will develop new communication and outreach materials to share community schools messaging with students, parents, families, and community members. This will include developing print and digital materials (e.g., banners, flyers, newsletters, social media postings) that inform all stakeholders about community school services and events and showcase CCSPP Project successes in order to garner growing support for the community schools initiative. Lastly, Thomas Elementary and Fresno Unified will provide new transportation options to families facing barriers to accessing community education, health, and social services.

Goal 3: Build the individual and collective capacities of teachers, support staff, and administrators to address the academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs of students within a multi-tiered system of supports.

Given the significant academic, social-emotional, and development needs of Thomas Elementary students, teachers and support staff require ongoing specialized professional learning to understand and address the complex needs of students and their family members, particularly among students that have experienced trauma. While Thomas Elementary has adopted MTSS and PBIS frameworks to identify and support students with unique learning and behavioral needs, needs assessment and gap analyses have identified the need for more intensive professional learning and collaboration, and the proposed CCSPP Project will address this need in three ways. First, Thomas Elementary and Fresno Unified will contract with trainers to deliver in-person and virtual professional development and coaching designed to improve teacher and staff knowledge and skills. While specific professional development content areas will be selected throughout each year based on frequent assessment of teacher and support staff professional learning needs, the needs assessment process has already identified the need to deliver trainings and coaching in restorative practices, trauma-informed practices, culturally responsive instruction, universal design for learning, social-emotional learning, educator self-care, and evidence-based family engagement strategies. These trainings will advance Thomas Elementary’s efforts to align educational practices with the Four Cornerstone Commitments of Community Schools. New professional learning will be delivered through a combination of professional

conferences, in-person and virtual workshops delivered by subject matter experts, new trainings embedded into Thomas Elementary's existing professional learning infrastructure (e.g., grade-level and schoolwide Professional Learning Communities, early release days), and follow-up coaching and refresher trainings delivered with the support of Fresno Unified coaches and external experts. Second, the CCSPP project will enable Thomas Elementary to further invest in teacher and support staff professional learning by covering a percentage of costs associated with personnel efforts above and beyond standard contract duties to (1) participate in collaborative community schools planning; (2) design interventions and supports for high-need students; and (3) engage in professional learning specifically related to the California Community Schools Framework. Lastly, in conjunction with new professional learning, Thomas Elementary will purchase social-emotional learning curriculum and resources (e.g., Everyday Speech, Second Step) in order to enable each school to more effectively address identified social-emotional learning needs.

Goal 4: Enhance and expand after school, intercession, and summer learning programming to provide students with new out-of-school-time opportunities that reinforce lessons learned during the regular school day and address targeted academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs.

While Thomas Elementary provides core after school programming funded through a combination of 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CLC), After School Education and Safety (ASES), and/or Expanded Learning Opportunities and Programs (ELO-P) funding, school leaders and stakeholders have identified the need to supplement these existing expanded learning investments to address both the high levels of learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the high levels of behavioral and social-emotional learning needs demonstrated by Thomas Elementary students. CCSPP funding will be strategically braided with existing expanded learning program investments to address these needs in three specific ways. First, Thomas Elementary will contract with expanded learning program service providers to enhance out-of-school time academic achievement and youth enrichment programming that addresses the academic, social-emotional learning, and overall positive youth development needs of its high-need students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, special education students, foster youth, and all students requiring Tier 2 intervention. While Thomas Elementary will select community-based organizations and service providers based on local needs and assets, needs assessment planning has highlighted the need for several specific enrichment and pro-social learning opportunities, including anti-vaping and anti-bullying programming, community service-learning projects, mentorships, and youth leadership development activities. Second, a portion of CCSPP funding will be used to cover teacher extra duty pay to enable Thomas Elementary certificated personnel to deliver new expanded learning opportunities to students requiring targeted academic, behavioral, and/or social-emotional supports. These efforts will also increase expanded learning program alignment with regular day instruction, creating a year-round continuum of academic assistance and youth enrichment programming. Third, Thomas Elementary will use CCSPP funding to provide new transportation services to ensure all students have

equitable access to community school services offered beyond the regular school day and/or off campus.

Over the five-year CCSPP Implementation Project grant period, Fresno Unified's Community Schools Steering Committee will engage each site-level Community Schools Advisory Council in cycles of ongoing assessment, reflection, and collaborative decision-making. These efforts will be supported by an external evaluator, who will conduct formative and summative evaluations that include quantitative and qualitative assessments to determine (1) the district's and each participating school's success in implementing the community schools model with fidelity and (2) the CCSPP Implementation Project's overall impact and success in meeting target performance measures (e.g., student, school, family, and community outcomes).

In order to measure fidelity of implementation, the evaluator will create a rubric of implementation that quantifies expectations for implementation of each community schools component. Expectations may be expressed in terms of the number of activities conducted, services offered, products created, trainings held, or participants served. Although implementation scales may vary, the rubric will categorize each component as not implemented, partially implemented, mostly implemented, or fully implemented. Applying a rubric of implementation at the site level will allow for comparison of implementation progress among Fresno Unified schools and the use of implementation level as an independent variable in outcome studies.

To measure CCSPP Project impacts, the evaluator will establish baseline data at the start of the project period across each measure to be assessed to determine the project's success in accomplishing all four CCSPP Project goals. Evaluation tools and methods will include (1) standardized testing results (e.g., CAASPP, NWEA assessments) to determine students' academic achievement; (2) Panorama Survey results to assess factors such as school climate, student engagement, and social-emotional development; (3) multiple measures that assess student behavioral outcomes (e.g., attendance, dropout rates, suspension/expulsion rates); (4) parent and community surveys and focus groups to obtain qualitative feedback regarding the perceived quality of community schools services; and (5) teacher/staff surveys to obtain qualitative feedback regarding the perceived quality of professional learning.

The Community Schools Steering Committee and Advisory Councils will meet monthly to review formative evaluation results and at the end of each school year to review summative results. During the final meeting of each year, each Community Schools Coordinator and the evaluator will lead site-level stakeholders in determining project strengths and weaknesses and making improvement decisions to be implemented in the subsequent year. Rigorous project evaluation at both site and district levels combined with ongoing collaborative reflection and continuous quality improvement will ensure CCSPP investments result in school-wide transformations that align with the Community Schools Framework and benefit Fresno Unified students, parents, and school communities. Further, this process of data-driven continuous quality improvement will result in broader impacts by informing Fresno Unified's efforts to scale its community schools initiative to new sites over the coming years.

3. Stakeholders Engaged and Key Staff

During the 2021–22 school year, Fresno Unified received a CCSPP Planning Grant and began a year-long planning process in preparation for the development of its CCSPP Implementation Grant application. At the start of Planning Grant proposal development, the district partnered closely with the Fresno Teachers Association (FTA) to collaboratively identify and engage an initial planning team (“Core Work Group”) comprised of administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and governmental agencies. Upon receiving CCSPP Planning Grant funding, Fresno Unified had already secured strong commitments from its Core Work Group partners to engage in a full year of community schools planning in preparation for developing this CCSPP Implementation Project application. At the start of the CCSPP Planning Grant period (June 2022), Fresno Unified also formalized a Community Schools Steering Committee co-chaired by a Fresno Unified Principal on Special Assignment and an educational planning consultant. These two individuals were selected to spearhead community school planning efforts due to their prior successes in leading projects of similar size and scope as well as their strong existing relationships with a broad range of key stakeholder groups throughout the district, including site principals, teachers, FTA, parent organizations, and students.

The Community Schools Steering Committee established a four-phase planning process to engage all key community stakeholders in designing a district-wide and site-specific community schools vision and meaningfully engaging each school site throughout the local needs assessment, asset mapping, and gap analysis process. First, the Steering Committee and Core Work Group engaged with community school leaders throughout the state to explore what community schools strategies were working in other educational institutions, particularly those serving communities with similar characteristics to those of Fresno Unified schools. This exploration included site visits to observe distinguished California community schools and engagement with regional educational researchers and practitioners through participation in Fresno County Superintendent of Schools’ Communities of Practice for Community Schools workshops. The purpose of this initial planning phase was to ensure that all key stakeholders shared a strong understanding of the core features of successful community schools.

Second, the Steering Committee and Core Work Group shared community schools information with Fresno Unified schools and asked site leadership teams to convene with local stakeholder groups to assess commitment to and interest in adopting the community schools model. Upon receiving site-level leadership team feedback, the Steering Committee and Core Work Group collaboratively selected five Fresno Unified schools to serve as the district’s first community schools cohort, and Thomas Elementary was one of the five schools selected. These five “pilot” schools were selected based on such factors as demonstrated need and local commitments from leaders and stakeholders to implement the community schools framework with fidelity.

Schools not selected to participate in Fresno Unified’s first community schools cohort will be the first considered for the district’s planned community schools scale-up efforts in CCSPP Implementation Round 3.

Third, after selecting target schools, the Steering Committee and Core Work Group engaged with a governing body from each school to conduct site-specific needs assessments, asset mappings, and gap analyses. Thomas Elementary’s governing body consists of the School Site Council in addition to select community stakeholders. The collaborative needs assessment, asset mapping, and gap analysis process included gathering and assessing both quantitative data (e.g., CASSPP/NWEA assessments, Panorama Survey results, California School Dashboard indicators) and qualitative feedback collected through focus groups, surveys, and interviews. These efforts culminated in **Thomas Elementary’s Community Schools Needs Assessment, Asset Mapping, and Gap Analysis (see CCSPP Grant Application Attachment III)**.

Lastly, the Fresno Unified Community Schools Steering Committee, Core Work Group, and Thomas Elementary’s local governing body collaboratively (1) defined the district-wide vision for the community schools initiative; (2) refined this vision to align with Thomas Elementary’s local needs and priorities; (3) developed the four CCSPP Implementation Project goals and corresponding activities; (4) drafted and discussed multiple budgets to determine the most cost-effective approach to achieving target goals; and (5) formalized Thomas Elementary’s Community Schools Implementation Plan. Throughout the CCSPP Implementation Project grant period, Thomas Elementary and Fresno Unified will continue to meaningfully engage with partners and stakeholders to effectively and collaboratively execute the school improvement strategies activities outlined in Chapter 5 below. Further, Thomas Elementary’s capacity for stakeholder engagement will be significantly increased by the hiring of a full-time Community Schools Coordinator who will serve as the school’s site-level lead in ensuring the Community Schools Framework is implemented with fidelity through shared governance and collaborative decision-making.