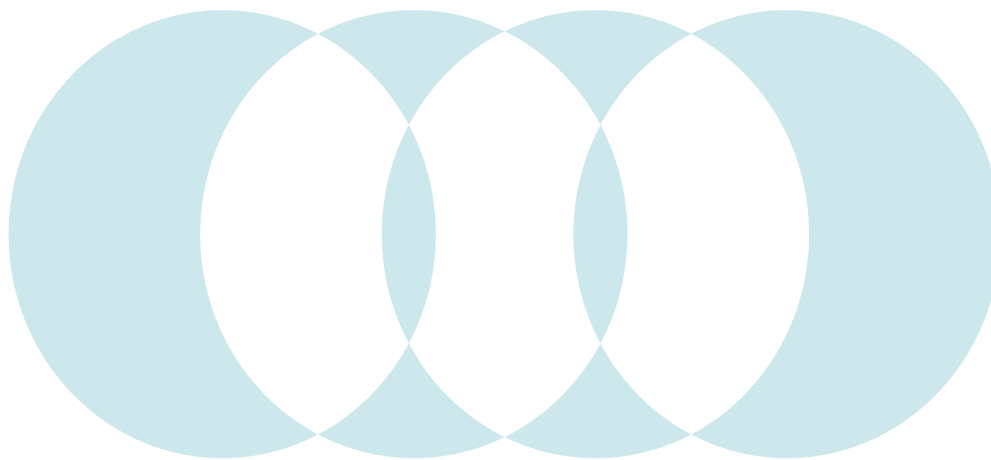


# The Role of Community Schools In Place-Based Initiatives

Collaborating for Student Success



WILLIAM R. POTAPCHUK

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**About the Coalition for Community Schools**

The Coalition for Community Schools, housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), is an alliance of national, state and local organizations in education K–16, youth development, community planning and development, higher education, family support, health and human services, government, and philanthropy as well as national, state, and local community school networks. The Coalition advocates for community schools as a strategy to leverage local resources and programs, changing the look and feel of the traditional school structure to best meet the needs of children and families in the 21st century.

**About the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)**

For a half-century, the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) has championed the need for leaders at all levels to shake off their institutional constraints and work across boundaries to address the needs of young people and their families. Bound by no constituency, IEL serves as a catalyst that helps policymakers, administrators, and practitioners at all levels bridge bureaucratic silos and undo gridlock to improve outcomes for all young people and their families. IEL’s mission is to equip leaders to work together across boundaries to build effective systems that prepare children and youth for postsecondary education, careers, and citizenship.

**About Policy Link**

PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by Lifting Up What Works.® Founded in 1999, PolicyLink connects the work of people on the ground to the creation of sustainable communities of opportunity that allow everyone to participate and prosper. Such communities offer access to quality jobs, affordable housing, good schools, transportation, and the benefits of healthy food and physical activity.

**About West Coast Collaborative**

The West Coast Collaborative is a partnership of three veteran community school initiatives designed to advance thought leadership and practical assets for our local efforts and the national movement. The Collaborative is an effort to bring a proven approach to a new level of maturity, reach, sustainability and impact, to advance the shift “from great schools to effective systems.” Founding members include Community School Collaboration, Los Angeles Education Partnership and Schools Uniting Neighborhoods.

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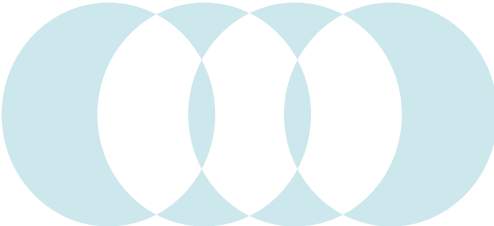
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## PREFACE

**A**cross the United States, communities are thinking differently about how to transform their schools and neighborhoods. Spurred by the realization that comprehensive educational reform and community change cannot be accomplished by any single organization, there is tremendous excitement about strategies that weave together resources in a clearly defined “place” to collectively improve outcomes for children, youth, families, and communities.

This excitement did not come out of the blue. It represents a convergence that has been building for decades, emerging out of myriad “place-based” efforts to reform schools, strengthen communities, and make educational, health, housing, and other systems more responsive to young people and their families and their assets and needs. In this environment, the Coalition for Community Schools at the Institute for Educational Leadership, PolicyLink, and the West Coast Collaborative are pleased to present *The Role of Community Schools in Place-Based Initiatives: Collaborating for Student Success*.

The paper is based on the experiences and lessons of efforts in the three communities involved in the West Coast Collaborative (Los Angeles, California; Multnomah County, including the City of Portland, Oregon; and South King County, Washington). It explores the relationship between community schools, Promise Neighborhoods, and other cradle-to-career, place-based strategies and the potential associated with the alignment of multiple place-based strategies operating in the same geographic areas. *The Role of Community Schools in Place-Based Initiatives* demonstrates that community schools offer a powerful vision and strategy for what schools should look like within broader place-based initiatives and how community schools can benefit from alignment with other efforts.

As scarce resources continue to challenge our ability to realize our vision for educated healthy, college-and-career-ready young people, strong families, and thriving communities, it is critical that we all work together to harness the power of the community and create shared vision and accountability for results. Systemic and sustainable solutions to the problems we face demand that we take advantage of each other’s strengths and create aligned and synergistic relationships.

We encourage you to use this paper as the basis for fostering these relationships and to give particular attention to the role of community schools in that enterprise.

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## INTRODUCTION

**D**ecades of place-based initiatives have produced remarkable results across the country—transforming neighborhoods and restoring hope. The latest generation of these efforts features something new: an intense focus on children and their success, often placing schools at the center of their work. Building from inspiring initiatives such as the Harlem Children’s Zone, the primary goal of these efforts has shifted from a traditional focus on community development to a passionate focus on improving the educational and life outcomes of children and youth.

**Community schools**,<sup>1</sup> a decades-old idea revitalized for the 21st century, place schools at the center of communities, making them hubs around which the community gathers its resources to help attain better outcomes for students, their families, and surrounding neighborhoods. In these schools, which focus on the whole child, community resources are strategically organized to support students and connect to the community. The community schools strategy is spreading rapidly across the nation as school systems embrace community schools as a core approach for achieving better outcomes and take community schools to scale.

Community schools, themselves a place-based strategy impacting a constellation of outcomes, are natural partners for this newest generation of place-based initiatives. There is a natural alignment between a community schools strategy and other place-based, cradle-to-college-and-career efforts such as Promise Neighborhoods.

The **Promise Neighborhoods** program<sup>2</sup> began in 2010 as a federally funded neighborhood development strategy with a strong focus on educational outcomes. Communities use the Promise Neighborhoods model to build a pipeline of coordinated educational, health, and social supports for children and families from cradle-to-college-and-career in a specific neighborhood or catchment area. Promise Neighborhoods maintain a results-driven focus on improving the educational and life outcomes of children both to ensure brighter futures for young people and to create healthier, safer neighborhoods with greater access to opportunity. Given that the model depends on strong schools as its centerpiece, collaboration with community schools is a productive way to strengthen community partnerships and accelerate results for children and families.

The U.S. Department of Education makes Promise Neighborhood grants to community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, or other bodies serving as the lead organization of a Promise Neighborhood. The model builds upon several generations of comprehensive community-change efforts and other neighborhood-focused initiatives that mobilize a wide array of community-based organizations, civic leaders, and service organizations to work collaboratively toward creating a birth-through-college-and-career continuum aligned by shared outcomes.

Promise Neighborhoods are in strong alignment with community schools. Indeed, three of the five fiscal year (FY) 2011 Promise Neighborhood implementation grantees—Hayward, California; San Antonio, Texas; and Buffalo, New York—are deeply invested in making community schools a core part of their strategy.

Promise Neighborhoods need to be able to do this work in the context of the excellent work already happening on the ground. There is absolutely no need to recreate the wheel. We see community schools as an important part of the Promise Neighborhood effort.

**Michael McAfee**  
Senior Director, PolicyLink

**Cradle-to-career initiatives**, often designed as community-wide collective impact initiatives,<sup>3</sup> share a focus on student success and mobilize senior community leaders around a policy, program, and quality-improvement agenda. Often, the initiatives follow a particular framework such as the Forum for Youth Investment’s Ready by 21 strategy<sup>4</sup> or the Strive approach.<sup>5</sup> The initiatives select and target research-informed milestones, such as reading by the third grade or high school graduation rates, and focus the collective effort of partners on attaining these goals. One strength of these initiatives is their capacity to mobilize the community’s highest level of leaders, from mayors and foundation executives to university presidents and United Way CEOs. To ensure success, however, these initiatives need vehicles for on-the-ground interaction with young people, families, and neighborhoods. There is great potential to increase the efficacy of cradle-to-career efforts by linking to community school strategies that support every child. Nate Waas Shull from the All Hands Raised Partnership, the cradle-to-career effort in Multnomah County, Oregon, captures this relationship.

This paper explains the community schools strategy more fully and shares stories from three communities with exemplary initiatives: Multnomah County, Oregon, which encompasses Portland; South King County, Washington, just south of Seattle; and Los Angeles, California. These stories show that community schools are an effective place-based strategy and illustrate how community schools’ leaders have worked hand-in-hand with next-generation, place-based, and community-wide initiatives to find synergy and achieve better results.

This is no small feat. Unfortunately, as anyone who has worked in communities knows, it is often easier to find competing and disconnected efforts than partnered and aligned initiatives. That is why the lessons from the three communities, which parallel similar experiences across the nation, are so instructive. Indeed, the Aspen Institute’s review of two decades of comprehensive community initiatives found that “better alignment of mission, action, capacity, collaboration, and learning” are a pivotal key to success.<sup>6</sup> When multiple efforts are linked in a mutually supportive framework, each effort is working from its strengths, and the whole community benefits.

Ultimately, the synergies between cradle-to-career strategies and community schools are endless. They are truly complementary and both rely on the core principles of “collective impact,” yet they are fundamentally different in their structure and approach. Community schools use a strategy that says if you can effectively align a whole host of academic and social supports in a particular place—using the school as a hub—you will maximize impact, reach more people, and improve academic impact in a way that would not happen otherwise. Our All Hands Raised Partnership represents a fundamental shift in the way we do business in an entire community, from the level of CEOs and elected officials to educators and other practitioners, to arrive at a shared vision and decision-making structure to drive collective impact on a community-wide scale. In other words, a community schools strategy can fit perfectly as a core strategy within a community that has adopted a cradle-to-career approach to working together.

**Nate Waas Shull**  
All Hands Raised Partnership



## WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS?

**T**he community schools movement, which started with individual and small clusters of schools over the past several decades, has become a core educational improvement strategy in many places, from Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Oakland, California, to Evansville, Indiana, and Cincinnati, Ohio. When local leaders from school, government, and other community-based organizations implement a community schools strategy effectively, transformative change occurs. Community schools change the lens through which community problems are defined and how resources are integrated and delivered to support communities. They transform the way in which schools and communities interact and children and families gain access to a wide array of opportunities and supports. They are much more than just a service delivery program.

Firmly anchored in their neighborhoods, community schools are organized around education as the means to a productive future for children, families, schools, and communities. Using a collaborative approach, community schools marshal the resources and participation of multiple partners to work toward shared outcomes in defined and measurable ways. Each school is a portal to the services, relationships, and opportunities that support academic, social, emotional, physical, and civic development for students and family members across generations. Each school serves as an anchor for a collaborative school culture focused on better outcomes for students.

### ROLE OF PARTNERS

The presence and complementary skills of community partners enable and enhance the critical work of principals, teachers, and other school personnel in several different ways. Some partners help remove barriers to learning, ensuring that students are fed, healthy, and supported. Other partners help expand horizons, encouraging students to think about careers, college, and their future.

Some offer alternative learning opportunities: environmental education, project-based learning, service-learning efforts focused on community improvement, or art and music education. Some address issues critical to the school community, ranging from tackling low attendance to providing literacy or continuing education programs for parents. The ways in which community schools have figured out how to serve and support their communities are almost endless.

### FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In a community school, engagement is more than a buzzword or the perfunctory back-to-school meeting. The involvement of family and community members as planners and decision makers ensures that community schools target resources to meet real needs and develop approaches that reflect the equity concerns of diverse cultural groups. Community engagement efforts actively foster the development of local leaders and build social capital for poor and ethnically diverse students.

In addition, the direct involvement of community partners demonstrates to both participants and observers the value of mutual aid, creating bonds of reciprocal trust and growing social capital. Through these relationships and shared understandings, community school initiatives reach beyond school walls to strengthen neighborhoods and build communities.

### A FOCUS ON STUDENT SUCCESS

A laser-like focus on student success permeates the work of partners and the processes that bring them together in an effective community school. The advantage of a community school is that it marshals considerable resources in support of the ultimate goal—and ensures that those resources are strategically deployed. For example, when a student stops coming to school for any of a variety of reasons—because mom has a new job and the student must watch her younger sister; because the student is flunking a number of classes and is thinking about dropping out; because the student is starting to fall in with a gang; because the student has chronic health issues and no insurance; or for any other reason—it is not up to the teacher to track the student down and become a part-time social worker, and it is not up to the principal or assistant principal to be an attendance officer.

Instead, it is the community school coordinator, in partnership with school staff and partners in the building, who determines the best approach for reaching out to the student and his or her family to address the problem and support the student's return to school. According to research and practice, the collective impact of these efforts creates conditions for learning that lay the groundwork essential for student success.<sup>7</sup>

This internal alignment and coordination of partners in a community school is typically the job of a full-time staff member—the community school coordinator. The coordinator brokers services, integrates programming on a daily basis, and engages community members and families. Often, these coordinators are employed by a non-educational lead agency, such as a community-based organization, higher education institution, local government, or other service provider.

## FUNDING

Community schools often require little additional funding in the context of the entire school budget. Many community partners operate with existing funds, finding that it is more efficient and effective to do their work in a school setting. Some partners may be eligible to bill against funding sources, such as Medicaid or other public funding streams, to support their work. Sometimes, community schools raise new funds. Funding for the community school coordinator, a key role, typically comes from reallocation of existing funding streams, which may include Title I, local government, United Way, foundation, and business funds.<sup>8</sup> Many communities commit to the community schools model and shift funds to support their approach, even in tight times.

## SYSTEMS OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Based on the strength of the community schools strategy, more and more communities are choosing to implement community schools not just at individual school sites, but as a systemic approach for improving outcomes among children and youth. For example, in Multnomah County, Oregon, the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) community schools initiative started with eight schools in 1999 in two districts. Now SUN Community Schools is working with 67 schools spread across six school districts.

Similarly, Cincinnati started to launch community schools in 2000; today, almost every school in the system has what Cincinnati Public Schools dub “a community learning center.” Cincinnati’s community learning center strategy and other reform efforts have led to results that are nothing short of amazing. In 2002, Cincinnati schools had a graduation rate of 52 percent; the state declared an academic emergency. Today, these schools have a graduation rate of 82 percent, have eliminated the achievement gap in graduation rates, and have earned an “effective” rating from the state.

Such a transformation does not happen by accident. Collaborative leadership structures play an essential

function in the alignment of planning, resource development, and implementation at both the school and community level. The leadership structure often guides the work of an intermediary—commonly a city, community-wide nonprofit organization, or trusted public agency—that leads the planning, coordination, and management. The intermediary’s role is to ensure communication between community-wide and school-site leaders and to facilitate operational functions across sites. An intermediary carries out four critical functions:

- Engaging, convening, and supporting diverse groups and communities
- Establishing quality standards and promoting accountability
- Brokering and leveraging resources
- Promoting effective policy measures.<sup>9</sup>

Intermediaries are sometimes formal structures, negotiated by the key players. They may also be individual organization or informal groups that coordinate across several schools. Whether formal or informal, a strong intermediary function is needed to drive transformation.

People are increasingly seeing they have to rely on Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) community schools because of their capacity. Despite crises in school, county, and city budgets and numerous budget cuts in Multnomah County, government entities across our region have committed to maintaining the SUN infrastructure. Districts have decided that SUN’s presence at schools is critical.

### Bill Scott

Former CEO, Flex Cars,  
SUN Service System  
Coordinating Council

## PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community schools are not a program; they are a strategy or an approach. Clear principles, such as those put forth by the national Coalition for Community Schools, create a unifying framework for collaboration and collective impact. A focus on equity is embedded throughout. Effective principles include the following qualities.

- **Shared vision and accountability for results**  
A clear, mutually agreed-upon vision focused on results drives the work of community schools. Agreements enable partners to hold each other accountable and move beyond battles over perceived turf.
- **Strong partnerships**  
Partners share resources and expertise and collaborate to design community schools and make them successful.
- **High expectations for all**  
Children, youth, and adults are all expected to learn to a high standard and to become contributing members of their community.
- **Community strengths**  
Community schools marshal the assets of the entire community—including the people who live and work there and local organizations.
- **Respect for diversity**  
Community schools know their communities. They develop respect and a strong, positive identity for people of diverse backgrounds and are committed to the welfare of the whole community.
- **Local decision making**  
The power of the local communities is unleashed when local leaders make decisions about community schools strategy with input from the school community, including families and neighborhood residents involved with each school who respond to their unique circumstances.

Community schools do not exist in isolation. Indeed, one of the keys to their success lies in the ability to connect with other initiatives and offer an implementation strategy for broader planning and alignment efforts. The next section describes how three community school initiatives connect to next-generation, place-based, and community-wide initiatives, which are seen as key strategies for achieving success. See Appendix A for background information about each of these efforts.

Our community schools strategy is instrumental in helping schools achieve our academic priorities as well as engaging communities in their children's education. The intermediary framework with a collaborative governance body helps us make wise, data-driven decisions that best serve our students and foster equity. Every community would benefit from a community schools initiative to help it think through how resources focused on students are being used in the most effective and efficient ways.

**Don Grotting**  
Superintendent,  
David Douglas School District

# VISITING A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

If you were touring a fully-developed community school, here's what you might see and learn:

You walk in and it's immediately evident that the school is a welcoming place for all. The school is open evenings and weekends, as the sign with the school hours shows. Down the hall, there are some dedicated rooms and offices for an array of community partners. According to the signs on the doors, partners offer counseling and mental health, family strengthening, tutoring and mentoring services and literacy programs for the community.

As the meeting with the community school coordinator and the principal begins, the trust and camaraderie between them is clear. The coordinator talks about recruiting partners, coordinating opportunities and supports with the work of teachers, and the school's goals. He talks with pride about aligning afterschool activities with the learning goals in the classroom, the new health clinic and the dental services shared by neighboring schools.

The principal describes her work to help struggling students and explains she now has more time to be the instructional leader since the community school coordinator helps manage expanded learning opportunities, health, and other supports. She discusses the ways in which teachers involve students in the community as part of the core curriculum, working with community partners on environmental and service learning projects and on STEM subjects.

She brags about the greater student engagement and the increases in attendance and academic achievement. The coordinator and the principal then start trading stories about the new roles and excitement among parents and how that new energy has had such a positive impact on the school.

You are invited to join a meeting with community partners. Today's conversation focuses on after-school opportunities and addressing increasing violence in the community. You learn about how more students are engaged in afterschool programming and that they are excited by the theater, arts, and music opportunities jointly staffed with community partners. The conversation then focuses on how to work with the police and faith-based institutions, to stop the violence.

As you continue the tour, you see the room where neighborhood early childhood programs come for professional development opportunities. Then you have a chance to speak with a couple of teachers who talk about how

the presence of community partners helps them address problems that students bring to class every day that they once had to deal with on their own. They also talk about how much they love the connections their students are making with the real world.

And what's particularly cool, you learn at the end of the tour, is that this community school is not one of a kind. In fact, it is similar to other community schools in the adjacent neighborhood and across town.



## CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND THE ALL HANDS RAISED PARTNERSHIP IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

In the late 1990s, Portland, Oregon, and the surrounding Multnomah County found itself facing alarmingly low graduation rates, a significant achievement gap, and growing poverty. In addition, demographic changes were dramatically increasing the region's cultural and linguistic diversity; schools, social services, and the community were unprepared to support and educate a changing school population.

Multnomah County community members and leaders recognized the need for a new approach—one that brought joint assets to bear and developed a true collaboration with shared vision, investment, and reward. A multi-jurisdictional community-building initiative—with leadership drawn from the elected officials of Portland and Multnomah County as well as from school districts, businesses, and community organizations—identified community schools as the strategy they wanted to fund and implement. The Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Community Schools initiative was officially launched in 1999 with eight demonstration sites. While wide-ranging services were available before SUN, they were not coordinated to target local needs.

Today, sixty-seven schools in six districts are a part of the SUN strategy, and students who access SUN services and supports have been consistently experiencing improved attendance, strong academic growth, and increased youth assets since 1999. In 2011–2012, attendance rates increased to 95 percent in K–12, over three-quarters of students increased benchmark scores in reading, and high school students earned 7.8 credits on average, compared to the six needed to graduate on time. A recently published quasi-experimental study demonstrated that high school students who participated regularly in SUN supports had significantly better school attendance rates and earned a greater number of credits toward graduation than peers who did not participate in SUN.<sup>10</sup>

Conditions are changing in the larger community as well. Portland Public Schools, the largest district in the area, has shown a 13 percent reduction in the achievement gap over a recent two year period. After years of stagnant results, 2010–2011 graduation rates in Multnomah County increased from 57 to 60 percent, with one SUN Community School accelerating its graduation rate by 14 percentage points in one year.

SUN is not just a collaboration strategy at the local school level. SUN's leadership structure and partnership also operate at a regional level through a multi-jurisdictional collaboration of Multnomah County, the city of Portland, six school districts, the state of Oregon, businesses, and community partners. Using a community schools strategy for delivering services to youth and families, SUN helps its partners focus their resources on the needs of students and families in a specific geographic area for maximum coordinated effect. This targeted approach has helped partners meet their varied organizational missions—whether focused on education, anti-poverty efforts, health, community safety, or workforce and community development—and track results and share accountability.

There wasn't a systemic approach or a consistent way that public dollars were being used. There were over 100 programs and no real rhyme or reason. We had evidence-based models but little alignment of efforts. One of the most compelling motivations for selecting the community schools strategy was its focus on the school as a center of community and as an effective place to both deliver services and engage the community to achieve a collective impact on educational success.

**Diana Hall**  
Program Supervisor  
SUN Service System

SUN is recognized locally as a strategy for achieving equity within and across neighborhoods in the region. SUN Community Schools serve the most vulnerable students and families (in 2011–2012, 71 percent of students were students of color and 77 percent of students were eligible for free and reduced-price lunch) and help them achieve positive outcomes. Disaggregated results show that SUN is closing the achievement gap for youth of color. SUN's demonstrated ability to improve efficiency and effectiveness, along with its commitment to achieving equity within and across schools and neighborhoods, has earned the trust of students, teachers, partners, and community members.

### **EMBEDDING SUN AS A CORE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

SUN's focus on educational and economic equity issues and improved outcomes has helped it become a foundational platform over the last few years. The SUN Service System Coordinating Council, which includes leaders from the county, city, participating school districts, and nonprofit organizations, guides the SUN Service System. As Bill Scott, a retired business leader and co-chair of the Coordinating Council, notes, "SUN has become a community-building and economic-development initiative as well as an education initiative." When Portland recently adopted a new 25-year strategic plan, for example, SUN was named in all of the three major categories of the plan, and a call to transform every school into a SUN Community School was articulated as a key action.

### **ANOTHER INITIATIVE FOR PORTLAND?**

In Portland and Multnomah County, like many other places, there were multiple tables where leaders from schools, business, higher education, local government, and community came together at a regional level to address educational success. In Portland, in addition to SUN's Coordinating Council, there were several regional leadership groups, including a long-standing Leaders Roundtable and a newer Education Cabinet convened by the mayor. Discussion and vision were strong, but often duplicated across tables while shared accountability for improving outcomes was lacking.

Missing at the regional level was one unified group with a shared vision, data-driven accountability, commitment to collective impact, and broad representation from corporate, foundation, and community leaders. When members of the Leaders Roundtable and Education Cabinet were first introduced to the work

of Strive Initiative in Cincinnati in 2010, they saw an opportunity to create a body that would incorporate both groups and provide structures to address what was missing. Since many of the members of the Leaders Roundtable and Education Cabinet were part of SUN Community Schools, they immediately recognized the potential for close connection between the two place-based, community-improvement frameworks.

Portland's then-mayor, Sam Adams, among others, realized that the infrastructure already in place through the SUN Service System, and that explicit community support for the Portland Plan's goal of making every school a community school was an excellent foundation for implementing a cradle-to-career approach.

Over the past three years, the cradle-to-career effort has developed into a robust community-wide effort. First, the nonprofit All Hands Raised was designated as the initiative's managing organization or "backbone" for the cradle-to-career effort.<sup>11</sup> Then, the commitment to collaborative partnerships gained significant momentum as partners adopted their first three priorities in July 2011, all of which are aligned with SUN's goals:

- Eliminating disparities in children and youth success
- Linking community and family supports to children and youth success
- Ensuring that all students enter school prepared to learn.

Additional points of alignment between SUN and the All Hands Raised partnership are apparent—and evolving. Community leaders view SUN as a basic building block and implementation strategy for much of what the All Hands Raised cradle-to-career continuum hopes to provide. Both initiatives share many leaders. The county chair, Portland's mayor, and district superintendents are involved with both. SUN's Coordinating Council was chosen as the co-convenor, with Portland State University one of three collaboratives charged with developing strategic action plans to advance the first two priorities: eliminating disparities and linking community and family supports to children and youth success.

The All Hands Raised Partnership also offers benefits to SUN. The partnership is able to establish community-wide commitment and vision at the regional level that supports work at the local and school levels. The shared indicators hold great promise for establishing a clear accountability structure across the community and increasing the cross-sector, cross-boundary focus on educational outcomes. This increased political will, alignment, and commitment all enhance the local, site-based efforts of SUN Community Schools.

## CASE STUDY: PARTNERING FOR IMPACT IN SOUTH KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

**K**ing County, Washington, with Seattle as its county seat, is one of the nation's most diverse communities. The area is known for high tech, great coffee, and great wealth. South King County is vibrant and rich in culture, and its diversity is growing. Washington State is fourth in the nation for refugee resettlement, and South King County receives 70 percent of those families. Over a quarter of students and their families are newly landed immigrants from 80 different nations. Spanish is the most common of more than 70 different languages spoken in the region, including Somali, Nepali, Burmese, Serbo-Croatian, Samoan, and Arabic.

South King County is also home to the city of Tukwila, which was chosen as the demonstration site for a community schools initiative in response to the high number of families living in poverty, the number of students living in out-of-home placements (one out of nine), and its rapid change from a primarily white farming suburb to a key refugee placement center. Against this backdrop, a collaboration among five public and private agencies embraced a community schools strategy as a way for bringing comprehensive, place-based services directly to children and families, and improving educational outcomes.

Starting in 1998, the partnership—forged among the Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD), the Tukwila School District, the city of Tukwila, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Children's Administration, and the Casey Family Programs—was formally organized as the Tukwila Community Schools Collaboration (TCSC).

Student outcomes at Foster High School, the only high school in Tukwila, illuminate the impact of the community schools strategy. The adjusted five-year cohort graduation rate for the class of 2004 was 52.1 percent. Six years later, the class of 2010's adjusted rate was 76.3 percent, a remarkable 24-point increase.<sup>12</sup> Almost three-quarters of Foster's graduates go on to college; statewide, only 62 percent of high school graduates do so. Somewhat surprisingly given national trends, a greater percentage of Foster's graduates attend four-year colleges than the statewide average even as Tukwila's demographics continue to evolve. Today the district serves a student body that is 82 percent students of color. Seventy-seven percent qualify for free or reduced-price meals, and 36 percent are English Language Learners.

Foster senior Mycal Ford was part of a 2007 delegation attending an awards ceremony in Washington, DC, that recognized the Tukwila School District. In his address, Ford said, "Through our community school, I was offered the opportunity to teach middle schoolers hip hop dance.... What the community school provides for these students is not just hip hop after school, but a [high school] student to look up to... and a sense of community, a sense of belonging, a sense of want, a sense of family.... It's been a pleasure and an opportunity and an astounding feeling to teach these students." Ford went on to attend Pacific Lutheran University on full scholarship.

The Community Schools Collaboration (CSC) is central to Tukwila's dramatic improvement in student outcomes. At school sites, the collaboration staff link providers to the schools and work with school staff to create a smooth transition between classroom learning and extended day programming. As a result, opportunities are available to support student learning and promote positive educational outcomes at every grade level from kindergarten to twelfth grade. When existing resources are not adequate to meet identified needs, the CSC hires staff with the needed expertise.

Each site manager, working with multi-lingual community liaisons, engages parents and other care-givers in a system of support that connect students and their families to community resources and provides them with the educational tools needed to be active in their students' success. Health coordinators bring medical, dental, and vision care to the schools, as well as health and nutrition programs. These three strategies—student supports, family engagement and support, and health services—make up the web of strategies CSC uses in partnership with school sites.

### EXPANDING THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

Seven years after starting work in Tukwila, the Highline School District, a much larger school district encompassing four cities and a community within unincorporated South King County invited the Tukwila Community Schools Collaboration to work in its jurisdiction as well. As a result of its expanded focus, the organization changed its name to the Community Schools Collaboration (CSC) and currently provides services and support for students from kindergarten through twelfth grade and their families at eleven

school sites within the communities of White Center, Burien, Des Moines, and SeaTac in the Highline School District, as well as the five school sites in Tukwila. As an intermediary organization, the CSC coordinates school site programs and services, sustains and expands community schools in high-needs areas, and provides schools and community agencies with training and technical assistance.

CSC is now well established with a strong record of independently evaluated success. Students who regularly participate in programs provided through the community schools strategies graduate at a higher rate than non-participants. Students served by CSC Tyee Campus in SeaTac had an on-time graduation rate of 68 percent compared to 48 percent of non-participating students. At Chinook Middle School in SeaTac, one of the early Highline District expansion schools, the percentage of seventh-grade students passing the Washington State test in reading has grown from 30 percent to 49 percent, and the percentage of students passing state eighth-grade math tests has increased from 28 percent to 58 percent over four years. Approximately three-quarters of the 2,200 students participating in academic support activities report that these activities are helping them build the skills, beliefs, and dispositions needed to succeed in school; teachers report that 75 percent of students who need to improve academic performance do improve.

### **PROMISE NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WORKING TOGETHER**

The CSC continued to expand in more communities; by 2008, this included three schools in White Center, a community served by the Highline School District. This work was in partnership with the White Center Community Development Association (WCCDA), an intermediary created in 2001 with a major 10-year investment by the Annie E. Casey Foundation through its Making Connections initiative. As the foundation's investment concluded in 2011, the WCCDA saw the federal Promise Neighborhoods initiative as a way to build and expand on Making Connections.

The CSC played a critical role by providing a ready-made framework for collaboration, along with an infrastructure on which to build. With community schools serving as hubs, the WCCDA could focus on coordinating external partners, family strengthening, and community building. Unfortunately, White Center was not a successful Promise Neighborhood applicant, but it used the Promise Neighborhood plan, like many other communities, to guide their future efforts.

### **DOUBLING THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ON A PATH TO SUCCESS**

In January 2010, a new nonprofit, the Community Center for Education Results (CCER), launched a regional project also modeled on the Strive “cradle-to-career” initiative in Cincinnati. Called the Road Map Project, it focused on the six South King County school districts as well as South Seattle schools.

Led by community leader Mary Jean Ryan (and initially housed in the Seattle Foundation), a group of project sponsors was convened, including the Seattle, Bill & Melinda Gates, and Raikes Foundations, regional superintendents, and community college presidents. The goal of the Road Map Project is to double the number of students in South King County and South Seattle who are on track to graduate from college or earn a career credential by 2020. Currently, 72 percent of high school students in the Road Map region graduate on time; 47 percent of those need pre-college level math when entering college. The county's disproportionately low graduation rate for students of color mirrors the rest of the country.

Community schools are a great operational strategy to support an overall Promise Neighborhood strategy. We work at the systems level and on broader community development goals; they create a collaborative framework to support students and the school community. It's a great partnership!

#### **Sili Savusa**

Executive Director,  
White Center Community  
Development Association



Before CCER's initial broad-based gathering, the Seattle Foundation coordinated a meeting between the CCER and CSC leadership to discuss the existing community school work in South King County. That meeting helped foster a collaborative relationship and CSC's participation has continued to grow.

So, too, has community engagement. An important aspect of CSC's value-added contribution lies in the degree of community trust its work has earned and the credibility this has lent to the Road Map Project in the eyes of parents and families. CSC's support for leadership development and advocacy is clearly reflected in the key role ascribed to the Community Network Steering Committee, a key oversight group. CSC's ability to engage parents has anchored the Road Map's regional perspective in schools and neighborhoods, making them partners in the success of their children and communities.

Currently, participation in the Road Map Project is structured around workgroups (e.g., birth to third grade, youth development, high school to college completion, data collection, English Language Learners, and STEM), all of which have developed indicators and benchmarks. As in Multnomah County, several key players hold important positions in both efforts. CSC's Executive Director is a member of the Community Network Steering Committee, which includes community members and advocates, ensuring that the community has a strong and real-time voice in steering the Road Map and balancing the role of the many representatives of various systems. In addition, CSC staff has been involved in each of the other workgroups.

Clearly, the benefits of CSC's participation in the Road Map Project work both ways. In recent years, CSC's leaders were concerned that their work in the severely under-resourced communities, where its community schools were located, was becoming too diffuse. The

shared framework of targets, indicators, and benchmarks developed by the Road Map Project has helped CSC's leaders focus and measure progress more clearly because each school district has also agreed to use the identical indicators and benchmarks.

## **SHARED WORK LEADS TO \$40 MILLION**

The Road Map Project, which includes communities beyond the CSC service areas, wrote a competitive grant application on behalf of seven King County school districts for federal Race to the Top funds and received \$40 million in funding. The King County districts' application was among 16 selected from 372 applications and one of only two applicants to receive the maximum grant award of \$40 million.

CSC is an integral part of efforts to focus on third-grade reading goals, which are part of the Race to the Top grant's Start Strong strategy, in addition to providing support and strategies for meeting the Stay Strong college readiness goals. An additional STEM Strong focus is being developed and CSC is working with the Workforce Development Council to align business professionals with students on STEM efforts in middle and high school. Finally, a deep-dive effort focused on the two elementary schools in the White Center Promise zone will include CSC in efforts to ensure that all students entering school are ready to learn and that the third-grade reading benchmarks are met. With Race to the Top successes, and in every other partnership described above, the CSC has found that partnerships can leverage resources in ways that increase help for students and their families. Schools can't do it alone; families can't do it alone; and neither can community agencies. As the South King County community schools model demonstrates, working together is the way we increase our impact and strengthen our communities.



## CASE STUDY: ALIGNING PARTNERSHIPS IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

**F**ormed in 1984, the Los Angeles Education Partnership (LAEP) is a nonprofit education support organization that collaborates with educators, families, and communities in high-poverty neighborhoods across the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Each year LAEP serves more than 1,400 educators and 60,000 students and parents to help create excellent teachers, great schools, and engaged communities.

LAEP embarked on its community school agenda in the late 1980s through resource-rich parent centers and Healthy Start sites. In 1991, LAEP (with LAUSD and others) implemented Healthy Start, a state initiative designed to provide seed funding for the coordination and alignment of resources and programs—starting with health services—that support and strengthen children and families at the local level. The first community school in San Fernando Valley grew out of this work with school leaders, teachers, parents, and service providers to provide an integrated network of resources at a single elementary school site.

About the same time, LAEP (in partnership with LAUSD) developed a winning design for the PreK–12 Elizabeth Learning Center as part of the national New American Schools competition. By building on these foundation-laying efforts, schools that are using a community schools strategy have continued to grow throughout LAUSD, including four campuses funded as Full Service Community Schools through a federal initiative to support comprehensive service delivery at school sites.

### ALIGNING WITH LA UNIFIED E5: AA>6;EFD;5F

As the second largest school district in the nation, the LAUSD enrolls more than 640,000 students in kindergarten through twelfth grade at over 900 schools and 187 public charter schools. Its boundaries spread over 720 square miles and include the mega-city of Los Angeles, all or parts of 31 smaller municipalities, and several unincorporated sections of Southern California. As a result of this complexity, LAUSD supports many simultaneous reform initiatives. LAEP has integrated its community school work into LAUSD school reform efforts and broader community improvement efforts.

In large urban districts, organized constituencies are crucial to any successful change effort. For example, LAEP partnered with InnerCity Struggle, an East Los Angeles-focused community organizing group, to advocate with LAUSD for the construction of a new high school; the existing high school was built to accommodate 1,500 students and, at that time, was serving 4,700 students. Now, the Esteban Torres Campus houses five, independent, small, learning communities connected by the health and social supports and family engagement provided by a community school.

One of LAUSD's major school reform efforts is Public School Choice (PSC). Started in 2009, this effort is designed to foster innovative, autonomous schools. PSC has enabled teachers, other school personnel, and charter organizations to compete for running the 115 new schools and campuses as well as existing schools categorized as persistently failing. One of the ways LAEP has fostered the growth of community schools is by strategically embedding its work within the PSC initiative.

### WORKING WITH TEACHER TEAMS TO FOSTER LEADERSHIP

Back in 1988, LAEP began fostering the development of teacher teams that employed the Humanitas interdisciplinary, thematic instructional model. One of the strengths of the Humanitas model is that it “attempts to provide *average* students with opportunities to develop critical thinking, writing, and discussion skills.”<sup>13</sup> Of the thirty teacher teams employing this model, nine have now written and implemented winning autonomous school plans, often with the support of InnerCity Struggle.

These teacher-leaders have facilitated career-themed small schools and a community school approach within LAUSD campuses and at new sites, including the Social Justice Humanitas (SJH) Academy, one of four small schools sharing a new campus that serves the northeast San Fernando Valley. By providing technical assistance to several teacher design teams, and by engaging community school staff in the planning, LAEP has helped embed a community school approach in the holistic school-reform design—with impressive results.

Our partnerships with community groups are not “add-ons.” Our partnerships are part of the fabric of who we are as a school. We have included our community partners from the very beginning. Community partners helped play a role in designing our school plan and they play a role in our plans for teaching and learning.

**Carolyn McKnight**  
Principal,  
East Los Angeles Performing  
Arts Academy

For example, at Social Justice Humanitas—an autonomous small school on a shared-LAUSD campus, 90 percent of the school’s students live in poverty; more than half of the 450-plus students are English Language Learners. This school was accredited within six months of opening and graduated 90 percent of its seniors in its first year. Similarly, at the East Los Angeles Performing Arts Academy (ELAPA), which boasts a high school attendance rate of 95 percent, 97 of its 112 seniors graduated, many of whom were credit-deficient when the school opened in 2010.

Each school enjoys partnerships with arts institutions, community partners, and other entities that integrate and enrich career-themed instruction. For example, at ELAPA, the school’s learning partners range from the LA Opera and LA Repertory Theatre to a poetry performance group and a Brazilian capoeira instructor, all of whom are incorporated in the school’s instructional plan. With their holistic approach and focus on student achievement, both schools are outperforming traditional LAUSD schools with similar demographics.

## **GRASSROOTS NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVES AND PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS**

The roots from LAEP’s ongoing work promoting community schools have sunk deep into LA neighborhoods and spread wide to create an engaged community. In several areas, neighborhood initiatives have grown up around community schools.

Pacoima Charter School, a founding member of LAEP’s Healthy Start program and a neighborhood school that converted to charter status, has been growing neighborhood roots since 2003. It uses a community schools strategy to address barriers in a community where 80 percent of students are dual-language learners and all are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. Through partnership efforts, the school’s Academic Performance Index score increased from 338 to 787 and is expected to break 800 next year, thus meeting California’s minimum proficiency standards. The school has met its federally driven Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) goals for the last three years and is the only elementary school in the area not in program improvement.

In 2007, LAEP assisted school leaders, parents, community members, and partners in organizing a Pacoima “neighborhood initiative,” a monthly roundtable that meets at the school to discuss and address neighborhood issues. For example, concern about neighborhood safety led the group to connect with law enforcement, area middle schools, youth development, and family strengthening organizations. As a result of these interactions, they joined hands to submit and win a major violence and gang prevention grant.

Three years later, LAEP-assisted full-service community schools and related neighborhood initiatives throughout the San Fernando Valley helped the Pacoima and Hollywood communities form the Los Angeles Promise Neighborhood. In FY 2010 the LA Promise Neighborhood won a Promise Neighborhood planning grant; in FY 2012 it was awarded a five-year, \$30 million implementation grant. As the lead agency, the Youth Policy Institute recognized Pacoima Charter School’s central position in the neighborhood and the value of its neighborhood initiative. The school reflects the ideas of an engaged community, neighborhood collaboration, and comprehensive services espoused by Promise Neighborhoods. The Pacoima Community Initiative (PCI) has provided a natural place to convene planning forums, and the neighborhood initiative has been directly involved.

As planning got underway, participants identified new points of alignment between what was already happening in Pacoima and what could happen in a more fully realized Promise Neighborhood. School leaders had the opportunity to visit the Harlem Children's Zone and to see in action the initiative on which Promise Neighborhoods is based. Through this visit, they developed a deeper appreciation of the role that community partners can play in fostering students' educational potential and are incorporating a cradle-to-career philosophy in all aspects of school planning. In addition, PCI is a participant in the Campaign for Grade Level Reading and is featured in a new case study about innovative birth-through-third-grade practices.

LAEP's work to support neighborhood initiatives and the involvement of school, parents, and community leaders in Promise Neighborhood planning has strengthened both schools and the surrounding community. Community schools like Pacoima provide the place where reform ideas take root—and generate the local energy and partnerships needed to expand into the larger community. From building the capacity of educators, administrators, and partners across Los Angeles to elevating community voices in Los Angeles neighborhoods and weaving together resources that can holistically address the needs of the children and families, LAEP has become a natural and invaluable partner with other place-based initiatives.

We were always involved with the surrounding community and the kids, but it was not until PCI and then Promise Neighborhoods that we started thinking more globally, that this is our neighborhood and the children live here and we need to make it better for them.

**Sylvia Fajardo**  
Principal  
Pacoima Charter School



## LESSONS: STRENGTHENING STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY TOGETHER

**T**he work of leaders in Multnomah County, South King County, and Los Angeles illuminates how the community schools approach complements and enhances other community-focused efforts. Organized around a place, built on strong partnerships, focused on results, and guided by a long-range strategy for change, community schools offer important strengths to other place-based initiatives.

As with any other social venture, community schools are not panaceas, but they can serve as a strong and even an essential element of efforts to improve outcomes for children and youth, especially those living in poverty. The experiences in Multnomah, South King County, and Los Angeles demonstrate that community schools bring the following assets to the table.

- **A clear vision of a community where learning can happen<sup>14</sup>**

Community schools initiatives never lose sight of the big picture. They are implemented at the school site, but a community schools strategy is driven by a larger community vision. Community schools initiatives realize that economic and social change at the local, regional, and state levels are needed to fully develop safe, vibrant environments with living-wage jobs and equitable opportunities for children and families. Strategic partnerships with comprehensive community initiatives are an essential part of a long-range community school vision.

- **Deeply rooted relationships and the trust of the community**

Community schools initiatives have learned the importance of listening to the community, understanding its history and cultural perspectives, and following through on promises. Partnering with community school initiatives that parents and local leaders already trust can expedite the entry of new reforms into the community and help build their credibility. Community schools can also help new initiatives seeking grassroots participation find ways to be more inclusive and responsive to local voices.

- **Demonstrated and sustained success in integrating multi-sector partnerships**

Community schools have a proven ability to bring together schools and community resources across multiple systems and organize them strategically to improve student success. The work already done to

educate cross-sector partners can greatly increase the number of “early adopters” willing to embrace the results-based framework of large-scale, place-based efforts. These existing institutional relationships and agreements set the stage for broader, deeper collaboration.

- **Flexibility for responding quickly to new opportunities**

Community schools initiatives are not wedded to “one right way” of doing things. They seek out natural points of alignment and flexibly adapt to and reflect evolving community priorities.

- **Community schools are a ground game for students**

Unless on-the-ground action in communities gives students and their families the direct supports and opportunities needed to thrive and excel, alignment and planning efforts will not achieve desired results. Community schools ensure that students and families receive resources and support in a convenient and friendly location—their local school.

Other place-based initiatives bring value to community schools initiatives as well. They often:

- **Mobilize a different set of organizations and leaders**

Collective impact initiatives often work at the C-suite level by engaging CEOs, senior elected officials, leaders from higher education, and other community-wide “movers and shakers.” Collective impact initiatives often draw a different set of “doers” to the table by focusing on policy and programs and less on service delivery. Similarly, Promise Neighborhoods and other neighborhood-focused initiatives that deliver direct services often have roots in community and economic development, early childhood programming, and the provision of social services, once again drawing a wide range of leaders to the table. When a broader set of players are intentionally and collaboratively engaged in community work, greater impact becomes possible.

- **Establish shared indicators and accountability frameworks**

Often, communities struggle with data and metrics. What data are collected across all efforts? What are the community’s targets? Who manages the data? Further, accountability frameworks are often not in

place community wide. Collective-impact initiatives organize their work around data and metrics, create community-wide mandates around data collection, and focus on a defined set of priority goals. While requiring all grantees to track a common set of indicators and outcomes, the Promise Neighborhoods program encourages communities to use their local knowledge of assets and challenges to create the programs and services most effective at achieving those goals (see Appendix B for exemplar frameworks). Community school initiatives can benefit from connecting their own results frameworks to those of other initiatives.

- Connect to comprehensive issue frameworks**  
 Many cradle-to-career efforts start with birth and place a strong emphasis on early childhood development. At the same time, they extend their focus beyond high school to encompass college, career, and other post-secondary pathways. Promise Neighborhoods incorporate health and community issues as well as education within their continuum. Other neighborhood-focused initiatives often focus on physical and economic issues such as transportation, land use, community development, environment, workforce development, and other issues that are beyond the purview of many community school efforts. In both cases, linking community school efforts with other initiatives can help the community focus on a broader range of interrelated issues.

## WORKING SMART

Finally, many communities find that it begins raining initiatives—new state and federal programs, new initiatives by local organizations, new leaders seeking to make their mark on a community, and new foundation initiatives. All these disparate opportunities contribute to a community working hard, but not working smart. When each place-based initiative in a community is working in its own silo, the community is not “working smart.”

Across the nation, communities are choosing a community schools strategy because it provides a cohesive way to work smart at the school level by organizing services and supports on behalf of children and their families where they live and learn—in their local schools and neighborhoods. Initiatives like Promise Neighborhoods and collective-impact efforts are built on the lessons learned from decades of previous community efforts, helping communities “work smarter” in neighborhoods and across regions.

The lessons from Multnomah, South King County, and Los Angeles illuminate how the community schools strategy and a variety of place-based initiatives can work together to give more children and families needed opportunities and support so that they are able to learn, grow, and succeed. Now that’s collective impact.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 More information and resources on community schools may be found at <http://www.communityschools.org>.
- 2 More information on Promise Neighborhoods may be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods> and <http://promise-neighborhoodsinstitute.org>.
- 3 The term “collective impact” was popularized in an article in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, which may be found at [www.ssireview.org/pdf/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/pdf/collective_impact).
- 4 More information on Ready by 21 may be found at [www.readyby21.org](http://www.readyby21.org).
- 5 More information on Strive may be found at <http://www.strivetogether.org>.
- 6 Anne C. Kubisch, Patricia Auspos, Prudence Brown, and Tom Dewar. *Voices from the Field III: Lessons and Challenges from Two Decades of Community Change Efforts*. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 2010, p. viii.
- 7 For a discussion of the research literature, see *Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools* (2003), available at <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/Page/CCSFullReport.pdf>.
- 8 For more information about how community schools are financed and how they spend their resources, see *Financing Community Schools: Leveraging Resources to Support Student Success* (2010), available at [www.communityschools.org/resources/capacity\\_building\\_finance](http://www.communityschools.org/resources/capacity_building_finance).
- 9 For more information on the function of intermediaries and scaling up, see *Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy* (2011), available at <http://www.communityschools.org/ScalingUp>.
- 10 See Carrie J. Furrer et al. “Getting Them There, Keeping Them There: Benefits of an Extended School Day Program for High School Students.” *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk* (JESPAR), 17:3, 2012, pp. 149–164.
- 11 For a description, see Shiloh Turner et al. *Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact*, available at <http://www.ssireview.org>, July 17, 2012, blog post.
- 12 All data are drawn from the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Washington State Report Card, available at <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.
- 13 Pamela Aschbacher and Joan Herman. *The Humanitas Program Evaluation, 1990–91*. Los Angeles: UCLA Graduate School of Education, 1991, p. 3.
- 14 A more detailed description of Communities Where Learning Happens is available at [http://www.communityschools.org/resources/part\\_one\\_a\\_community\\_where\\_learning\\_happens.aspx](http://www.communityschools.org/resources/part_one_a_community_where_learning_happens.aspx).



## APPENDIX A

### SUN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

A unique partnership of city, county, state government, and six local school districts launched the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Community Schools initiative in 1999 at eight sites. The number of community schools grew steadily from 1999 to 2004 as the partner organizations aligned existing programs and resources and pursued grants to create over 20 community schools. In 2004, the implementation of the SUN Service System, a system of care focused on educational success and self-sufficiency for youth and families, included community school schools as a core strategy and expanded to 46 schools. Since then, sponsors have continued to scale up community schools in response to community need and demand, system development, and positive results. As of 2013, SUN accounts for 67 community schools across six school districts.

#### Current Status

SUN Community Schools are full-service neighborhood hubs where the school and partners from across the community come together to ensure that kids and families have what they need to be successful—in school and in life. SUN Community Schools mobilize and strategically organize community resources to provide:

- Strong core instructional programs
- Educational support and skill development for youth and adults
- Enrichment and recreation activities
- Family involvement and support
- Social, health, and mental health resources
- Family and community events.

At SUN Community Schools, the collective efforts of youth, parents, businesses, faith communities, libraries, and community organizations create a network of supports that ensure academic success, family self-sufficiency, and economic prosperity.

With 67 community schools in place, SUN is in nearly 50 percent of Multnomah County's 140 public schools. The SUN Service System's sponsors and communities envision that every school will become a SUN Community School; they are working to develop financing models in support of that goal.

#### Intermediary Function and Governance

SUN Community Schools are the cornerstone of the broader SUN Service System, a multi-jurisdictional collaboration that provides an integrated system of supports and opportunities for school-age youth and their families.

Key systemic collaborators include the following entities:

- Multnomah County
- City of Portland

#### At a Glance

Community Schools at Launch:	8
Community Schools in 2013:	67
Number of School Districts:	6
Total Students Served: (unduplicated)	19,863
Participation in Family and Community Events: 97,444 (duplicated)	

#### Major Funding Sources

County General Fund	
City General Fund	
Portland Children's Levy	
Federal Funds: Title I, General Fund	
Amount of funding blended to support community school core operations:	\$6.7 million
Amount of funding aligned or leveraged into the larger SUN Service System:	\$51.7 million

#### Contact

SUN Service System  
421 SW Oak Street  
Portland OR 97204  
(503) 988-4222  
[www.sunschools.org](http://www.sunschools.org)

- Six school districts
- Portland Children’s Levy
- Oregon Department of Human Services
- Business Sector
- Non-profit/community partners
- All Hands Raised (cradle-to-career intermediary).

The governance body consists of a system-level SUN Service System Coordinating Council that includes leaders from the SUN collaborative partners (see above), community partners, parents, and others. The group meets monthly to share decision-making on issues such as system alignment, allocation, budget, performance, and sustainability

The coordinating council co-convenes a Communities Supporting Youth Collaborative with Portland State University to provide a support network for the local cradle-to-career initiative.

### **Key School Partners**

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Across the 67 community schools there are over 350 community and business partners. Many partners support students in multiple schools, including Chess for Success, aka Science, Multnomah County Library, Portland Reading Foundation, and Ethos Music.

### **Site Managers**

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A full-time SUN Site Manager at each school is responsible for nurturing the school-based collaboration and coordinating services. Site managers are funded through a combination of funds from the major sources listed above and are employed by non-educational lead agency. Lead agencies are either a community-based organization or the city of Portland’s Parks and Recreation Bureau.

## APPENDIX A

# COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COLLABORATIVE, SOUTH KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

The Community Schools Collaboration was established in 1998 as a public-private partnership in Tukwila, Washington. The initiative was launched as a full-district initiative in all five schools of the Tukwila School District in 2001. After receiving the Community Schools National Award for Excellence in 2007, the organization expanded into the neighboring Highline School District. The CSC currently provides services to K-12 students and their families within Burien, Des Moines, SeaTac, and White Center communities of the Highline District as well as Tukwila.

### Current Status

Today, the CSC coordinates programs and services to over 2,200 students and their families in 20 schools on 16 campuses. Programs and services include dental, medical, vision, and social/emotional health services; family literacy events, family education workshops, and family resource referrals; homework assistance and tutoring along with expanded learning opportunities using arts, technology, and recreation; and leadership and college and/or career preparation. The CSC partners with three cities and two school districts, along with more than 160 community-based organizations.

### Collaboration Framework

Given that the CSC operates in three primary communities and two districts, its governance structure is unique to each community. In Tukwila, for example, monthly meetings are held with district and city staff and CSC leadership staff to address issues and make long-range plans, including plans for sustainability. In SeaTac, the CSC meets with community partners, along with city staff and a regional human services coordinator, to plan and provide updates on community needs and resources. White Center is organizing under the White Center Promise planning committee, which also meets monthly. In addition, each quarter, Highline School District leaders meet quarterly with CSC leaders to plan and access programs and services.

### Key School Partners

The CSC partners with over 160 agencies and volunteers. Swedish Medical Center, Health Point Community Health Services, Public Health, LensCrafters, Washington Smile Partners, and Renton Area Youth Services, to name a few, provide health services. Other major partners include YMCA, Neighborhood House, Washington Youth Soccer, King County Library, Highline Community College, Asian Counseling and Referral Service, Northwest Harvest, and various city parks and recreation departments.

Many principals recruit partners (especially if matching funding is required) like the Seattle Zoo, Technology Access Foundation, and Boeing Math and Science. Partnerships that span more than one community, such

### At a Glance

Community Schools at Launch:	5
Community Schools 2012-13:	20
Total Students:	9,998

### Public Sector Funders

21st Century Community Learning Center Funds  
City of SeaTac  
City of Tukwila  
Tukwila School District  
Highline Public Schools

### Private Funders

Stuart Foundation  
Silver Foundation  
United Way  
College Spark  
The Seattle Foundation  
Medina Foundation  
State Farm  
Key Bank  
Boeing Employees Credit Union

### Contact

Community Schools Collaboration  
137 SW 154<sup>th</sup> Street  
Burien, WA 98166  
(206)901-2503  
[www.cscwa.org](http://www.cscwa.org)

as Washington Youth Soccer or Girls on the Run, are usually negotiated by the Community Schools Director. Local partnerships with individual schools are negotiated by the site director.

### **Site Managers**

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Each community school site is led by a site manager, who uses his/her daytime hours to meet with faculty, students and parents; plan lessons and activities; and support classroom learning as needed. During after-school hours, site managers coordinate activities, supervise staff and volunteers, communicate with parents, and support student learning and development.

Additionally, three health coordinators recruit and manage health partners in each of our three major communities. Site managers and health coordinators are CSC employees and are paid through grants and other funds raised by the organization.

## APPENDIX A

### LOS ANGELES EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP (LAEP) COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Los Angeles Education Partnership (LEAP) launched its first community school with foundation support in 2005 with a collaborative of nonprofit organizations, each with decades of experience serving the northeast San Fernando Valley. Its goal was to raise graduation rates and reduce dropout rates at San Fernando High School. In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the collaborative a five-year Full Service Community School grant, enabling it to expand to include other northeast San Fernando Valley secondary schools.

Initial success in the San Fernando Valley spurred the development of community schools in South and East Los Angeles based on the LEAP model. As part of the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) and LAEP's efforts to transform teaching and learning in South Los Angeles' Fremont family of schools, LAEP integrated community schools with its school reform work in the Fremont High School feeder pattern, connecting resources that support children from early childhood through high school. In fall 2011, LAEP and five autonomous teacher-led pilot schools launched the first campus-wide community school at the Esteban Torres High School. In 2012, LAEP was contracted as the School Improvement Grant intermediary for Washington Prep High School. The school transformation team includes coaches for teaching and learning as well as the integration of the community school learning supports. Currently, LAEP has nine community school coordinators serving 16 schools on nine campuses.

#### Current Status

The overarching goal is to build the capacity of schools for increasing the number of students who stay in school, graduate, and are prepared for college or other post-secondary educational opportunities. LAEP's community schools create the infrastructure to facilitate shared problem solving, leading to an integrated web of resources that link school-based, community-based, and civic assets so that all children from birth through college can thrive. The collaborative work raises student achievement, builds social networks that strengthen school communities, and produces students who are college- and career-ready.

Each school has improved its Academic Performance Index score every year since the launch of its community school collaborative.

#### Collaboration Framework

LEAP is the lead agency and facilitates the partnership of school and community members to coordinate extended learning and learning supports. Community schools change the service-delivery system for students and parents and the relationships among the constituent groups. Each school operates with a community-school collaborative, called a Neighborhood

#### At a Glance

Community Schools at Launch:	1
Community Schools 2012–13:	
Total campuses	9
Multi-high school campuses	2
Total Students:	18,000

#### Major Sources of Funding

U.S. Department of Education,  
Full Service Community Schools  
U.S. Department of Education,  
School Improvement Grant  
Stuart Foundation  
W. M. Keck Foundation  
Ford Foundation  
California Community Foundation  
Roth Family Foundation  
The Carol and James Collins Foundation  
The Lawrence Welk Family Foundation

#### Contact Information

Los Angeles Education Partnership  
1055 West Seventh Street, #200  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
(213) 622-5237  
[www.laep.org](http://www.laep.org)

Partnership that include students, parents, teachers, on-campus and community service providers, school and local district administrators, government agencies, college and postsecondary institutions, and representatives of businesses and community groups. A community school coordinator facilitates the Neighborhood Partnership, and the Neighborhood Partnership may create workgroups to address particular needs. The plans and decisions originate from an inclusive, united group.

### **Key School Partners**

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LAEP partners with more than 150 organizations to provide after-school and extended-learning opportunities, college awareness and preparation, career exploration and readiness, health and well-being and youth development activities. Partners also provide support for families, including ESL classes, food pantry, and parenting programs, and address community issues such as safety, health, and nutrition.

### **Community School Coordinators**

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As the lead agency, LAEP facilitates the work around collective impact, shared leadership and improved service systems by placing one community school coordinator at each community school. The community school coordinator, supported by federal and foundation grants, convenes and facilitates the Neighborhood Partnership meetings; coordinates with consultants who provide evaluation, fundraising, planning, and professional development services; ensures prompt documentation and funder reporting; and handles community updates. The Neighborhood Partnerships determine priority needs, how best to meet them, and what partners are most appropriate to provide or coordinate services. On-site community-school coordinators then work with the school and partners to strategically implement those plans and facilitate links among programs, students, parents, and teachers.

## APPENDIX B: RESULTS AND INDICATORS

### FEDERAL PROMISE NEIGHBORHOODS PROGRAM

Table 1. Education Indicators and Results They Are Intended to Measure

RESULTS	INDICATORS
Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number and percent of children, from birth-to-kindergarten entry, who have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health.</li> <li>◆ Number and percent of three-year-olds and children in kindergarten who demonstrate age-appropriate functioning at the beginning of the program or school year across multiple domains of early learning (as defined in this notice) as determined using developmentally appropriate early learning measures (as defined in the Federal notice).</li> <li>◆ Number and percent of children, from birth-to-kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or preschool.</li> </ul>
Students are proficient in core academic subjects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number and percent of students at or above grade level according to state mathematics and reading or language arts assessments in at least the grades required by the ESEA (third through eighth and once in high school).</li> </ul>
Students successfully transition from middle school grades to high school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Attendance rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade.</li> </ul>
Youth graduate from high school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Graduation rate (as defined in the notice).</li> </ul>
High school graduates obtain a postsecondary degree, certification, or credential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number and percent of Promise Neighborhood students who graduate with a regular high school diploma, as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1)(iv), and obtain postsecondary degrees, vocational certificates, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without the need for remediation.</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Family and Community Support Indicators and Results They Are Intended To Measure**

RESULTS	INDICATORS
Students are healthy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number and percent of children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily;</li> <li>◆ Number and percent of children who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily; or</li> <li>◆ Possible third indicator, to be determined (TBD) by applicant.</li> </ul>
Students feel safe at school and in their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number and percent of students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school, as measured by a school climate needs assessment (as defined in the Federal notice); or</li> <li>◆ Possible second indicator, TBD by applicant.</li> </ul>
Students live in stable communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Student mobility rate (as defined in this notice); or Students live in stable communities.</li> <li>◆ Possible second indicator, TBD by applicant.</li> </ul>
Families and community members support learning in Promise Neighborhood schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ For children birth to kindergarten entry, the # and % of parents or family members who report that they read to their child three or more times a week;</li> <li>◆ For children in the kindergarten through eighth grades, the # and % of parents or family members who report encouraging their child to read books outside of school; and</li> <li>◆ For children in the ninth through twelfth grades, the number and percent of parents or family members who report talking with their child about the importance of college and career; or</li> <li>◆ Possible fourth indicator TBD by applicant.</li> </ul>
Students have access to 21st century learning tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number and percent of students who have school and home access (and percent of the day they have access) to broadband internet (as defined in the Federal notice) and a connected computing device; or Students have access to 21st century learning tools.</li> <li>◆ Possible second indicator TBD by applicant.</li> </ul>



## APPENDIX B: RESULTS AND INDICATORS

### COALITION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Table 3. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS RESULTS AND INDICATORS

CCS RESULTS	CCS INDICATORS
Children are ready to enter school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Immunizations</li> <li>◆ Availability of early childhood education programs</li> <li>◆ Attendance at early childhood education programs</li> <li>◆ Vision, hearing, and dental status</li> <li>◆ More children with health insurance</li> <li>◆ Parents read to children</li> <li>◆ Children in expected height and weight range for their age</li> </ul>
Students attend school consistently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Daily attendance</li> <li>◆ Tardiness</li> <li>◆ Truancy</li> <li>◆ Early chronic absenteeism</li> </ul>
Students are actively involved in learning and their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Availability of in-school and after-school programs</li> <li>◆ Schools are open to community</li> <li>◆ Attendance at before and after-school programs</li> <li>◆ Partnerships for service learning in the school/community</li> <li>◆ Post-secondary plans</li> <li>◆ Students feel they belong in school</li> <li>◆ Students feel competent</li> </ul>
Schools are engaged with families and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Community-school partnerships</li> <li>◆ Trust between faculty and families</li> <li>◆ Teacher attendance</li> <li>◆ Teacher turnover</li> <li>◆ Faculty believe they are an effective and competent team</li> </ul>
Families are actively involved in their children's education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Family attendance at school-wide events</li> <li>◆ Family attendance in parent-teacher conferences</li> <li>◆ Family participation in school decision-making</li> <li>◆ Families support students' education at home</li> </ul>
Students succeed academically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Standardized test scores</li> <li>◆ Grades</li> <li>◆ Graduation rates</li> <li>◆ Dropout rates</li> <li>◆ Reading by third grade</li> </ul>
Students are healthy: physically, socially and emotionally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Vision, hearing, and dental status</li> <li>◆ Asthma rates</li> <li>◆ Student Body Mass Index (BMI)</li> <li>◆ Positive adult relationships</li> <li>◆ Positive peer relationships</li> <li>◆ Nutritional habits</li> </ul>

**Table 3. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS RESULTS AND INDICATORS** *(continued)*

CCS RESULTS	CCS INDICATORS
<p>Students live and learn in stable and supportive environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Reports of violence or weapons at school</li> <li>◆ Students feel safe in school</li> <li>◆ Staff feel safe in school</li> <li>◆ Schools are clean</li> <li>◆ Incidents of bullying</li> <li>◆ Families provide basic needs</li> </ul>
<p>Communities are desirable places to live.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Student mobility rates</li> <li>◆ Juvenile crime</li> <li>◆ Student and families with health insurance</li> <li>◆ Community stability</li> <li>◆ Employment and employability of residents and families served by the school</li> </ul>

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### **Community Schools Research Brief, 2013**

*Martin J. Blank and Reuben Jacobson*

The report highlights evidence about how a diverse set of community school initiatives (each with their own name) are preparing students to learn, helping them succeed, and preparing them for future success.

### **Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships: The Community Schools Strategy**

*Atelia Melaville, Reuben Jacobson, and Martin J. Blank*

This report builds both practice and research to describe the what, why, and how of system-wide expansion of community schools.

### **Financing Community Schools: Leveraging Resources To Support Student Success**

*Martin J. Blank, Reuben Jacobson, Atelia Melaville, and Sarah S. Pearson*

This report highlights the financing strategies of seven established community school initiatives as they leverage existing resources to avoid service duplication and to break down silos.

### **Growing Community Schools: The Role of Cross-Boundary Leadership**

*Martin J. Blank, Amy Berg and Atelia Melaville*

This report highlights work in 11 communities where leaders are working together in new ways to “grow” community schools.

### **Community Schools Research Brief, 2009**

*Martin J. Blank and Sarah S. Pearson*

Research synthesis of the impact of community schools in improving student and adult learning, strengthening families, and promote healthy communities.

### **Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools**

*Atelia Melaville, Bela P. Shah, and Martin J. Blank*

This report highlights evaluation data from 20 different community school initiatives and a synthesis of their combined results.

### **Community Schools—Promoting Student Success: A Rationale and Results Framework**

*Coalition for Community Schools*

This report outlines a rationale for and defines short- and long- term results that community schools seek.

### **Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship**

*Atelia Melaville, Amy Berg and Martin J. Blank*

Discover how community schools are using real-world, hands-on problem solving to ignite the imagination and the intellect of our young people.

### **California’s Tomorrow: Equity is the Superior Growth Model**

*PolicyLink*

Long at the cutting edge of the nation’s demographic transformation, California continues to grow more racially and ethnically diverse. This diversity will be the key to the state’s future economic success—if its leaders take immediate and decisive action to increase fairness and opportunity.

### **Promoting Equity through the Practice of Health Impact Assessment**

*PolicyLink*

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is an important tool for understanding the health implications of proposed policies, plans, or projects on communities. Equity is a core value of HIA and many practitioners have used HIA to advance equity in decision-making processes.

### **Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities**

*PolicyLink*

For the 143 communities and regions engaged in planning for a prosperous future, the Sustainable Communities Initiative is a game-changing opportunity. By bringing together diverse and disparate interests while developing new leaders, Sustainable Communities is seeding an opportunity for regions and communities to craft an authentic vision for an equitable and prosperous future.

### **America’s Tomorrow: Equity is the Superior Growth Model**

*PolicyLink*

These are uncertain times. As the country barely inches its way out of the Great Recession, its economic future is unclear. The growth model of the past decade—based on a housing bubble, credit-fueled consumption, and a deregulated financial industry—is failing nearly everyone. This model was not only unsustainable, but it also did not deliver on the American promise of shared prosperity.



**Coalition for Community Schools**

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