Old River Elementary School Community School Implementation Plan, 2024-2025

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School Overview and Description

Old River is an elementary school serving 657 students (2022-23) grades 4-5. Our students feed directly into Stauffer Middle School, with whom we share a complex, parking lot, etc. (two schools on contiguous real estate). Located in southern Downey, Old River serves a largely low-income (71% of households eligible for Free and Reduced Meals) community that is majority Hispanic/Latino (89%), but has concentrations of African American (2%), White (5%), and Asian American and Pacific Islander (2%) students. Old River has relatively large proportions of both Multi-lingual Leaners (19%) and Students with Disabilities (14%). In the recent past, Old River served about 4-5 foster youth and 4-6 McKinney-Vento (housing insecure-housing does not meet the physical, emotional, and physiological need) students annually. However, since January 2024 Old River has identified 28 McKinney- Vento Students.

Strategy 1: Shared Understanding and Commitment

Our Mission Statement showcases that we are "… committed to developing all students to be self-motivated learners and productive, responsible and compassionate members of an ever-changing global society. Our highly qualified staff foster meaningful relationships with students, parents, and the community while providing a relevant and rigorous curriculum in facilities that advance teaching and learning." Given our proximity and close relationship with Stauffer Middle School, Old River is focused on ensuring that our students have a seamless and successful transition to middle school and beyond.

Much of our mission and vision aligns closely with the Community Schools Framework:
- We are promoting and maintaining a supportive and nurturing environment
- We are implementing a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum - Character Counts!
- We welcome and encourage involvement of families and actively enlist their input
- We start from an asset-based approach that recognizes strengths and achievements
- We accept and appreciate diversity throughout our school community

However, we recognize that Old River is at the **Visioning** stage of becoming a Community School. We are articulating a common vision and commitment to change – both in practice and mindset – to transform our school-wide community in line with the mutually reinforcing pillars, commitments, and core principles of the Community Schools Framework. We believe that the prioritized systems, services, and supports envisioned under Community Schools vision will help us enable students and families to become more resilient, accelerate equity and dismantle barriers to learning, and empower our school community to participate in collaborative leadership.

Strategy 2: Setting Goals and Taking Action (Asset Mapping and Needs Assessment)

Staff from Old River participated in the series of five Community Schools planning meetings for all the schools in South Downey (Fall 2022 and Winter 2023). Bringing together a core group of approximately 40 people comprised of parents, community-based organizations, teachers, counselors, site administrators, and district leaders, these meetings provided a forum for active listening to school community needs. We learned together about the Community Schools Framework and discussed how

best to prioritize school community needs in each of the four Community Schools Pillars. In addition, Old River sent staff and parents to regional focus groups (including events at next door Stauffer Middle School) where more than 50 family and community members, as well as rank-and-file school employees, were able to elaborate on their interests, desires, and vision for Community Schools.

Across South Downey there was a clear consensus for focusing on two of the four Community Schools Pillars: Integrated Supports and Family/Community Engagement. With district investment in campus Wellness Centers, stakeholders were especially interested in strengthening the systems and integration of Mental Health, Wellness, and SEL available to students and their families. At the same time, there was an acknowledgement that school in South Downey needed to do much more to involve a larger, and more representative cross-section of students and families into school programs and services, as well as a need for cultivating leadership among students and family members to allow for authentic and renewed participation in ongoing planning and decisions to set and implement school priorities.

These findings were articulated into a Community Schools planning grant for South Downey schools, successfully obtained in Spring 2023. Since then, Old River has conducted additional asset mapping and needs assessment to clarify needs, priorities, and direction for Community Schools including:
- Surveys of students in grade 4 (135 student respondents)
- Surveys of families (50 households responding)
- Surveys of school staff (66 staff respondents)
- Site visits to hear directly from teachers, family members, and school leaders on the vision and needs for Community Schools.
- Interviews with district support staff, particularly those involved in Mental Health services and MTSS, basic needs support, and family engagement.
- Interviews with community-based organizations, both nonprofits providing services and community forums of faith-based and business leaders in Downey.

Overall, the school community assets most frequently mentioned included:
- A consistent asset-based orientation and outlook
- Regular use of data to drive school discussions and decisions
- Commitment to DEI principles and deepening cultural proficiency
- Active listening and responsiveness to family voices
- Interest in developing student and family leadership

We have documented additional key assets and described the most critical needs below for each of the Four Community School Pillars with our description of the **Plan for each of the 4 Pillars of Community Schools** below.

Core staffing for Community Schools

As detailed in our budget for Community Schools, core staffing in support of Community Schools implementation will be centered on two additional staff positions:

- A Community Schools Specialist (0.3 FTE). This classified position will be responsible for advancing and reinforcing the implementation of Community Schools within the Stauffer feeder
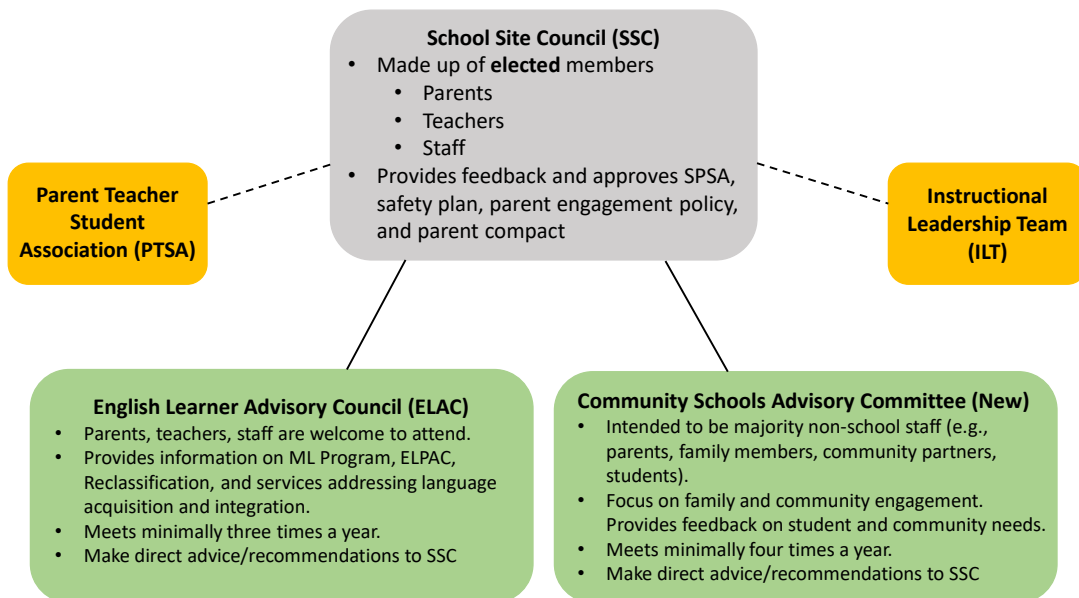
pattern (Stauffer (grades 6-8) and both Old River (grades 4-5) and Williams (grades TK-3)). They will be responsible for ensuring that Core Commitments, Goals and Actions in Old River's Community School Plan are implemented in an inclusive and coordinative fashion across the multiple stakeholder groups and partners working with Old River and our larger feeder pattern. Working closely with school community leaders, the CS Specialist will also serve as the liaison for Old River to district-wide Community Schools governance and coordination.

- A Family and Community Engagement (FACE) liaison (1 FTE). This classified position will be responsible for leading family and community outreach and engagement in the Old River school community. Efforts will focus on enhancing school-home communication, expanding opportunities for families to provide ongoing input and feedback, and providing educational opportunities and training workshops in key areas of community interest and in alignment with school-wide priorities.

These two staff positions will work closely with school administrators and other teacher and family leaders in the school community to coordinate the implementation of our Community Schools action plan detailed for each of the four Community Schools pillars below.

Strategy 3: Collaborative Leadership

The chart below illustrates our proposed governance structure, with the addition of a new Community Schools Advisory Council.   Please refer to Pillar 4 below for more information on Collaborative Leadership.

School Site Council (SSC)
- Made up of **elected** members
  - Parents
  - Teachers
  - Staff
- Provides feedback and approves SPSA, safety plan, parent engagement policy, and parent compact

Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)

Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)

English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC)
- Parents, teachers, staff are welcome to attend.
- Provides information on ML Program, ELPAC, Reclassification, and services addressing language acquisition and integration.
- Meets minimally three times a year.
- Make direct advice/recommendations to SSC

Community Schools Advisory Committee (New)
- Intended to be majority non-school staff (e.g., parents, family members, community partners, students).
- Focus on family and community engagement. Provides feedback on student and community needs.
- Meets minimally four times a year.
- Make direct advice/recommendations to SSC

Plan for each of the 4 Pillars of Community Schools

Below we have provided a plan for implementing Community Schools in each of the 4 Pillars. For each pillar, we provide context and priorities that arose from our Needs Assessment and Asset Mapping process (WHY), a set of goals with concrete activities and strategies (WHAT), and a description of staffing, alignment, measurable outcomes, and plans for sustainability (HOW). In this way, we have underlined embedded key components of the Community Schools Implementation Plan for each pillar including:

- Strategy 4: Coherence: Policy and Initiative Alignment
- Strategy 5: Staffing and Sustainability
- Strategy 6: Strategic Community Partnerships
- Strategy 7: Professional Learning
- Strategy 8: Centering Community-Based Curriculum and Pedagogy
- Strategy 9: Progress Monitoring and Possibility Thinking

Pillar 1: Integrated Supports

Within the Integrated Supports Pillar, Old River is at the **Visioning** level. A campus Wellness Center was recently established (Fall 2023) and has been well received across the school community. Although our neighboring middle school has had a Wellness Center for some time, we are in the process of developing a model that articulates with them and provides a grade 4-8 continuum of care tied to MTSS and encompassing Mental Health, SEL, and Wellness. We continue to learn and inform ourselves about these issues, and staff and families are eager to receive more training and resources. We know, for example, that family members are also in need of counseling services and that some are still stigmatized by the mention of Mental Health. We see that students are challenged by interpersonal relationships on campus and often bring challenging situations from home into school. We also see that we need a shared understanding and vocabulary for talking about prevention and proactive SEL and Wellness. We need to explore how to expand access to services creatively, given the need and the constraints of staffing. The table below provides two goals and a structure for summarizing our intended approach to implementation of Integrated Supports: The table below provides a structure for summarizing our intended approach to implementation of Integrated Supports:

Goal 1: Develop a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) inclusive of both mental health and social emotional learning (SEL). Address key barriers to learning with systems that ensure a safe, welcoming, supportive learning environment for all.

Existing Assets	Critical Needs	Collective Commitments and Strategies	Key Staffing and Partnerships
Clear consensus for deepening school efforts focused on improved access and use of	Address growing levels of student anxiety, stress, grief,	Augment school capacity to provide Mental Health related MTSS:	On-site Wellness Center staffed by Clinical School Therapist (CST).

Mental Health, SEL, and Wellness services.	and other Mental Health issues that serve as barriers to learning	• Expand and scale universal preventative and early identification services (MTSS Tier 1) for students and families.
Strong interest in trauma-informed, MH, and SEL resources by school faculty to support the parent and student community.	Address knowledge and awareness gaps, building local capacity on topics like SEL and MTSS tiers. ‑ Equip teachers to have these kinds of conversations with students and families	• Pilot some Tier 2 (mild-to-moderate need) support groups for students and families • Add clerical staff to campus Wellness Center to ensure greater coordination of services. • Explore how best to provide Wellness Center services before- and after-school.	External Tier 3 Mental Health providers including Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS) and other outside agencies as needed and coordinated through TLC and our site Mental Health Support Team.
Currently training teachers in AVID which focuses on student strengths and assets, an approach that complements SEL and Wellness approaches	Educate and empower families on pervasive mental health and wellness issues, as well as relevant service offerings available on campus.	Professional Learning: Provide training and professional development to complement MTSS implementation: ‑ Training for faculty and staff on SEL best practices and Tier 1 (Universal and Preventative) components of MTSS. ‑ Parent education to increase family awareness and knowledge of SEL, Mental Health, and Wellness services and supports available through the campus Wellness Center; continue to destigmatize Mental Health.	Access to district SEL TOSA (Teacher on Special Assignment)
Currently using Rethink program as a SEL curriculum	Expand trauma-informed counseling supports for students and families.		FACE Liaison for family and community outreach, partner coordination, and ongoing communication.
			CS Specialist for convening and coordinating collective commitments and documenting accountability.
Strategy 4: Coherence - **Alignment to LCAP and SPSA**	Clear linkage to LCAP Goal 2 (Safety and Wellness): All students have a sense of safety, school connectedness, and have their social and emotional needs met. Linkage to LCAP Goal 5 (Family/Community Engagement): Involve parents and community in school and district decision-making; provide tools, build connections, and enhance meaningful and transparent communication. • Training and knowledge building of families to better understand MTSS, SEL and MH will help reinforce this district goal.		
Progress Monitoring and **Possibility Thinking -** **Measurable Outcomes and** **Accountability**	Develop a MTSS plan that spells out systems and services at each Tier Increase awareness of school-based MTSS services among families by 10% Decrease perceptions of MH stigma among families by 20%		

Plan for Sustainability	Increase number of students/families participating in Tier 1 Wellness Center services by 10%

Training all staff in MTSS and Trauma-informed approaches will help to sustain Old River's capacity to provide Tier 1 using existing faculty and staff; we should be better equipped to leverage our campus Wellness Center

Longer term, we aim to work with our district to investigate sustainable funding for school-based and school-linked Behavioral Health (BH) services available through California's Child and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) including:

- Possible hiring of Wellness Coach to provide Tier 1 and Tier 2 MTSS services
- District participation in the Multi-Payer Fee Schedule to allow for reimbursed BH services (provided by Wellness Coaches and existing PPS credentialed staff) when this opens to all LEAs in January 2025 |

Pillar 2: Family and Community Engagement

Within the Family and Community Engagement Pillar, Old River is at the **Engaging** level. We are communicating with families regularly, using multiple methods and across multiple platforms. Parents are expressing their needs, and we are actively trying to adapt. For example, families have been clear with us about the need for more interactivity with staff, more events that involve and recognize their children, and more flexibility on scheduling of school events and activities. There are also a host of topics and issues that families have requested for workshops and training that align with their interests and/or our school's priorities. Surveys of our stakeholders for Community Schools planning revealed the most interest for focusing on communication and parent education. Through surveys at our Gator Gathering meetings, we were able to identify specific topics and days/times that parents requested for future meetings. We developed a series of "Gator Parents Connect" workshops focusing on: behavior support, PBIS, technology, STEM challenges, and math support. Parents attended these interactive workshops and loved building a community of learners together. We have also been engaging parents of Multilingual Learners (MLs) and harnessing their desire for involvement in their child's educational journey. For example, we recently had a meeting filled with parents on the English Learner Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) where we directed families toward the ML supports at Old River. The table below provides a structure for summarizing our intended approach to implementation of Family and Community Engagement:

Goal 2: Deepen and strengthen family engagement with enhanced staff-family interactions and culturally relevant parent educational opportunities.

Existing Assets	Critical Needs	Collective Commitments and Strategies	Key Staffing and Partnerships
Regular school-home communication across multiple methods (email, social media, website, newsletter) and	Provide opportunities for more interaction between school staff and families.	Host parent engagement events in the late afternoon and early evening to accommodate work schedules.	Principal, Vice Principal, Categorical Resource Teacher, Multilingual Interventionists, and PTA Teacher Representative.

platforms (Dojo, Blackboard, etc.)	Refine and curate education workshops for parents in line with expressed desires and formats	- Provide food and childcare to encourage greater participation	FACE Liaison for family and community outreach, partner coordination, and ongoing communication.
Regular, monthly Coffee with the Principal (Gator Gathering) attended by an average of 30-40 family members	Involving families in efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism	Revise family educational workshops and training to include: - Emphasis on SEL, especially strategies for parents to use in home and out-of-school settings to reinforce school efforts (e.g., positive social interaction and interpersonal relationships) - School-based mental health, especially dealing with depression and anxiety early identification and strategies for - Parental role in setting boundaries and monitoring safe use of technology by children - How to support Mathematics in the home; homework monitoring and interactive conversations about Math	CS Specialist for convening and coordinating collective commitments and documenting accountability.
External partnership with TLC, Stauffer Foundation, PTA Helps, DFEO, Downey Fire Department, Downey Police Department, Downey City Library, various groups at nearby secondary schools including Stauffer Middle, and Downey and Warren High Schools	Building a community of families that support one another	Enlist family support to improve attendance/reduce chronic absenteeism. - Explore use of a promotors model - Create a parental "community of practice" to design outreach - Have families suggest recognitions, awards, and incentives	
Strategy 4: Coherence - Alignment to LCAP and SPSA	Clear linkage to LCAP Goal 5 (Family/Community Engagement): Involve parents and community in school and district decision-making; provide tools, build connections, and enhance meaningful and transparent communication. • Emphasis on transparent communication and training of families on school resources, services, and programming.		
Progress Monitoring and Possibility Thinking -	Increase by 10% the number of family participants in workshops and programming		

Measurable Outcomes and Accountability	Increase by 10% positive perceptions of families to annual school climate and LCAP surveys
	Reduce chronic absenteeism by 5% annually
Plan for Sustainability	Gradually shift funding for FACE liaison from Community Schools funding to Title I, Title III, and LCFF sources so this staff position can be sustained longer-term
	Training parent volunteers and promotores will help ensure we have local capacity to be actively engaged with our school community

Pillar 3: Extended Learning Time

Within the Extended Learning Time Pillar, Old River is at the **Engaging** level. We are working closely with the Downey Foundation for Educational Opportunities (DFEO), the district's after-school provider, to provide extended day services. However, there are many students on the waiting list. As part of the Community Schools planning process, Old River stakeholders placed the highest priorities on increasing student access to academic support services. We know that families view academic support as a top priority, so we would like to expand capacity and staffing for academic tutoring. Surveys also revealed strong interest in increasing extended day learning access to Visual Arts and STEM. All this data indicates that we need more capacity to meet student and family demand. Lastly, we are a school pursuing AVID certification. As such, we are embedding career exposure and exploration into our regular school day. We would like to reinforce this in after-school programming. The table below provides a structure for summarizing our intended approach to implementation of Extended Learning Time:

Goal 3: Increase alignment between regular school day and extended day programming with academic support, while also providing additional opportunities for fun extracurricular opportunities.

Existing Assets	Critical Needs	Collective Commitments and Strategies	Key Staffing and Partnerships
Survey data suggests interest in expanding extended day programming options in key categories.	Increase student access to supervised sports and recreation; lack of access contributes to discipline and behavioral issues.	Expand capacity to provide academic support beyond the regular school day.	DFEO, our district's provider of Extended Day learning. They contract with vendors to provide recreation and extracurricular offerings.
Existing success with before school intervention programming for students who need Reading assistance (serving 24 students); and Math (serving 30 students).	Expand academic tutoring and homework help offerings during before and after school hours.	Expand student access to extracurricular activities, particularly Visual Arts and STEM.	
		Explore expansion of Saturday School including academic intervention, enrichment activities, and a strand for families across our entire school feeder pattern (Williams, Old River, and Stauffer)	FACE Liaison for family and community outreach and communication on extended day opportunities.

Aiming for AVID certification; career readiness is already embedded.	Provide more extracurricular activities that are aligned with requests from students and the community. - Demonstrate that we are listening and responsive Aligning school focus on AVID with extended day programming	Work with DFEO to expand student access to Visual Arts Work with DFEO to explore: - A STEM club, an area not currently provided by DFEO, but one in which there appears to be student and family interest. - A career exposure/exploration component to complement our AVID focus	CS Specialist for convening and coordinating collective commitments and documenting accountability.
Strategy 4: Coherence - Alignment to LCAP and SPSA	Linkage to LCAP Goal 1 (Student Success): All students graduate college and career ready, equipped with 21st Century learning skills of creativity, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and civic responsibility. • Extended day programming develops and reinforces these components of student success Connection to LCAP Goal 2 (Safety and Wellness): All students have a sense of safety, school connectedness, and have their social and emotional needs met. • Extended day programming helps reinforce SEL and other aspects of school connectivity by providing extracurricular and enrichment options to students.		
Progress Monitoring and Possibility Thinking - Measurable Outcomes and Accountability	Increased number of students participating in tutoring and other academic support by 10%. Increased extended day enrollments by 10%; reduce the number of families on waitlist for DFEO services.		
Plan for Sustainability	Work with DFEO and its access to Extended Learning Opportunity Program (ELO-P) funds as longer-term funding for modified and expanded programming before and after-school. Leverage Title I and LCFF for staffing of academic tutoring after-school.		

Pillar 4: Collaborative and Shared Decision-Making

Within the Collaborative and Shared Decision-Making Pillar, Old River is at the **Visioning** level. While there are a host of traditional school governance forums, we would like to use the Community Schools grant to reimagine school decision making, integrating greater family and community voice and opportunities for input. We also need to show our school community how the different governance bodies and forums work cohesively together to advance an agenda supportive of our vision for increase academic achievement, greater equity and cultural relevance, and a welcoming, safe learning environment where barriers to access have been dismantled. Most recently, we have been focused on engaging families of Multilingual Learners (MLs) in our English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). Old River will embed Community Schools into existing governance bodies, as well as provide a new forum focused on oversight and continuous improvement monitoring of Community Schools implementation. The table below provides a structure for summarizing our intended approach to implementation of Collaborative and Shared Decision-Making:

Goal 4: Provide multi-stakeholder forums for planning, coordination, and shared decisions responsive to Community Schools issues and needs; increase opportunities for gathering input from all school community stakeholders and meaningful engagement in school governance.

Existing Assets	Critical Needs	Collective Commitments and Strategies	Key Staffing and Partnerships
Parents are important members of our SSC and ELAC; parents are involved in campus decisions, school activities, and budget items.	Strengthen parent interest and involvement in school governance and parent organizations; make opportunities for family input more plentiful and obvious	Increase opportunities for family voice and learning aligned with cultural proficiency projects and Community School goals. - Monthly Coffee with Principal and ELAC meetings.	SSC, ELAC, and PTSA members School site administrators School Categorial Advisor and ELD Coordinator (oversee ELAC)
Our extremely active PTA is constantly involved in gathering parent involvement in activities and decision making.	Clarify desired family roles and presence on campus	Establish a Community Schools Advisory Council that is at least 60% family and community - Focus on planning and monitoring of the Community Schools Implementation Plan - Operate in parity with ELAC and PTSA as advisory governance bodies that report to the SSC	FACE Liaison for family and community outreach and training tied to school governance. CS Specialist for convening stakeholders, coordinating collective commitments, and documenting accountability.
We have regular meetings with personal invitations extended to our families of MLs so they can	Increase parent and school staff interactions tied to planning and decision-making, ideally on school boards and councils.	Provide Professional Learning:	

participate in shaping our support programs. .	- Provide leadership development training for interested school staff and family members on Community Schools governance - Train parents in the promotores model of outreach and advocacy
Strategy 4: Coherence - Alignment to LCAP and SPSA	Clear linkage to LCAP Goal 5 (Family/Community Engagement): Involve parents and community in school and district decision-making; provide tools, build connections, and enhance meaningful and transparent communication. • The strategies we have outlined above are intended to do precisely this. Additional linkage to LCAP Goal 4 (Staff Development): Hire the best teachers and ensure a highly effective staff; promote opportunities for shared and distributed leadership. • Ward is developing school staff leaders who can participate in school governance and work effectively with families and the larger school community as representatives and liaisons for shared decision-making
Progress Monitoring and Possibility Thinking - Measurable Outcomes and Accountability	Train at least 20 parents in a leadership development cadre. • Recruit and involve at least 5 of these for the new Community Schools Advisory Committee Recruit at least one community (external) partner to participate in the new Community Schools Advisory Committee Involve at least 20 parents in regular ELAC participation
Plan for Sustainability	The collective commitments above are not dependent on funding. Rather, these require a change in mindset and renewed energy in service of multi-stakeholder collaboration that is equitable and meaningful.