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WHEREAS, the American Federation of Teachers recognizes that five fundamental principles must govern the creation of community schools:

A. Community schools have a strong academic curriculum. The school and community must work together to ensure that students have a strong and rigorous curriculum that will further student success. The goal of academic success should inform all strategic partnership planning.

B. Community schools establish a set of coordinated and purposeful partnerships that integrate services for students, their families and the community, with the common goal of ensuring student success and building strong communities. Many schools offer after-school tutoring or a series of unconnected programs: These are not community schools. Their programs are too often unrelated to each other, disconnected from any academic mission or rigorous curriculum and lacking the kind of support built through partnerships that engender sustainability.

C. Community school partners may include a variety of providers and funders. They may be community based, regional or national organizations, and may have nonprofit, for-profit or faith-based status.

D. Community schools provide more than one type of service to students, parents and the community. These may include:

1. academic services, such as tutoring, community-based learning and other enrichment activities;
2. medical services, such as primary, vision, dental, wellness and nutritional services;
3. after-school recreational activities;
4. mental health services, such as counseling and psychiatry;
5. curricular tie-ins with local community employers and needs;
6. jobs and internships;
7. institutions of higher education, community colleges, English language skills and job development programs; and
8. a variety of social services.

E. Community schools are based on a comprehensive and strategic plan agreed to in writing (e.g., contracts, memoranda of agreement and memoranda of understanding) between the partner organization(s), including providers and funders, and the school. Written agreements are necessary for oversight of the school site(s) to avoid school governance and operations problems. Written agreements also provide a vehicle for planning and for creating scalable community school models with buy-in from all stakeholders.

WHEREAS, the AFT believes all students have a right to learn and achieve academic success regardless of where, or under what circumstances, they live. Too often, children from disadvantaged areas, whether in urban centers or rural communities, lack the additional supports other children have at home and in their communities that promote learning; and

WHEREAS, research shows that access to healthcare, social services and extended and additional learning and recreational opportunities, as well as increased parent involvement, are critical to student success. We cannot ensure that all students learn without closing the services gap for disadvantaged students; and

WHEREAS, when community schools are carefully designed and built with input from the community, they are better able to accommodate the various services and activities they provide. Research finds that a well-designed, sustainable school environment supports academic goals and can significantly improve students' learning, productivity, health and overall well-being. Studies continue to show that student attendance is consistently better in sustainable, green schools; studies associate adequate ventilation, natural lighting and good acoustics with improved student performance. Students in sustainable community schools located in disadvantaged areas demonstrate real progress; and

WHEREAS, a community that is engaged in the school; promotes a school climate that is safe, supportive and respectful; and connects students to a broader learning community will help develop an informed and educated citizenry, strengthen family and community ties, and nurture democracy in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, by forging strategic partnerships, community schools have the potential to strengthen a school's academic program, engage parents and meet the varied needs of students as well as communities. Community schools connect and educate all partners to the issues of school, community and family life; and

WHEREAS, existing community school models—like the Children's Aid Society in New York City, the nationwide Communities In Schools, Beacon Schools, university-assisted community schools such as the schools being developed under the AFT's Innovation Fund grant in Philadelphia that supports the collaboration between the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and the University of Pennsylvania, and the locally developed Community Learning Centers in Cincinnati—provide established solutions that demonstrate how schools and communities can connect to help all students learn and thrive. These models provide examples of how to:

- manage space and resources;
- design new community schools, redesign existing schools and buildings and co-located spaces for community school use; and
- involve nonschool personnel and experts; and
- leverage support from outside organizations, including government, private not-for-profit and philanthropic organizations:

RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers:

- **urge locals to partner with school districts, local government entities, political leaders, and labor and community leaders to transform the schools serving our neediest students into community schools, to bring together, under one roof, the services and activities that our children and their families need;**

- **work with partner organizations and support affiliations with and coalitions of allies to solicit local needs from community members and to establish and promote community schools;**
- **support federal legislation and programs that fund community schools programs as part of a strategy to turn around struggling schools;**
- **support federal and state legislation that enables school districts to accelerate new construction and/or renovation of community schools to accommodate their various functions and to build them to green and sustainable standards such as those of the U.S. Green Building Council, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system or the Collaborative for High Performance Schools;**
- **assist states in developing enabling legislation and comprehensive strategies to institute community schools;**
- **call for ongoing, high-quality research into community schools' best practices, staffing models, approaches to implementation and student outcomes such as student learning and other outcomes;**
- **urge the federal government (U.S. Department of Education) to establish a database of community schools in the United States that can guide research;**
- **disseminate such findings to our locals and advocate for the consideration of those findings when modifying legislation like the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and other legislation, budgetary items and competitive grants;**
- **ensure that community schools enhance academic standards;**
- **ensure that community schools will not be used to bypass contractual agreements, reduce standards for existing, normal operating school hours, lessen those standards during after-hours operations, displace existing services and/or staff or weaken existing crucial health and safety regulations; and**
- **call for high-quality, ongoing, embedded staff development in community schools.**

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