



**TILDEN**  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
(GRADES 5-8)



MAYOR'S OFFICE  
OF EDUCATION

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
PHILADELPHIA

A City of Philadelphia  
Designated Community School

COMMUNITY  
SCHOOL PLAN  
MARCH 2017

## LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



This past July, the City of Philadelphia, in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, proudly announced the first cohort of Community Schools. The Community Schools initiative is a key piece of our shared vision to improve the educational landscape of our city. This effort marks a new approach for how the City supports students and families, strengthens schools, and revitalizes neighborhoods.

By providing services like food pantries or access to dental care we remove barriers that prevent our students from learning. Ultimately, Community Schools and the services they provide allow our students to focus on learning and our teachers to focus on teaching.

I am happy to share that over the past six months the Mayor's Office of Education has conducted a thorough analysis of each of our nine community schools. Our dedicated team has surveyed more than 2,000 community members, students, school staff, and parents to get a comprehensive understanding of the unique needs within each school community. More than 500 additional people participated in 1 of 50 in-person focus groups, providing feedback that informed this report.

This report highlights the ways the City will expand services to meet the specific needs of our schools. Our Community School Coordinators will continue to work closely with their Community School Committees over the next year and we invite you to join them in this shared effort to strengthen our schools and neighborhoods.

Together, we will help our children reach their full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James F. Kenney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James F. Kenney  
Mayor of Philadelphia

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**4** | Philadelphia's Community Schools

**5** | Identifying School Needs

**7** | About Tilden Middle School

**9** | Tilden's Community School Focus Areas  
and Priorities

**12** | Get Involved

**13** | Acknowledgements

Appendices

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES, STRENGTHENING SCHOOLS, REVITALIZING NEIGHBORHOODS

The City of Philadelphia's Mayor's Office of Education (MOE) launched the Community Schools initiative, in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, to strengthen school communities by improving access to programs, services, and supports for the children and families of Philadelphia. Funded by the Philadelphia Beverage Tax, nine community schools were established during FY17.

Community schools are public schools where a full-time coordinator works with the entire school community—students, families, teachers, administrators, service providers, and neighbors—to identify student and community needs, such as expanded health services, after-school programming, and job training. The coordinator then works with service providers and City agencies to bring these resources directly into the school, enabling community schools to become thriving neighborhood centers.

Successful community schools leverage public, private, and philanthropic resources to address non-academic barriers and challenges that too often keep our students from learning. Through this strategy, the City strengthens schools and the School District by sharing the responsibility for meeting the needs of the whole child, and thereby helping hardworking educators focus on teaching.

### Community School Coordinators

A key tenet of a community school is a dedicated Community School Coordinator who works directly in the school and with the entire school community. Philadelphia's Community School Coordinators are city employees reporting to MOE, and working in partnership with the school principal. MOE also provides technical and programmatic assistance to support principals, coordinators, and community partners to secure resources and create opportunities that benefit students, families, and neighbors. Examples of this centralized support include systems strategies around resources such as social and emotional wellness, health services, training and professional development, identifying new resources and partners, and working with local and national coalitions.

### A Focus on Health

Because the physical, social, and emotional health of children is critical, MOE is also working closely with the School District of Philadelphia, various city departments, community organizations, and service providers to develop strategies to increase these services. One highlight is a new collaboration between MOE and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) to develop expanded health services and access in school communities, including dental and vision, asthma care and other strategies to support the district's school nurses. Through this partnership, MOE also hired Healthy Schools Coordinators to provide additional support to community schools. Grounded in the understanding that healthy, active, well-nourished children learn better, they are working to improve access to healthy foods, physical activity and drinking water habits that students need to thrive in and out of the classroom.

### Community School Committee

Each school has organized an advisory committee to review information and provide guidance on priorities for the community school plans. The Community School Committee (CSC) is comprised of school staff, parents/caregivers and community members. The CSC works with the Community School Coordinator and school leadership to develop and implement this plan based on the unique set of needs of their community school. The CSC sets priorities, and advises in the implementation of the community school plan.

# IDENTIFYING SCHOOL NEEDS

Once a school receives designation as a community school, the first step is to conduct a needs assessment in order to discover the strengths of the school and its neighborhood assets, as well as what the school community identifies as priorities for the community school to address.

## What MOE did at every school:

MOE utilized a variety of tools to obtain feedback from community school stakeholders. Staff engaged five stakeholder groups: students, parents, teachers/staff, organizations providing services in the school, and representatives from the community. Methods included:

- ✓ Surveys (paper and digital)
- ✓ Focus groups
- ✓ One-on-one interviews
- ✓ Participation in school activities to hear from as many stakeholders as possible



MOE also analyzed community datasets including information from the American Community Survey, the School District of Philadelphia’s annual student, family, and staff surveys, Public Health Management Corporation’s Household Health Survey, the Community Health Assessment, and other data sources. This data review process helped provide context for understanding neighborhoods, and was used in conjunction with information from surveys and focus groups. Using this data, MOE created maps and presented detailed data presentations on neighborhood resources, health and census information to each community school committee for their specific neighborhood.<sup>1</sup>

## What MOE learned across schools:

During citywide community outreach there were some consistent themes across all nine of our community schools:

- Job training and access to job opportunities
- Food insecurity and access to healthy foods
- Access to physical, social and emotional health services, including the need for a “trauma informed” approach to serving students
- Access to clothing and uniforms
- Cultural and social opportunities

For example, students who are hungry are not ready to learn, and in many of the neighborhoods where community schools are located people identified food insecurity as a need. To address this broader need, the Mayor’s Office of Education is working with SDP and key partners including philanthropic and community organizations to implement food access programs at all the community schools. These programs may include a food “backpack” pilot where students take home food monthly, establishing food pantries and/or fresh produce stands to bring healthy and

<sup>1</sup> A detailed methodology description is available in Appendix A

## IDENTIFYING SCHOOL NEEDS

affordable foods directly to community schools, working with partners like Philabundance, the SHARE Food Program, the Food Trust and Common Market. Some programs will take time to develop and some are advancing already.

As Mayor Kenney has said, every City department has a shared responsibility to improve the ways the City of Philadelphia supports students, families and local schools. MOE is working closely with numerous departments and agencies to create opportunities that can build upon existing good work and align the City's many programs and services. For example, the Community Schools initiative is partnering with the Health Department to place Healthy School Coordinators in schools to support programs to increase physical activity; promote access to healthy food and drinking water, physical activity, and family engagement in wellness. In addition to working closely with the Health Department, the Community Schools team is working with the REBUILD initiative, PHLpreK, the Department of Human Services, and the Managing Director's office to align strategies to serve families and neighborhoods. The Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS) is working with MOE to help identify schools' ongoing needs and barriers to services, with the goal of strengthening connections to behavioral health services for students and families. Technical assistance staff work closely with the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity to refer families to programs that will connect them to public benefits, and with the Commerce department to expand workforce development efforts. The Office of Adult Education is working to help bring their extensive portfolio of adult education to schools. Other examples include working with the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy and Mural Arts to bring arts and cultural opportunities to schools. MOE is also partnering with the Office of Immigrant Affairs to respond to the critical challenges our immigrant and refugee families are facing.

From this work, MOE created a profile of each school, including an assessment of community resources, demographic information, and information about the neighborhood and specific school community.



***“We cannot expect our children to succeed academically if they come to school hungry, sick or too traumatized to learn. Expanding the community schools approach is one way that we will strategically align City services and other resources to better address the needs of students and families. I’m excited to expand this proven strategy in Philadelphia and look forward to working with these school communities.”*** - Mayor Jim Kenney

# ABOUT TILDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Tilden Middle School** is located at the intersection of South 66th Street & Elmwood Avenue in the Southwest section of the city. The school is working to increase family engagement, and last year the school created a Parent Resource Center. It was selected for the School District of Philadelphia's Redesign Initiative in 2015-16, which supports schools in implementing innovative plans that use research-based practices proven to improve educational outcomes for all students. Tilden is in their second year with the Redesign Initiative.

The community around Tilden Middle School contains several resources including two Community Development Corporations: Catholic Social Services and Empowered CDC. It is also near the Elmwood Avenue and Woodland Avenue business corridors. Long-time residents shared that the neighborhood around Tilden used to be primarily Caucasian, but the demographics have shifted and now the area is home to mostly African American families and African immigrants. Community members see a lot of opportunity to create more partnerships in the neighborhood, both with the many small businesses along the Elmwood businesses corridor and between new residents.

### Current Offerings:

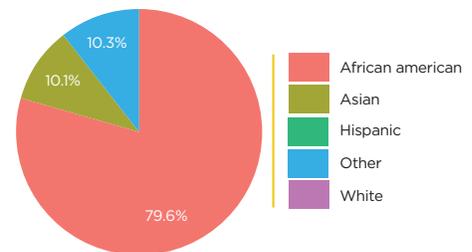
- Afterschool STEM program offered through PHMC
- A food pantry located at the school
- A Parent Resource Center

### Partners:

- Philadelphia Health Management Corporation (PHMC)
- Empowered Community Development Corporation
- Southwest Community Development Corporation, and more

Total students <sup>2</sup>	368
English Language Learners	15.2%
Special Education	18.8%
Economically Disadvantaged	100%

### William T. Tilden School Demographics



Percentage of population born outside of the United States, Tilden<sup>3</sup>:

**22%** 91th percentile

City average: **10.7%**

**Recreation Centers** Myers Recreation Center is a 25-minute walk, but is accessible by trolley. Donald P. Finnegan Playground is at 6900 Grovers street, and McCreesh playground is at 66th by Regent street.

**Libraries** The Paschalville Library is a 15-minute walk from the school on the corner of Woodland Avenue and 70th street.

**Green Space** The closest green space is Connell Park a few blocks from the school. Also, Bartram Gardens and Heinz Wildlife are located in Southwest.

**Health Resources** The Health Annex is a family practice and counseling network less than a mile from the school. Tilden also refers students and families to the Dunbar Counseling Agency and Carson Valley for mental health services.

**Grocery Stores** There is a Save-a-Lot at 58th and Woodland near the school, a ShopRite at Island Avenue and Lindbergh Blvd, and a new grocery store just opened at 54th and Chester.

<sup>2</sup> Data in this table is taken from the School Profiles on The School District of Philadelphia website, [https://webapps1.philasd.org/school\\_profile/](https://webapps1.philasd.org/school_profile/)

<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey 2010-2014

# ABOUT TILDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

## What We Learned at Tilden School

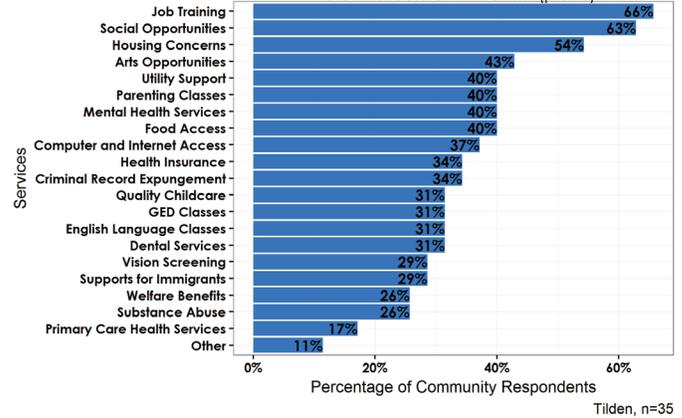
At Tilden, more than 350 students, staff, families, community members, and school partners completed surveys and/or participated in focus groups or interviews.

- ✓ Students, families, and staff expressed concerns about bullying and said there was a need for bullying prevention services
- ✓ Community members, families, and students said that job training was a service that was needed in the neighborhood
- ✓ In focus groups, families and community members shared that community safety and family engagement were both needs
- ✓ Families and community members asked for more resources like housing, utility supports, and adult education classes in surveys
- ✓ Physical health services were a need based on staff surveys, including primary care, insurance help, and dental services.

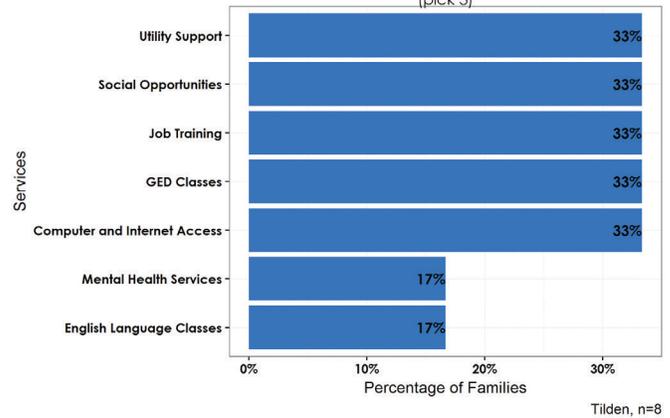
Additionally, school and neighborhood beautification and cleanliness was also brought up by all stakeholder groups, except service providers, and about half of students identified homework help as a service they wanted at their school. While counseling and mental health services were not identified by students or families as a need on surveys, it was identified by more than half of school staff, school partners, and discussed in Community School Committee meetings.

Tilden's community school committee (CSC) consists of families, teachers, staff, community members, school partners, the principal and community school coordinator. (A list of CSC members is available on page 13.)

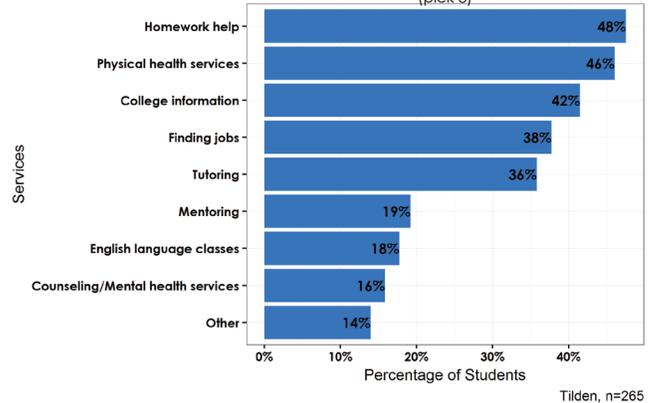
**Services The Community Wants**  
Please choose the services you would participate in if they were available at this school (pick 5)



**Services Families Want For Themselves**  
Please choose the three biggest needs for yourself (pick 3)



**Services Students Want**  
What Services Do You Need More of At Your School? (pick 3)



## PRIMARY PRIORITIES

- Coordinate resources to support the school environment
- Increase access to physical, social, emotional, and mental health services
- Strengthen job training and employment resources for families

### **Coordinate resources to support the school environment**

Nearly half of students agreed that bullying was a problem at Tilden; it came up in both student focus groups, and almost 70% of staff identified it as a need for students. Parents expressed concern that children were bullied for many reasons, including cultural differences. During the Community School Committee meeting, members talked about how bullying was related to other challenges in the school including a need for more adults in the building, particularly during transitions between classes.

#### *Initial action steps (3 months)*

- Empower youth to help design solutions to climate issues through the creation of student leadership positions
- Identify organizations and resources in the community and at the School District that have expertise in the areas of bullying and creating a positive school environment

#### *Short-term goals (6-12 months)*

- Increase adult supervision in the hallways during transitions between classes and during lunch periods
- Create peer mediation groups for students with support from community partners
- Identify the resources needed to create a mediation and mindfulness room
- Provide opportunities to learn about other cultures and increase cultural competency for both adults and youth
- Identify partners to train staff and educate students on the importance of social responsibility

#### *Long-term goals (2 years)*

- Ensure all students have the resources they need to address academic and behavioral concerns without missing school days
- Decrease the number of student suspensions

### **Increase access to physical, social, emotional, and mental health services**

On community school surveys, nearly half of students said they needed more physical health services, including access to doctors and vision services. Families and community members stated that access to primary health care services and dental services was a need in the community. For dental services, the school currently partners with a local organization to offer dental screenings once a year, but more supports are needed to ensure that all students, regardless of insurance, can receive treatment for dental issues identified during the screening. Mental health services were identified as a need by school staff. On community surveys, 1/3 of respondents indicated they would participate in services that help them get health insurance.

## TILDEN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOCUS AREAS

### *Initial action steps (3 months)*

- Meet with families and current providers to identify barriers to dental care, primary care, and mental health services
- Work with partners and MOE to identify additional health and mental health partners
- Identify partners who are interested in providing health education to students

### *Short-term goals (6-12 months)*

- Develop communication strategy to effectively share information about health resources with families
- Form partnerships with dental service providers to increase access to treatment for families
- Establish partnerships to increase access to annual flu shots, dental care, and mental health services
- Create health resource binder, organized by insurer, for students and families

### *Long-term goals (2 year goals)*

- Ensure all students receive dental screenings and follow-up treatments
- Ensure students do not miss school due to untreated illnesses or appointments

## **Strengthen job training and employment resources for families**

Job opportunities and job training was a commonly identified need on community and family surveys. A third of student surveys also selected finding jobs as one of the top services needed at the school. At the Community School Committee meeting, the group discussed how the lack of employment training and job opportunities affect housing situations and utility supports. By connecting families to jobs the community school will be able to improve several inter-related challenges for families, such as losing a house or having the electricity turned off.

### *Initial action steps (3 months):*

- Meet with community partners to learn more about the resources they offer job seekers
- Conduct focus groups with students and families to learn what will attract people to job training and support programs
- Meet with local employers and business corridors to identify what types of job training are important to the business community

### *Short-term goals (6-12 months):*

- Host informational sessions with local employers and staffing agencies for families and community members
- Offer basic job seeking tips to seekers during pre-set hours in the Parent Resource Room

### *Long-term goals (2 year goals):*

- Create on going access to employment resources including trainings, resume support, and clothes for interviews
- Create a work mentor program where job seekers can receive assistance, resources, and support
- Build partnerships with employers and regularly communicate job opportunities to families

# TILDEN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOCUS AREAS

## SECONDARY PRIORITIES

**Increase access to uniforms.** Middle school children grow quickly and both purchasing and replacing uniforms can be expensive. Our initial plan to address this is to identify groups and organizations that will donate uniforms to the school, ensure they are accessible to families, and share information on where uniforms can be purchased at a low cost.

**Create a mindfulness space for students.** To support the students who are in crisis, and support a positive school environment, we are planning to create a mindfulness space. Students will be able to come to this space when they need to take a break, and we will look for partners to help staff the mindfulness room.

**Increase access to healthy food for families when school is closed.** When schools are closed, the community school will support families by offering food items that will sustain them through the “in-between times”. In planning for this initiative, we will look for sources of healthy foods, identify volunteers or partner organizations that will collaborate with us, and work with families to see what types of food they want access to.

**Increase physical activity for students.** The community school committee identified offering intermural sports to students after school to increase physical activities and the need to create more sports options for low income families.



# GET INVOLVED

## What's Next

As the name implies, Community Schools are not the work of one person, but of all the people in the school and in the neighborhood. Already, partners are coming together every month to share resources and identify new ways to help the school families and staff are meeting regularly at Community School Committee meetings, and new strategies are being developed to achieve the community school's goals. The principal, staff, and Community School and Healthy School Coordinators will continue to work together with existing community partners to expand services and opportunities that meet the needs of students, families, and community members.

## Get Involved

There are many ways to support your neighborhood community schools:

- **Volunteer** - Community schools offer events throughout the year that require volunteers. Volunteering can include one-time opportunities, such as presenting during career days, special event support, or ongoing opportunities with the school or one of the many partners who work there. *Volunteers in community schools will need to follow the SDP volunteer guidelines and complete all required background checks.*
- **Partner** - Philadelphia is a city with many strong neighborhood, community and citywide organizations that are working, or would like to work with schools to bring additional resources and opportunities to children and families. *Please be aware that if your organization is interested in working in a school there are School District of Philadelphia requirements you may have to meet.*
- **Contribute** - Community schools are often looking for donations, including in-kind items such as winter coats or uniforms for clothing closets, as well as for funding for specific initiatives or programs.

To learn more about how to volunteer, partner or contribute, contact our office at **Community.Schools@phila.gov**

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To find out more about the Community School Committee or specific opportunities at this community school contact the Tilden Community School Coordinator, Regina Young. **Email: [regina.young@phila.gov](mailto:regina.young@phila.gov)**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The Mayor's Office of Education would like to thank the following individuals, organizations, and city departments for their valuable support in producing this plan.**

School District of Philadelphia  
Tilden Principal Brian Johnson

The members of Tilden's  
Community School Committee:

Shantayah Hayes, *Resident*

Dominique Tocatlian, *Teacher*

Yvonne Shervington, *Teacher*

Cole Jadrosich, *Teacher*

Melissa Gray, *Resident*

Alandra Abrams, *Teacher*

Brionna Williams, *Student*

Marsha Wall, *Community Organization*

Thank you to the many educators and administrators of the School District of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers who have worked with MOE to develop this strategy to support our schools.

Many City Departments and City Council Offices have offered their partnerships, and shared their knowledge, ideas, and resources to support this initiative.

## METHODOLOGY

### Survey Development

To develop the community school surveys, the Mayor's Office of Education worked with local and national partners, reviewed surveys used by other community school initiatives and cities, and worked with coordinators and students to ensure that the data collected was useful and the questions meaningful. In total, nine surveys were reviewed by two national and seven local partners including the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, Community Legal Services, and more. Initially, surveys were created for each key stakeholder group: students, families, school staff, community members, and service providers. An additional survey for younger students (grades Kindergarten - 2nd) was also used. Themes incorporated into the surveys included questions about needs and services, and stakeholders' perspectives on the school and community.

### Focus Groups

Focus groups provided community school coordinators the opportunity to have deeper discussions with stakeholders about their concerns and priorities. Each focus group was facilitated by either the community school coordinator or healthy school coordinator. Staff from the Mayor's Office of Education supported the process as note takers when necessary. Training on facilitation was provided to community school and healthy school coordinators in August, and sample focus group scripts were shared with all coordinators. Questions focused on the needs of the school and community. Focus group notes were reviewed, themes were identified for each discussion and entered into a summary table for comparison across stakeholder groups.

### Interviews

In order to collect as much information as possible, some coordinators chose to do additional outreach to stakeholders in the form of 1:1 interviews. Interviews were between 20 and 60 minutes long and notes were collected and reviewed similar to focus groups.

### Community Data

The community information section presents findings from an analysis of data from the American Community Survey (ACS), Philadelphia Health Management Corporation's (PHMC) Household Health Survey, the Philadelphia Police Department, and Get Healthy Philly.

- Key measures asked in the 2009-2014 ACS were measured in all census tracts that overlap the area within 1000 feet of the school.
- The PHMC survey data was calculated for 2010, 2012, and 2014 by measuring respondents within 4000 feet of a school (the larger buffer was chosen due to the survey's relatively low sample size.)
- Drug crimes were measured using public data released by the Philadelphia Police Department's part II narcotics offenses, and calculated by adding up the number of events within 1000 feet of each residence in the city. The average number of crimes per residence is then calculated within ½ mile of the school.
- Estimates from Get Healthy Philly (Philadelphia Department of Public Health) are used for areas of the city that have both high poverty (greater than 20% of the block is below the poverty line) and there is low or no access to healthy food within walking distance (half a mile).



*"The community school initiative is helpful to the shift we are looking to have in our school culture. The Tilden team is very appreciative of this collaboration"* - Principal Brian R. Johnson



MAYOR'S OFFICE  
OF EDUCATION

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
**PHILADELPHIA**

**Otis Hackney**

Chief Education Officer  
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