

Community School Community Conversations

2020-21 Report

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

A community school is a way to put the school at the center of the community, making it a hub for services and programs. In collaboration with Racine Unified School District, United Way of Racine County implemented the community school model for Racine County with the LIFT (Link and Inspire for Tomorrow) strategy. Through LIFT, Racine County community schools intentionally create an infrastructure that forges strong relationships to align resources and expertise to move the needle on key indicators related to young people's success.

WHAT ARE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS?

As Mitchell, United Way of Racine County and Racine Unified School District prepare to make Mitchell Racine's third community school in the 2021-22 school year, we held twenty kitchen table-style discussions called Community Conversations.

Community Conversations provide the space for teachers, staff, students, parents and community members to share their knowledge and thoughts on the strengths of the Mitchell community and our collective aspirations for the future. In total, we heard from over 120 teachers and staff at Mitchell and from over 200 students.

WHAT'S NEXT?

While we cannot promise to make every idea happen and solve every challenge we face, we DO promise to work together, listen fully and take the steps to move forward as a community. This is just the beginning, and we are excited to build on the success and strength of Mitchell. We will regularly host opportunities for community members to support their student's success and contribute to our community school partnership. We encourage students, parents, teachers, staff and community members to reach out to Maham Ali (mali@unitedwayracine.org), community schools manager with questions and comments.



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Findings

Aspirations

- Remove stigma of Mitchell as “dumping ground” for students
- Add a mental health clinic and more staffing resources
- Build collaborative relationships across grade levels
- Develop deeper relationships with parents, students and staff
- Reduce staff turnover
- Offer culturally-relevant curriculum and teaching practices

Challenges

- Negative perception as a place for low-performing students
- High staff turnover
- Chronic absenteeism rates and students transfer schools frequently
- Hard to engage parents due to time and transportation constraints
- Students suffering from trauma have difficulty engaging with school
- Need to unify the elementary school and middle school as one

Possible solutions

- Create unity through community engagement, school beautification
- Hire more therapists, counselors and additional staffing resources
- Have a mental health clinic
- Collaborate across grade levels
- Engage more community partners and organizations
- Offer staff incentives to stay at Mitchell



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