

ACE Community School Needs Assessment

Spring 2022

ACE Leadership High School used a collaborative and participatory research approach to complete a needs assessment to inform our Community School planning. Beginning on the next page, a Data Brief presents data from multiple focus groups, interviews, and surveys conducted as part of the needs assessment. Our goal was to gather input from diverse stakeholders to help us better understand the needs and assets of our students, school, and community.

A project team that included school staff, paid student interns, and partners from local nonprofit Future Focused Education collaborated to design data collection tools and collect the data. We then collaboratively interpreted the results by reviewing and discussing the Data Brief—first as a project team and then with our Community Schools Council. These findings emerged from our discussions:

- **Many ACE students are not involved in sports, clubs, religious communities, or other groups.** In the DAP, nearly half said they are not at all or rarely involved. The Covid-19 pandemic may have impacted this low level of involvement and contributed to greater isolation for young people. *In becoming a Community School, what group activities (including after-school opportunities) might ACE provide to young people?*
- **Many residents in ACE's neighborhood talked about the needs of the unhoused and elderly populations.** These needs include food, housing, home repairs, and improvements like installing ramps for wheelchair users. ACE prepares young people with skills for the architecture, construction, and engineering industries, and respondents were interested in seeing students provide services for residents. *Could ACE's Community School Plan include projects and services that help meet the needs of the unhoused and elderly populations?*
- **Families and neighbors expressed interest in ACE offering classes for adults, especially construction and trades classes.** Because of the school's connections to the construction industry, *might it be possible for ACE to offer these classes for not only students, but for families and community members?*
- **There was also high interest in ACE hosting community events and offering their building as a community space.** For example, ACE has a kitchen, meeting spaces, and outdoor areas that could be opened up for reservations by community groups. *How might ACE use the school's physical space to connect with the community through events and space-sharing?*
- **Students at ACE are more likely to experience support at school and at home than in their community.** ACE students report having strong, positive relationships with adults at school and at home, but they have weaker relationships with their neighbors—both in the school's Sawmill neighborhood and in the neighborhoods where they live. This was particularly evident in the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) results. *In the Community School Plan, what opportunities might we provide that would help young people feel connected with their neighbors and communities?*

This brief presents partially digested data from focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Our goal is to answer these questions as part of our assessment of assets and needs at ACE and in the community:

Assets:

1. *What do students, staff, and families appreciate about what ACE is already doing? ([page 3](#))*
2. *What internal and external assets do our students have? ([page 4](#))*
3. *What organizations and initiatives exist in the community that already benefit students, family, and community members—or could benefit them? (Still to come)*

Needs:

4. *What emerge as areas of student and community need? ([page 6](#))*

Becoming a Community School

5. *What activities, supports, and services would students, families, and community members use if provided by ACE? ([page 9](#))*
6. *What ideas do stakeholders have for steps ACE should take to become a Community School? ([page 12](#))*

Data Sources

FOCUS GROUPS in Oct 2021

- 3 Student groups (25 participants) • 2 Staff groups (22 participants)
- 1 Community group (6 participants)

INTERVIEWS

- 35 Parent interviews in November 2021 • 5 Community Org interviews in January 2022

SURVEYS

- **Developmental Assets Profile (DAP)** completed by **135 ACE students** in October 2021
- **Parent/Guardian Survey** completed by **21 ACE family members** between November 2021 and January 2022
- **Neighborhood Survey** completed by **62 neighborhood residents** in January 2022

ASSETS

1. What do students, staff, and families appreciate about what ACE is already doing?

This table lists the most common themes from across surveys, interviews, and focus groups about what ACE is already doing well.

Provides food for families	<i>"My son enjoys the school and they send him home with food packages and he enjoys that. That's helped us out." (Parent/guardian)</i>
Communicates with families	<i>"They reach out to me on a regular basis. I'm able to speak with the principal directly and have his and teachers number. They handle things is excellent." (Parent/guardian)</i>
Forms community and industry partnerships	<i>"Having community partners come in and judge for exhibitions. We get to talk to people in the workforce, talk about the requirements for a job, talk to the army or military as well. [ACE does a good job] Helping us understand how to partner with people." (Student)</i>
Refers students and families for services	<i>"I help students with housing." (Staff)</i>
Provides students with social-emotional supports	<i>"ACE includes my son in their progress and makes him feel like he's a family member." (Parent/guardian)</i>
Organizes activities and events	<i>"The heavy equipment rodeo, the school brings in partners to show a hands-on way to show the different career pathways." (Community member)</i>

Offers career preparation and exploration (e.g. internships)	<i>"School works to connect students to people in the industry- getting students jobs, internships, etc." (Staff)</i>
Nurtures teacher-student relationships	<i>"They reach out to my son and include him in a lot of things. He has good relationships with the teachers and they keep him engaged in classes." (Parent/guardian)</i>

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2. What internal and external assets do our students have?

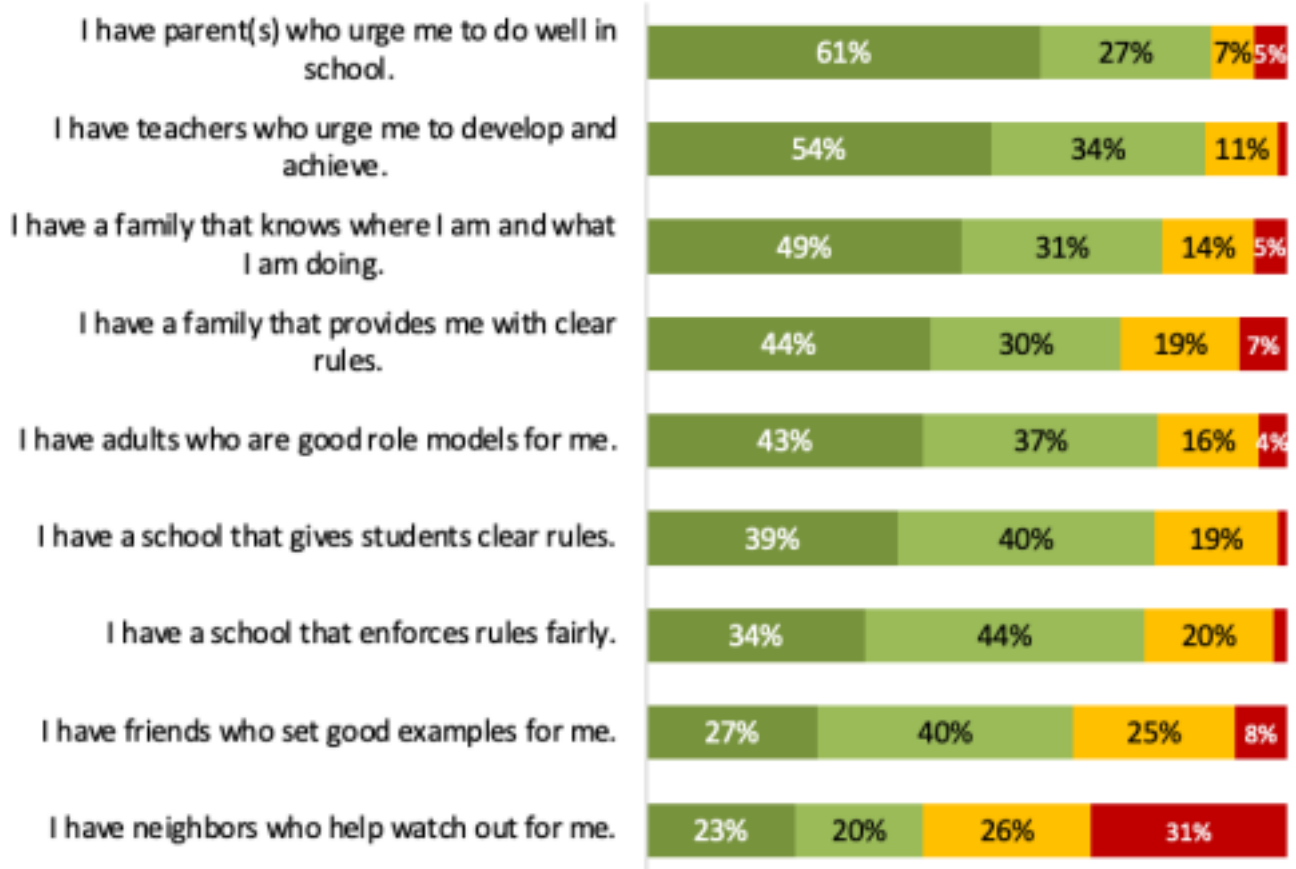
The Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) is a survey that 135 ACE students completed in October. According to survey results, ACE students are strongest in two asset categories:



Closer Look at Boundaries and Expectations

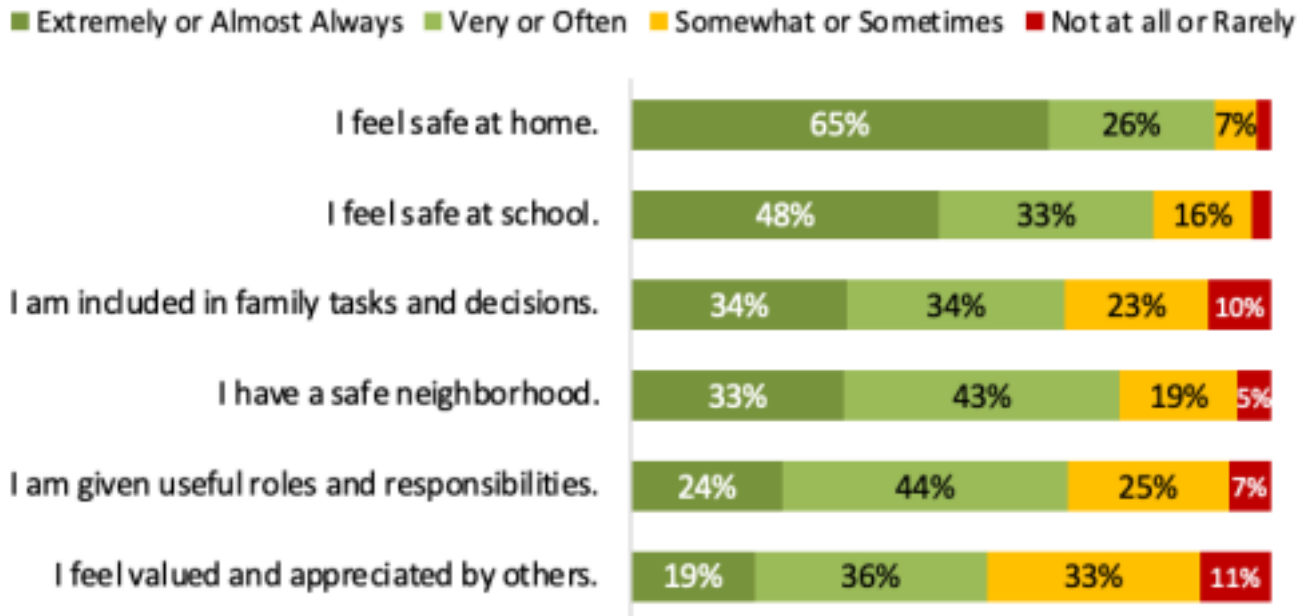
In the DAP, **Boundaries & Expectations** means that ACE students have “clear rules, consistent consequences for breaking rules, and encouragement to do their best.” It is composed of these nine items:

■ Extremely or Almost Always ■ Very or Often ■ Somewhat or Sometimes ■ Not at all or Rarely

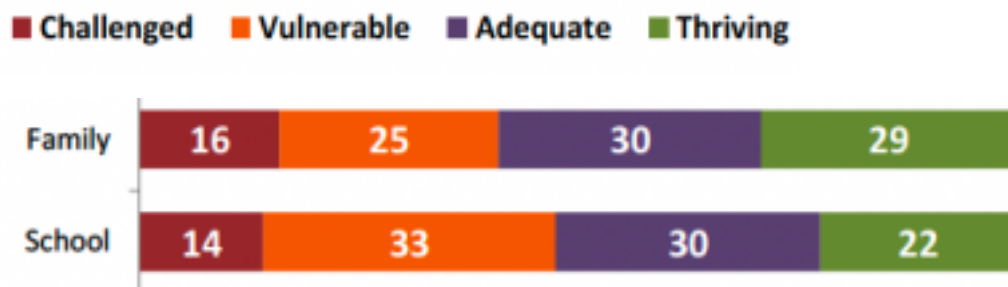


Closer Look at Empowerment

In the DAP, **Empowerment** means that ACE students “feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.” It is composed of these six items:



The DAP also does an analysis of *where* students experience high levels of support and strength. According to survey results, ACE students are most likely to experience support in two contexts:



This analysis is based on many of the same items listed under “Empowerment” and “Boundaries/Expectations” above. It is worth noting a few additional items that show the support many ACE students feel with their families and at school:

- 83% of students very/often/extremely/almost always “have parent(s) who try to help them succeed.”
- 86% “have a family that gives me love and support.”
- 86% “have a school that cares about kids and encourages them.”

3. What organizations and initiatives exist in the community that already benefit students, family, and community members—or could benefit them?

NEEDS

4. What emerge as areas of student and community need?

The Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) is a survey that 135 ACE students completed in October. According to survey results, ACE students are most vulnerable in one asset category:

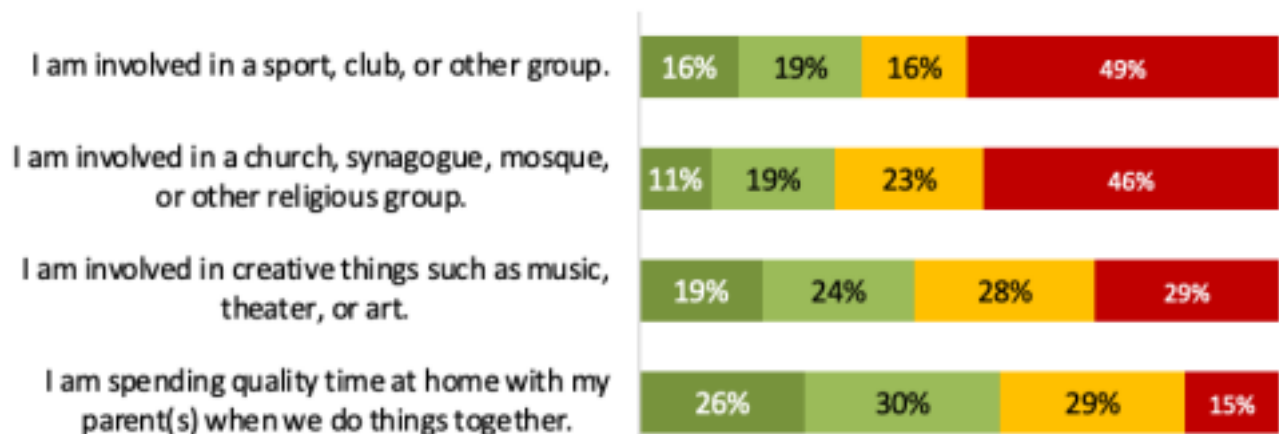
■ Challenged ■ Vulnerable ■ Adequate ■ Thriving



Closer Look at Constructive Use of Time

In the DAP, **Constructive Use of Time** means that ACE students have “opportunities—outside of school—to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youth and adults.” It is composed of these four items:

■ Extremely or Almost Always ■ Very or Often ■ Somewhat or Sometimes ■ Not at all or Rarely



The DAP also does an analysis of *where* students experience high levels of support and strength. According to survey results, ACE students are least likely to experience support in one context:

■ Challenged ■ Vulnerable ■ Adequate ■ Thriving



This analysis is based on many of the same items listed under “Constructive Use of Time” above. It is worth noting a few additional items that suggest possible areas for growth:

- **59%** of ACE students say they very/often or extremely/almost always are “helping to make my school, neighborhood, or city a better place..”
- **46%** “have good neighbors who care about me.”
- **37%** are “serving others in my community.”

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In a Neighborhood survey completed by 62 individuals from the neighborhoods around the school, we asked what needs they have seen in their neighborhood. This table lists the most common themes in their responses.

Housing / services for unhoused population (most common theme by far)	<i>“Support for unhoused individuals”</i> <i>“We have such a problem with homelessness in our neighborhood. It is so heartbreaking to see people living outdoors in this cold weather! it would be great if we could do something to help!”</i> <i>“Public bathrooms”</i> <i>“Clean up and food at tent park”</i>
Supports for seniors	<i>Group activities for seniors.”</i> <i>“Assisting individual seniors that need help with projects at their homes”</i> <i>“Help elderly install safety grab bars in bathrooms, widen doorways, install wheelchair ramps, help with landscaping”</i> <i>“Activities to connect the seniors in the Sawmill Community Land Trust with younger children in the community”</i> <i>“Senior citizen home repairs and cleaning their yards”</i>
Affordable construction / home repairs	<i>“Access to power tools for small projects”</i> <i>“A lending library for tools”</i> <i>“affordable construction”</i> <i>“Senior Citizen home repairs”</i> <i>“Landscaping”</i> <i>“Help with home repairs”</i>
Neighborhood improvements / beautification	<i>“Playgrounds”</i> <i>“Need for murals, art, trees. Need for community gardens especially for local residents and the unhoused.”</i> <i>“More green space is always great. Community gardens.”</i> <i>“Need parks and trees”</i> <i>“Art/sculpture installations”</i>

Clean up	<p><i>“Neighborhood clean up”</i></p> <p><i>“Stop illegal noisy and polluting industrial type businesses” “Throw TRASH, move boxes, etc”</i></p>
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Community-building	<p><i>“There’s lots of isolation, we need to bring community together. this includes houseless people, they should be included too.”</i></p> <p><i>“Activities to promote community such as Halloween party, Easter egg hunt...”</i></p> <p><i>“cultural events - music”</i></p> <p><i>“holiday centered community events involving food”</i></p>
Classes	<p><i>“Finance classes and career classes are what I would have recommended. People need these options to get a leg up in the world.”</i></p> <p><i>“Also I would love Spanish classes for myself, wife and 2 year old daughter.”</i></p> <p><i>“Tech classes for seniors.”</i></p> <p><i>“Music workshops/training”</i></p>
Mental health and addiction services	<p><i>“Lots of folks struggling with mental health issues and addiction.”</i></p> <p><i>“Assistance for those experiencing homelessness and/or addiction”</i></p> <p><i>“Assistance for mentally ill individuals to acquire housing, health care supports”</i></p>
Youth programs and services	<p><i>“Career activities for younger people”</i></p> <p><i>“Community center for teens”</i></p> <p><i>“Tutoring”</i></p> <p><i>“Activities to get neighborhood children outdoors such as sports and games in the Sawmill Community Land Trust park”</i></p>
Food	<p><i>“Food bank”</i></p> <p><i>“Community food pantry”</i></p>
Glass recycling	<i>“glass recycling”</i>
Childcare	<i>“Need of responsible and safe daycare.”</i>

Other ideas	<i>Computer lab/office space? printing, scanning, copying. book exchange</i> <i>Second hand retail</i> <i>library</i> <i>pet vaccination clinics</i> <i>Better parking</i> <i>Improved walkability</i>
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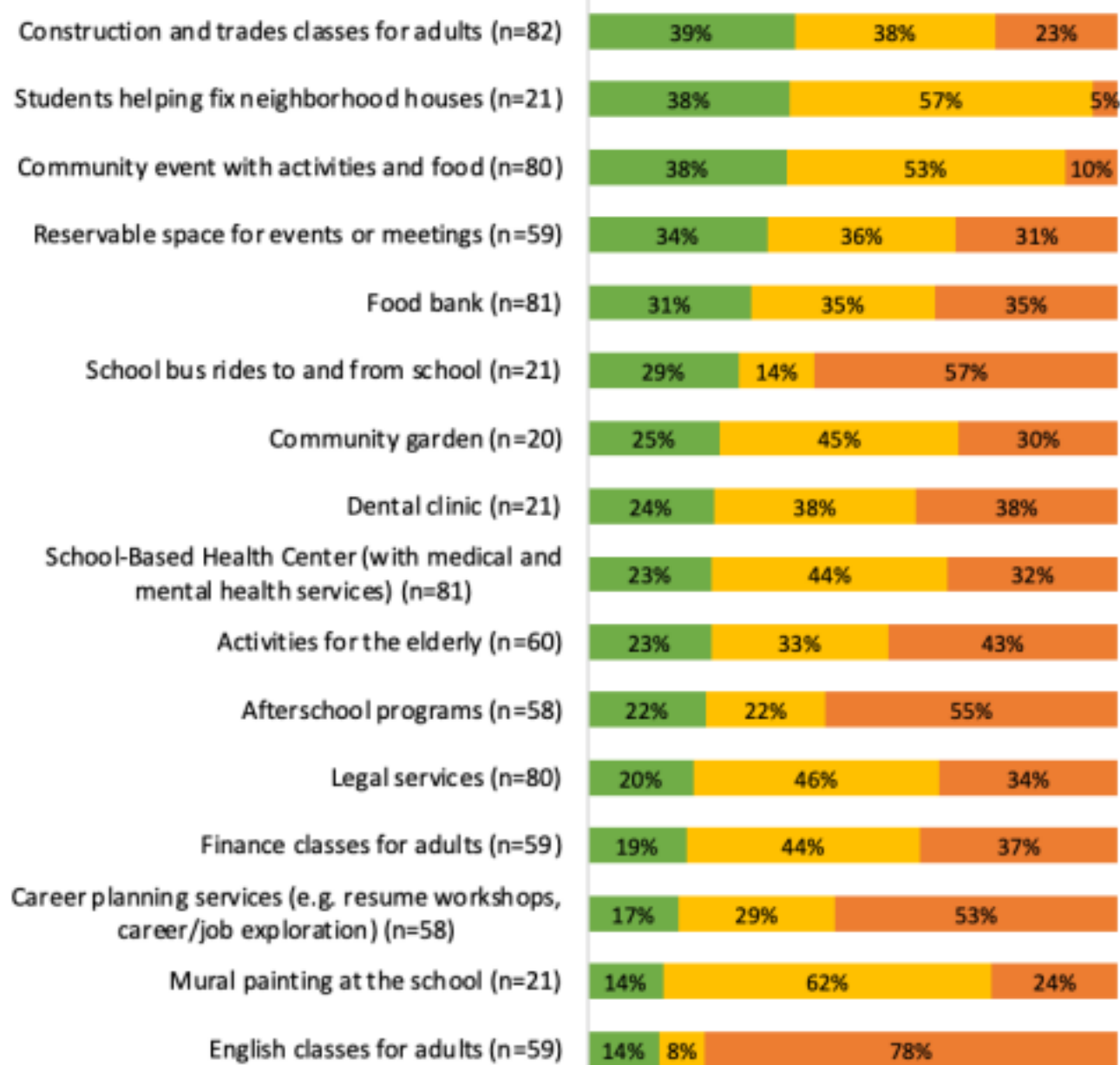
BECOMING A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

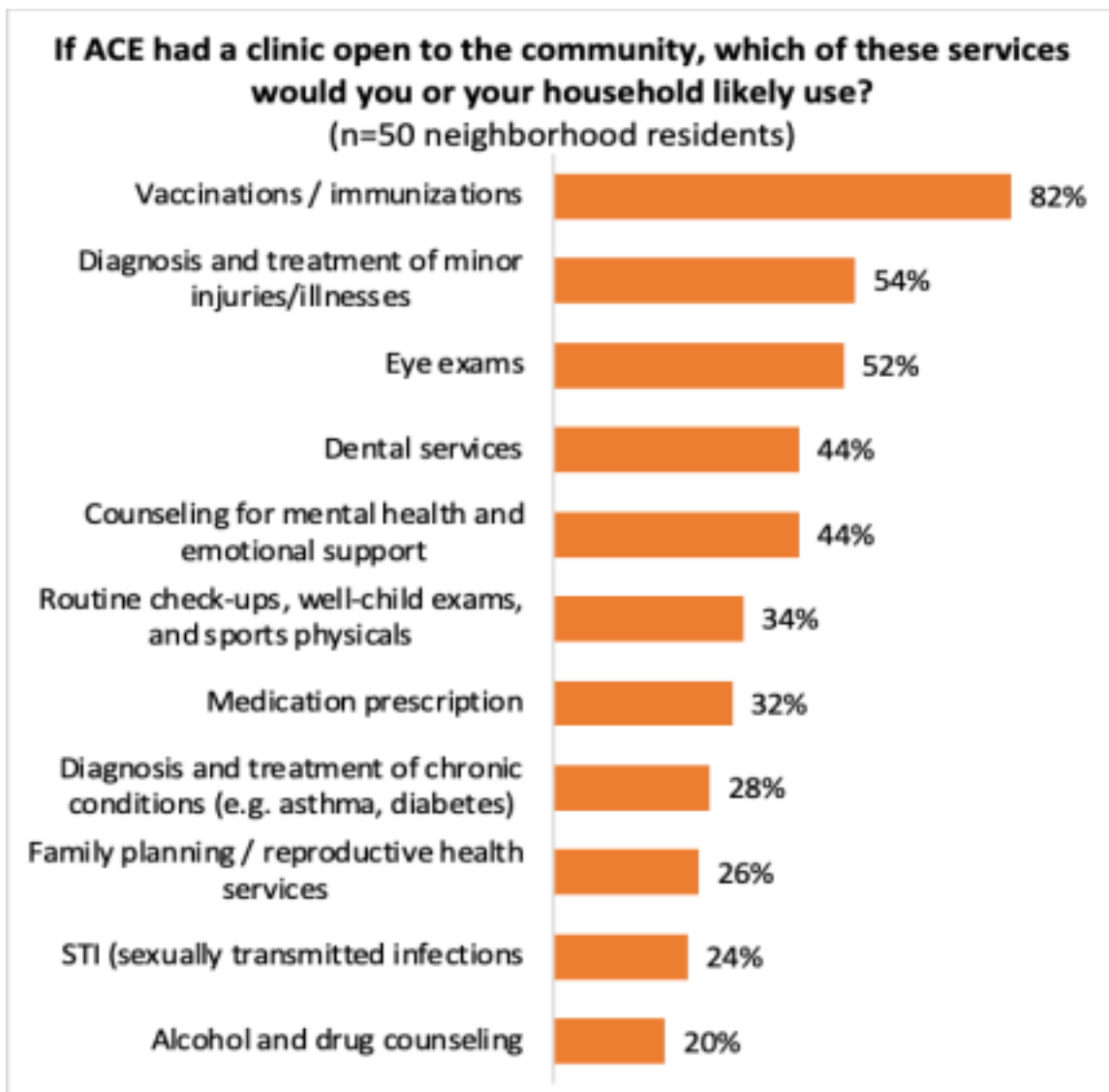
5. What activities, supports, and services would students, families, and community members use if provided by ACE?

Responses from Parent/Guardian and Neighborhood Surveys:

Would you or someone in your household participate in these supports and activities, if ACE provided them?

■ Definitely ■ Maybe ■ Probably not





In surveys, interviews, and focus groups, we asked for ideas from stakeholders about what ACE could look like, be like, and do as a Community School. This table lists the most common themes in their responses.

Community service / Projects to help the community	<i>Volunteer at a soup kitchen</i> <i>Ramps for disabled community members</i> <i>Would love to come in on a community service day to help do something for the community like food boxes.</i>

Events	<p><i>Having a carnival for the community.</i></p> <p><i>More family nights</i></p> <p><i>I like the idea of a community thing where students and families can get together and get to know one another. One where they show what they do in the school.</i></p>
Health clinic	<p><i>The dentist thing would be nice—they don't have access—and for some of them, we could have a option to do yearly physicals or monthly wellness checks.</i></p> <p><i>Could partner with Wells Park because New Day has their health center there.</i></p> <p><i>My kids have medicaid, the clinic could be a good thing. Family planning for kids, a good thing so they don't ahead of themselves in that way.</i></p>
Classes for adults (e.g. Construction, personal finance, personal enrichment)	<p><i>Family classes, manage money classes, community classes, community college offers, prep classes, behavior classes.</i></p> <p><i>Classes at night for older people in the community as well (e.g. ELL classes). The classes we offer related to getting into the industry could be offered to the adults similar to the students.</i></p> <p><i>The adult classes really. I'm a single mom, and its hard to manage budgets sometimes. Anything like financial education for adults and children would be a big help.</i></p> <p><i>Programs for seniors (elders) and activities. Could offer computer classes and sewing things.</i></p>
Activities for youth (e.g. afterschool programs)	<p><i>After school activities- like woodshop and welding.</i></p> <p><i>Sports, out of school activities</i></p> <p><i>More activities where you're moving around. A lot of public schools have gyms, weight rooms and rock walls, something to do to be active that would be nice.</i></p> <p><i>Mechanics- acts as therapy; knowing how to work on your own car; kids being able to work on their own cars in a space with tools where they can also ask teachers questions</i></p> <p><i>We used to have Wednesdays as fun days- helped in the middle of the week. Go for a walk to the park, play volleyball or soccer. It's a short day and so a lot of people would just stay home.</i></p>
Provide a variety of services (e.g. hub model, wraparound supports)	<p><i>Services that other folks in the community can access too, clothing, food, jobs.</i></p> <p><i>A place with wrap around services.</i></p> <p><i>Would love to see some services at school so if a student needs</i></p>

	<p><i>help with housing she can take them over to a person who can help right there and then. A person for housing, therapy on school grounds, resource center. Able to provide more intensive therapies at school instead of sending the student somewhere else.</i></p> <p><i>I can see that in the future we have a community health center and a community kitchen. What does that look like where we can help prepare foods for the community? I can see us offering child care to help the evening students. It could be more of a community center that also offers classes during the day and evening. Believes they have the potential.</i></p>
Make use of the building / Share space	<p><i>Industry kitchen, could Three sisters kitchen, can folks come in to utilize the space we have and don't use. A school and industrial size kitchen and they opened it to let other use. To make sure ppl had access to food</i></p> <p><i>Orgs that are looking for spaces. Opening their building for people to use. A community space that can be utilized.</i></p> <p><i>The facility. We have the ideal space for the community health center and kitchen.</i></p> <p><i>(Also multiple requests from students for a gym)</i></p>

6. What ideas do stakeholders have for steps ACE should take to become a Community School?

Grow and maintain partnerships (w/ orgs and individuals)	<p><i>The CEC (Community Engagement Center?) could help out. Connect with Sawmill Neighborhood Association.</i></p> <p><i>Why don't we use resources from the other sister schools?</i></p> <p><i>Asset mapping, where are your students coming from, how are they including in growing the relationship with community</i></p> <p><i>Could reach out to the person who ran the clinic before to help with reopening it.</i></p> <p><i>Having an open house! See people engage with each other and what they want to do to improve it. That would make people interested. (to improve the school or community?)</i></p> <p><i>Both!</i></p>

Fundraising	<i>You're gonna need grants, funding</i>
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Organizational change (not too fast and learning as we go)	<p><i>Organizational change throughout the years. Even if they have been small changes at a time.</i></p> <p><i>have chewable of bitesize piece and not get overwhelmed of the destination and be mindful that it all takes time and do one thing at a time</i></p> <p><i>Grow capacity, expand appropriately, what do we need to do internally to support the community better</i></p>
Commitment and motivation to get it done	<p><i>There needs to be a will to make it happen.</i></p> <p><i>Wanting to help people is a strength</i></p> <p><i>Someone who will go out and do it.</i></p>

Communications and marketing the school

Get more contact with the community, people outside of here. Have them expand and tell other people. Share knowledge with other people.

Using social media-pictures of what we've done in the community.

Evidence of success *Evidence of success and collective shared vision of what that means.*

Measurable success criteria to get more money.

Showcase and celebrate your successes

Appendix A

Survey Respondent Demographics

Survey	Grade	Gender Race/Ethnicity	Zip Code	Household Size
Developmental Assets Profile (n=135 ACE students)	19% 9th 21% 10th 30% 11th 30% 12th	32% Female 67% Male 70% Hisp or Latino/a 12% White 10% Multiracial 4% African American or Black 2% American Indian or Alaskan 2% Other	N/A	N/A
Parent/Guardian Survey (n=21 ACE family members)	N/A	67% Female 33% Male (Check all that apply) 76% Hisp, Latinx, Chicano or Mexican 24% White 5% African, African American or Black	29% 87105 14% 87031 10% 87102 (remaining distributed 1 per zip code)	14% people 3-4 38% people 7+

