

THE ALLIANCE

TO RECLAIM OUR SCHOOLS

THE SCHOOLS OUR CHILDREN DESERVE

UNITING TO WIN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS)

believes that every child deserves a high quality public education in their own neighborhood and that strong schools help to create strong communities. We believe Sustainable Community Schools are the solution to the opportunity gaps in our schools and will help reverse the growing inequality in our society.

The corporate model of school reform promotes closing schools rather than improving them. Instead of expanding supports for students in neighborhood schools, it diverts resources to charter schools without holding them accountable. It is increasing, not fixing, the inequities in our schools.

Sixty years ago, the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* firmly established the right to equal opportunity and equity of resources in America's schools. And yet children in many low-income, African-American and Latino neighborhoods attend schools that lack a rigorous college-bound curriculum, offer little access to technology and the arts, and have inadequate staffing and support.

By promoting Sustainable Community Schools, AROS is working to finally fulfill the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Critical elements of sustainable community schools

Our alliance builds on more than 20 years of work designing and implementing "full service community schools" in high poverty neighborhoods. Our model is based on the right of every child to attend a high-quality Sustainable Community School in their neighborhood. That model includes the following elements:

- **Curriculum that is engaging, culturally relevant and challenging.** It includes a broad selection of classes and after-school programs in the arts, languages, and ethnic studies, as well as AP and honors courses, services for English Language Learners, special education, GED preparation and job training.
- **High quality teaching, not high stakes testing,** is emphasized. Appropriate assessments are used to help teachers meet the needs of students, and educators have a real voice in professional development.
- **Wrap-around supports** such as health care, eye care and social and emotional services are offered to assist learning. They are available before, during and after school and are provided year-round to the full community. Providers are accountable and culturally competent.
- **Positive discipline practices such as restorative justice** and social and emotional learning supports are stressed so students grow and contribute to the school community and beyond. Suspensions and harsh punishments are eliminated or greatly reduced.
- **Transformational parent and community engagement** is promoted so the full community actively participates in planning and decision-making. This process recognizes the link between the success of the school and the development of the community as a whole.

The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools includes the Alliance for Educational Justice, American Federation of Teachers, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Center for Popular Democracy, Gamaliel Network, Journey for Justice Alliance, League of United Latin American Citizens, National Education Association, National Opportunity to Learn Campaign and Service Employees International Union.

Uniting for the public schools our children deserve