

Community Involvement

Community Involvement (CI) in schools can promote resource-sharing and coordination to more effectively meet diverse student needs and enrich opportunities in the learning environment. This analysis explores the extent to which state policies promote community engagement in school governance, the formation of school and community partnerships, and the shared use of school facilities. Such efforts are mutually beneficial for schools and communities and contribute to student well-being and learning.

How is community involvement addressed in state law?

- **Thirty-three states encourage or require school districts to include community stakeholders as members on local governance councils or as part of school improvement planning efforts.** Community stakeholders can bring critical and unique insights into school decision-making, including bringing new resources and tools that can improve school processes.¹
- **Forty-two states encourage or require districts to establish school-community partnerships or enter interagency agreements to meet student needs.** Thirteen states encourage districts to promote *Community Schools* or *Integrated Student Supports* initiatives that focus on integrating academics, health and social services, and youth and community development through collaboration with community partners.
- **Forty-one states authorize or encourage districts to establish shared-use agreements or to otherwise promote community use of school buildings or property for civic and recreational purposes.** In many communities, particularly rural settings, the school building may be one of the only publicly accessible locations for community needs. Further, use of athletic fields and other school facilities can help promote the overall health of communities.

Figure 1. 25 states cover at least 80 percent of community involvement topics examined.
Comprehensiveness of policies promoting community involvement in schools, by state

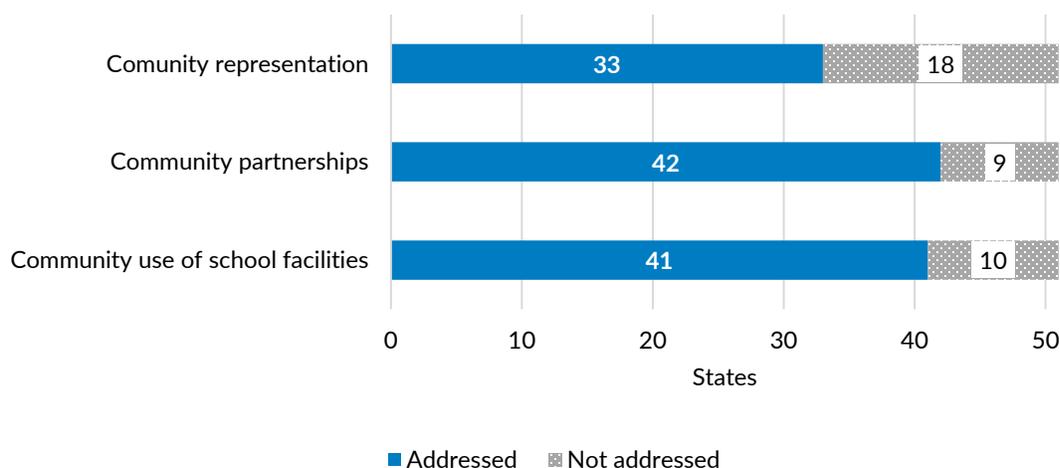


This map shows states that have [◇] **comprehensive** (25), [Δ] **moderate** (22), [□] **low** (3), [○] and **no** (1) coverage of community involvement topics in statutes and regulations governing education.

How comprehensively do states cover community involvement?

- Twenty-five states have comprehensive coverage of community involvement topics (range: 80 percent to 100 percent) indicating a strong emphasis on school-community collaboration to enhance learning opportunities and school environments. Twenty-two states have moderate coverage (range: 40 percent to 60 percent) addressing some components of community engagement in schools.
- Four states—Michigan, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota—have the least comprehensive (range: 0 to 20 percent) coverage with limited emphasis on community participation in school governance, policies and practices.

Figure 2. Number of States Covering Community Involvement Topics



Child Trends, partnership with The Institute of Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago and EMT Associates, Inc., examined the extent to which 11 healthy schools domains are addressed in state policy. These domains include the 10 components of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model: Health Education; Physical Education and Physical Activity; Nutrition Environment and Services; Health Services; Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services; Social and Emotional Climate; Physical Environment; Employee Wellness; Family Engagement; and Community Involvement. An additional domain, the WSCC References domain, addresses the extent to which state laws include explicit references to the WSCC model or similar language, such as the Center for Disease Control and Preventions' Coordinated School Health model.

This sub-brief provides an overview of how state policies cover the Community Engagement domain. Sub-briefs covering the other domains as well as the compiled report can be found on the [Child Trends website](#). Definitions of each of the five topics are provided in the Appendix of the compiled report. Data from all topics are available through the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) [State Policy Database on School Health](#).

¹ Sanders, M. G. (2003). Community involvement in schools: From concept to practice. *Education and urban society*, 35(2), 161-180.