

82nd Street Academics: A Conduit for Transformative School-CBO Partnerships in Jackson Heights

By Michael Selkis

In Jackson Heights, a neighborhood teeming with linguistic diversity, cultural richness, and boundless potential, the future of education depends on partnerships that extend beyond the school walls. Schools alone cannot bear the full weight of student success—academic, social-emotional, and behavioral growth requires a village. A **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)** provides a strategic roadmap for this endeavor, but it is only as effective as the ecosystem that brings it to life.

Enter **82nd Street Academics**—not just an afterschool program, not just a community partner, but the **conduit for a seamless and deeply integrated school-community partnership**. As a Community-Based Organization (CBO) embedded in the fabric of Jackson Heights, 82nd Street Academics has the expertise, structure, and commitment to **extend learning authentically**—before school, after school, on weekends, during breaks, and at pivotal transition points—ensuring that no child falls through the cracks.

Rather than operating as a vendor providing auxiliary services, **82nd Street Academics serves as a co-architect of student success**, helping schools manifest and operationalize MTSS in ways that are both **practical and transformative**. This partnership does not supplement school efforts—it **expands, fortifies, and integrates** them into a seamless educational ecosystem.

MTSS as the Roadmap, 82nd Street Academics as the Engine

MTSS is a research-based framework designed to support students at multiple levels—from universal interventions for all students to targeted supports for those who need additional help. Schools in Jackson Heights are already engaging in this work, but the real question is: **how do we fully leverage community resources so that MTSS is not just an in-school approach, but a community-wide ecosystem of student success?**

82nd Street Academics: Bridging the Gaps, Extending the Learning

With deep roots in Jackson Heights and an unwavering commitment to student growth, **82nd Street Academics is uniquely positioned to bridge gaps and extend learning in ways that schools cannot do alone.**

1. Expanding the Learning Day and Year

- **Before School, After School, Weekends, and Summer**
- **High-quality instruction beyond the school day** in literacy, math, and social-emotional learning
- **Culturally responsive programs** tailored to the multilingual and immigrant-rich community of Jackson Heights

2. **Providing Holistic, Wraparound Support**

- Academic **tutoring and mentoring** that aligns with school curricula
- **Mental health and behavioral supports** integrated into daily interactions
- **Family engagement initiatives** that empower parents to be active participants in their children’s education

3. **Enhancing Inclusion and Equity**

- Special programs for **English Language Learners (ELLs)** and students with disabilities
- **Culturally affirming curricula** that reflect the lived experiences of Jackson Heights families
- **Scaffolding support for at-risk students** to ensure they remain on track

4. **Data-Driven Interventions**

- **Close collaboration with school teams** to share student performance data
- **Asset mapping and root cause analysis** to pinpoint learning gaps
- **Ongoing program evaluation** to ensure measurable student growth

Addressing the Barriers to True School-CBO Collaboration

Despite the promise of partnerships like these, several key challenges must be addressed:

- **Siloed Approaches:** Schools and CBOs often operate independently, missing opportunities to align resources.
- **Data Sharing Barriers:** Privacy laws and logistical hurdles can impede the ability to track student progress across settings.
- **Funding Constraints:** Many school districts struggle to sustain long-term collaborations with external partners.
- **Cultural and Operational Differences:** Schools and CBOs sometimes speak different “languages,” making collaboration difficult.

82nd Street Academics is actively dismantling these barriers. By fostering deep **trust-based relationships** with local schools, implementing shared **data protocols**, and leveraging **public and private funding streams**, we ensure that collaboration is not just an aspiration—it is a **sustainable reality**.

Building a Seamless Ecosystem of Support in Jackson Heights

Imagine a Jackson Heights where **learning never stops**, where every child—regardless of background, zip code, or personal circumstance—has access to a **continuous, interconnected web of academic and social support**.

Through a strengthened partnership between 82nd Street Academics and local schools, we can create an **unbreakable educational fabric**, ensuring that:

- **Every student receives support that transcends school hours**—no interruptions, no disruptions, just continuous learning.

- **Teachers and school leaders are relieved of some of the burden** of implementing MTSS, allowing them to focus on their core instructional roles.
- **Families feel empowered and engaged**, understanding that their children's education is a shared community endeavor.
- **Outcomes improve across all measures—academic achievement, social-emotional well-being, college and career readiness.**

Conclusion: The Future is Now—82nd Street Academics is the Catalyst

MTSS is the roadmap, but without a **vehicle**, the journey is stagnant. **82nd Street Academics is that vehicle—a dynamic, ever-adapting engine that drives student success in partnership with schools.**

This is not a school vendor relationship. **This is a transformative, mission-driven partnership** that aligns resources, extends learning, and ensures that no child in Jackson Heights falls through the cracks.

We are not just filling gaps; **we are eliminating them—seamlessly integrating** school and community so that there is **nothing to tear, no cold gets through, and every student arrives at their full potential.**

The question is not **if** we should deepen this partnership—it is **how soon we can make it happen.**

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