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Lessons Learned from the NH PDG Community School Planning Grants

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Recommended Citation

NH Preschool Development Grant, "Lessons Learned from the NH PDG Community School Planning Grants" (2024). *Preschool Development Grant*. 46.

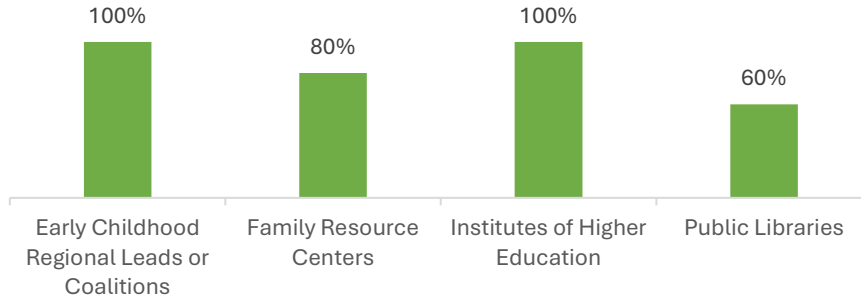
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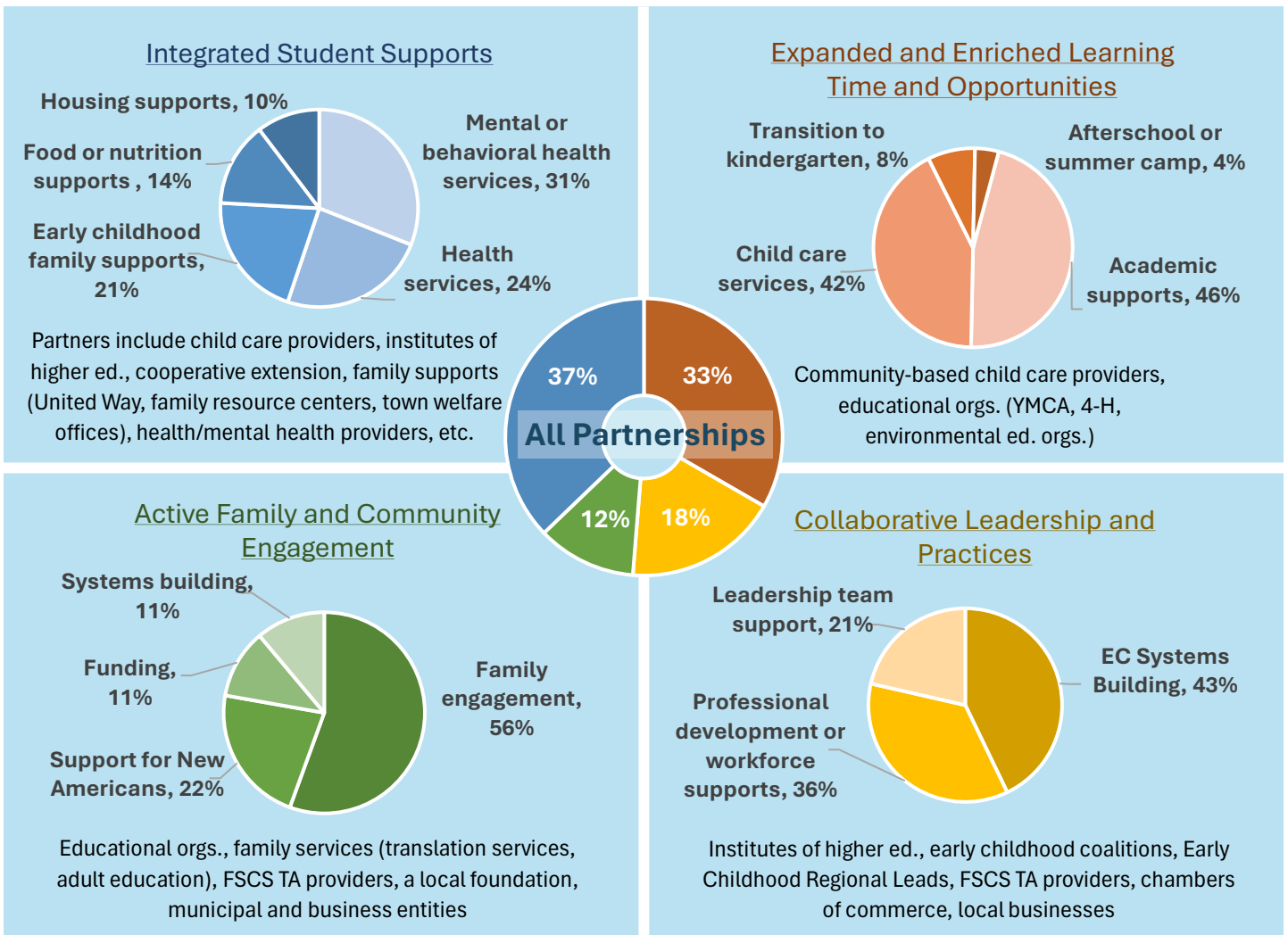
Lessons from the Community School Planning Grants

Community schools are public schools that develop partnerships with local organizations to provide services to students, expand educational opportunities, deliver PD to staff and leadership teams, and provide support to families. Partners also help fund community school initiatives. A primary goal of community schools is to improve academic outcomes for students.

Percentage of planning grant awardees who partnered with...



Partners help schools expand initiatives under each of the Four Pillars of Community Schools.



This publication was made possible by grant number 90TP0110. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.



New Hampshire's
Preschool Development Grant

NH PDG awarded planning grants to six school districts and community-based organizations who partner closely with school districts. Grants ranged from \$150,000 to \$197,000. Over the 13-month planning period, awardees used funds for family engagement events, additional staff, needs assessments, stipends for family leaders, materials, and to strengthen partnerships.






Case Study: Concord’s Community Preschool Ecosystem

Early on in community school planning conversations, the Concord School District realized they don’t have the capacity to be the ‘hub’ in a hub-and-spoke community school model. Instead, they envisioned a community school ecosystem where coordination and fundraising responsibilities are divided among key partners. In their community, systems of support for early childhood care and education run deep, namely through the Concord Connections early childhood coalition. The district embraced the planning grant as an opportunity to strengthen their relationships with the coalition and to improve and expand early education in their community. When it came time to create a plan for the next 2-3 years, building upon existing efforts allowed the Concord School District and their partners to dream big.

Concord Connections is a grassroots interagency coalition. Leadership team members include:

- Concord School District
- Granite United Way
- Boys & Girls Club
- Community Action Program Early Head Start/ Head Start
- Local early care and education providers

When asked what challenges arose while developing plans for community schools, awardees pointed to personnel and funding issues, and the need to garner the support of stakeholders. Possible solutions are drawn from their insights and collective experiences.

Challenges	Solutions
 <p>Limited capacity among</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School staff (educators, admins) • Partner organization leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted funding for planning activities, such as planning and capacity-building grants. • PD for educators and providers to reduce the burden on administrative staff.
 <p>Staff turnover in schools and partner organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear plans, policies, and MOUs to help smooth transitions. • Longer term, improvements in school culture will lead to increased staff retention.
 <p>Limited family engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stipends for family leaders. • A variety of ways for families to engage with a range of commitment levels.
 <p>Stakeholder support for the model is needed before the community school vision can be realized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for families, students, and community partners to participate in planning. • Transparent, ongoing communication with stakeholders, in particular school boards.
 <p>Inconsistent, inadequate funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse funding sources to improve sustainability. • Partners and schools share fundraising responsibility. • TA and small grants to support the development of applications for larger grants.