



SCALING the COMMUNITY SCHOOL STRATEGY in NEW YORK CITY

A Systems-Building Guide

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**THE CENTER FOR NEW YORK CITY AFFAIRS
THE NEW SCHOOL**

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The Children's Aid Society

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Executive Summary | i |
| Introduction to the Community School Strategy | 1 |
| Community Schools in New York City | 4 |
| Profiles of Community School Systems Across the U.S. | 6 |
| Core Community School Standards | 9 |
| CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY SCHOOL READINESS | 11 |
| Rigorous Selection Process | 11 |
| School Leadership Readiness | 13 |
| Community Partner Readiness | 17 |
| Building Readiness | 21 |
| Neighborhood Readiness | 23 |
| School-Community Partnership Map | 25 |
| CHAPTER 2: FUNDING THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL STRATEGY | 26 |
| Challenges to Community School Financing | 27 |
| Cost Estimates and Funding Opportunities | 29 |
| Recommendations to City Hall | 38 |
| CHAPTER 3: CITYWIDE LEADERSHIP FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS | 41 |
| Bringing Leaders Together: Cross-Boundary Leadership and Collective Impact | 41 |
| Vision and Responsibilities for New York City’s Children’s Cabinet | 44 |
| Children’s Cabinet Support of the Community Schools Initiative | 46 |
| Restructuring the Department of Education’s Central Office | 51 |
| CHAPTER 4: TOOLS FOR MANAGING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS | 53 |
| Policy and Tools for the Department of Education | 53 |
| Data Sharing and Integration | 61 |
| Evaluation and Continuous Improvement | 68 |
| Acknowledgements | 74 |
| Endnotes | 76 |

Executive Summary

Vigorously championed by Mayor Bill de Blasio, community schools are intensive partnerships of educators and health and human services providers that are designed to help typically very low-income students thrive, academically and socially. These schools now have a strong wind of political support filling their sails in New York. During the upcoming school year, some 40 schools will be chosen to join a citywide community school initiative designed to launch 100 new community schools by the end of de Blasio's first term.

This new initiative marks a significant departure from the education course charted by the previous administration, which regularly discounted the need to reduce the effects of income inequality to improve classroom achievement. The success of this major new initiative would vault New York City into the national fore among cities that have embraced the idea that overcoming the social consequences of poverty must go in tandem with progress in learning—and that community school partnerships are the ideal vehicle for that task.

This report describes the philosophical, fiscal and organizational prerequisites for a successful community schools initiative in New York City. It's based on a critical appraisal of the city's existing community schools, some of which—like the Beacon schools begun under Mayor David Dinkins—have decades-long track records. It also rests on extensive research of community schools in Chicago, Cincinnati, Oakland, Portland (Oregon) and other cities, including scores of interviews with policy-makers and practitioners in those systems.

This report is organized into four chapters addressing community school “readiness,” financing, city-wide leadership and system management. The text includes detailed practical recommendations in such areas as:

- New York's existing capacity and readiness to create community schools
- Using existing qualitative and quantitative data to select schools

- Making the most of public and private funding sources
- How to maximize input from students and parents
- Balancing oversight flexibility and accountability
- Leveling the funding playing field between schools and community organizations that are well-versed in winning and managing grants and those that aren't yet as adept in these skills
- Governance and administrative mechanisms that will foster the success of the initiative over the long haul

In city government, good intentions and meritorious ideas all too often die on the vine, especially when they upend longstanding ways of doing business. For innovation to thrive, institutional muscle also matters. We strongly urge adding the responsibility of creating policies for the community schools initiative to the portfolio of the de Blasio administration's recently established Children's Cabinet, broadening its mandate beyond a current, narrow focus on child protective services. Cross-agency collaboration is critical at every stage of the community school initiative. The Children's Cabinet—which consists of all relevant city departments and which reports to Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives Richard Buery, who is also overseeing the community schools initiative—has the kind of scope and authority that have proved instrumental to bolstering community school efforts in other parts of the nation.

In the fourth and concluding chapter, this report also offers useful recommendations on ways to make ongoing evaluative research integral at every stage of the community schools initiative. These recommendations show how such research—aided by the development of new data-gathering tools and procedures—will help promote accountability and high performance at the school level, and encourage further improvement of the city's community schools.

In carpentry, the pragmatic folk wisdom is “measure twice, cut once.” That's a useful rule of thumb for City Hall to apply in constructing the community schools initiative, also. Forethought and careful preparation for this highly complex and ambitious undertaking will almost certainly conserve institutional resources and political capital, prevent costly errors and produce better results for everyone in the long run. “Scaling the Community School Strategy in New York City” gives city policymakers a thoughtful, comprehensive and step-by-step planning guide to making the community schools initiative a success.



About the Center for New York City Affairs at The New School:

The Center is an applied policy research institute that drives innovation in social policy. It works where people's lives intersect with government and community organizations. Its findings have spurred major efforts in such areas as reducing chronic public school absenteeism in New York City and overhauling the state's juvenile corrections system.

About the Children's Aid Society:

The Children's Aid Society is an independent, nonprofit organization established to serve the children of New York City. Its mission is to help children in poverty to succeed and thrive by providing comprehensive supports to children and their families in targeted high-needs New York City neighborhoods. Founded in 1853, Children's Aid is one of the nation's largest and most innovative non-sectarian agencies, serving New York's neediest children. Services are provided in community schools, neighborhood centers, health clinics, camps and other settings. It currently partners with the New York City Department of Education in 16 community schools in New York City and operates the National Center for Community Schools.

Introduction to the Community School Strategy

Community schools all begin with the belief that non-academic factors such as family and neighborhood instability, poverty and inadequate access to health care have contributed to an “opportunity gap” in our nation’s schools. Research finds that wide disparities exist before children ever enter a classroom and often persist or widen over the years.¹ These disparities not only affect test scores and other measures of academic achievement, but also have an impact on broader measures of health and human capital.² To combat these issues, a growing number of schools and communities across the country have begun to redefine the role, leadership, hours and even physical boundaries of the traditional school to include more comprehensive, holistic student and family supports.

... a growing number of schools and communities across the country have begun to redefine the role, leadership, hours and even physical boundaries of the traditional school

Community schools leverage existing resources, expertise and knowledge in local communities to bolster struggling schools. They build partnerships with community-based organizations to address students’ social, emotional, mental and physical health needs both inside and outside the school building. Because the needs and assets of each community vary, no two community schools are exactly alike. Many have a wide mix of programs to help address a variety of needs and interests among the students, from after-school tutoring and enrichment to connecting families to affordable housing to mental health counseling. Given this need for responsiveness, it is best to think of community schools as implementing a flexible strategy rather than a model that prescribes specific services or partnerships each school should have.

The use of the community school strategy can be traced back to the first urban settlement houses of the late 1800s. Progressive advocates like Jane Addams and educational theorists like John Dewey saw then that schools could benefit from additional resources while also serving as centers for community life.³ Indeed, several settlement houses still exist and run community schools today, but many changes have occurred as political support for the strategy waxed and waned. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's support of community education revived the movement in the 30s and again in the 60s, but each time it failed to take hold due to a lack of political support and a lack of integration with the schools' core missions.⁴ This began to change in the 1990s with the creation of two major public funding streams to support this work and the formation of two national coalitions to advocate and provide technical assistance.

In 1991 Mayor Dinkins dedicated city tax levy funding to the Beacon program run by the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) to forge partnerships serving youth and community members in the city's highest-crime neighborhoods. Beacons were mandated to open the schools to the community until 9 p.m. and on Saturdays as well as rebuild and create positive spaces for families and community members. Since then they have expanded to 80 school sites in New York City, one in each City Council district, as well as a national model embraced by cities such as Denver, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

Children's Aid Society opened its first community schools in 1992 and 1993. These schools met a great need for health services, social supports and quality education in the predominately immigrant neighborhood of Washington Heights. Children's Aid has since expanded into East Harlem, the South Bronx and Staten Island at 16 community schools. At these schools, Children's Aid uses the "lead-partner model" that many schools across the country now follow. Under this model, one CBO partner coordinates with school leadership and all other providers, integrating resources around shared objectives and a long-term vision for the community school. The national interest in the agency's work in Washington Heights prompted the creation of the National Technical Assistance Center for Community Schools (now National Center for Community Schools) in 1994. To extend into research and political advocacy, CAS became a founding member of the Coalition for Community Schools in 1997. Both of these organizations continue to support the growth of community schools across the country today.

The first federal fund to support community schools, the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) initiative, was developed in 1994 to "open up schools for broader use by their communities."⁵ This original community schools orientation was obscured when President Clinton framed it as quality, affordable childcare, but with Clinton's support the budget grew fivefold over the course of his administration. Today it is the largest federal funding stream for after-school programs, funneling \$1.17 billion to states each year.⁶

Under No Child Left Behind, the pressure to meet high-stakes accountability benchmarks shifted the focus of many school districts and states away from comprehensive student supports to a single-minded focus on academic achievement. This drew funding and political support away from the growing

community school movement. In fact, President Bush first proposed increasing the 21st CCLC fund, but only with an emphasis on “remedial education, math and science classes, tutoring and mentoring.”⁷ He later attempted to cut funding by 40 percent but was deterred by major pressure from afterschool providers and advocates.

In the meantime, a growing body of research from the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education, the Harvard Family Research Project and the Consortium on Chicago School Research has shown that improved instruction alone cannot drive lasting school reform. Anthony Bryk and his colleagues at the Consortium on Chicago School Research argue in their 2010 book, *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*, that a school’s parent and community ties are one of the essential ingredients for lasting school improvement. They recognize that while a school’s main goal should be to advance the academic learning of all its students, “instructional productivity does depend on the effectiveness of a diverse array of student and family supports.”⁸ The effectiveness of those supports is driven by the strong leadership of the school principal, who nurtures the leadership of others in a shared vision for local reform. This is the community school strategy at its heart: a principal, parents and community leaders working together to organize resources to better support students and families.

... the community school strategy is a fiscally responsible approach to closing the opportunity gap.

Because it targets existing programs or services to the children, families and communities who need them most, the community school strategy is a fiscally responsible approach to closing the opportunity gap. Community schools add immediate value because providers gain easier access to their clients and school buildings are utilized more efficiently. Over the long term, community schools can contribute to even greater potential cost savings and increased human capital through their coordination of early and sustained comprehensive supports.

Three recent cost-benefit analyses of individual community school models have found a positive return on the investments. For every dollar invested at Elev8 sites in Oakland, CA, the Bright Research Group found that the coordination team was able to leverage \$2.27 dollars in services from other partners and \$4.39 worth of cost savings to society over the long term.⁹ Taken together, the initial investment of \$5.8 million in services at five middle school sites had a long-term return to society of \$25 million.

A similar study by Economic Modeling Specialists on Communities in Schools, a model implemented in schools across 26 states, found that for each dollar spent coordinating and running their dropout prevention services, society will see a return of \$11.60 in greater earnings and health outcomes over a fifty-year horizon.¹⁰

Most relevant to this report is a study by The Finance Project on the costs and benefits of two Children’s Aid Society sites in Washington Heights. It found a “social return on investment” of \$10.30 for each dollar invested at PS 5 Ellen Lurie Elementary School and \$14.30 at the Salomé Ureña campus which

houses two middle schools and one combined middle-high school.¹¹ Total investments included private and public funds paying for the early childhood program, the budget for school-aged programming including after school, the school budget from the city’s Department of Education (DOE), the cost of operating the school-based health center, and a dollar value for other in-kind services such as volunteer time.

These investments totaled \$10.1 million at PS 5 and \$5.8 million at the Salomé Ureña campus, but if the DOE school budget contributions are subtracted, Children’s Aid’s “value-added” presence in the schools comes to \$2.3 and \$2 million, respectively. Divided by the total enrollment, Children’s Aid is investing about \$3,307 per child per year and generating an average return of \$38,479 per child—or more than \$50 million total per year.

Community Schools in New York City

Both locally and nationally, the notion of a persistent achievement gap has provided the backdrop for an era of high stakes accountability in education reform. Nowhere has this been more pronounced than in the nation’s largest school district, New York City. Mayor Bloomberg sought to improve the schools with a strategy of high stakes accountability combined with increased school choice and school closures. Although Bloomberg touted mayoral control as an effort to break down silos between the Department of Education and other government agencies, one unintended consequence of his reforms was to cut ties between schools and communities. This diminished school capacity to connect community-based organizations with children and families that depended on their support. “While Bloomberg enacted some changes aimed at boosting the prospects of disadvantaged students,” says Elaine Weiss, director of the Broader Bolder Approach to Education at the Economic Policy Institute, “he also played down the role of poverty and marginalized education policies’ capacity to address it.”¹²

By contrast, Mayor de Blasio’s renewed priority on child and family services acknowledges the impact of poverty on a student’s academic performance and overall well-being. Early in his term, de Blasio announced the creation of the New York City Children’s Cabinet to create better coordination among the agencies that serve children both in and out of school. He has expanded after school for middle school students, established universal Pre-K and promised to create 100 new community schools by the end of his first term. This signals a shift in education policy to address the opportunity gap, recognizing that educational disparities begin before students enter school buildings, rather than policies that only attempt to treat achievement gaps once children are in school.

In late June, de Blasio announced that \$52 million in state funds for the Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention (AIDP) program will be used to help schools address chronic absenteeism through a community school approach. Schools that applied to the NYC Department of Education this summer will be paired with one of 10 to 15 community-based organizations vetted by the United Way to bring the first round of at least 40 community schools into the city’s initiative within the upcoming school year. City Hall has convened a Community Schools Advisory Board, consisting of school principals,

CBO providers, advocates, and other resource organizations, to contribute to the emerging shape of the broader community schools initiative, which includes the AIDP funding.

Some of the strongest advocates for community schools now hold key positions of power in city government and are poised to convert the current piecemeal set of efforts into a system-wide strategy. Given the interagency and multifaceted nature of community schools, these leaders will need to commit to deeper collaboration and develop support structures both within and among city agencies and mayoral offices.

“every school should have a strategy for connecting the children in that building to the supports that they and their families need to be successful and for the children to come to school, ready to learn.”

While community schools are not new to New York City, there is no one system in place to assist schools and their community partners in initiating and sustaining the strategy. To support existing and new community schools, the city will need to formalize current practices and pair newer partnerships with seasoned community school practitioners. It will need to assist individual sites to develop and mature and conduct long-term planning to sustain the strategy. The city will need to find stable funding, review and eliminate bureaucratic barriers that limit or constrain the strategy, embed the work in city agencies, and make community schools integral to both education and social services. Ultimately, the initiative has the potential to realize Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives Richard Buery’s vision that “every school should have a strategy for connecting the children in that building to the supports that they and their families need to be successful and for the children to come to school, ready to learn.”

It is our hope that this report can serve as a starting point for the NYC Community Schools Advisory Board. It proposes a set of standards to serve as a baseline for all community schools in the initiative and suggests a selection process based on criteria for readiness. The report also explores the costs of community schools, where those funds can come from, and challenges of accessing, managing and maintaining those funds. We conclude with recommendations for how city government can best align its internal agencies to support and sustain this strategy.

This paper draws examples from five school systems that have converted piecemeal community school efforts into system-wide strategies. Each region provides a unique history, policy and approach that will inform systems-building in New York City.

Profiles of Community School Systems Across the U.S.



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Scale: 154 schools in the official Chicago Community Schools Initiative; adding all 21st Century Community Learning Center grantees makes well over 200 schools total

Longevity: 13 years; began system-wide initiative in 2001

Formal home for coordination and staffing: Chicago Public Schools central office, three dedicated staff

Cross-boundary leadership structure: Established by Chicago Campaign to Expand Community Schools, a public-private partnership with strong philanthropic leadership; currently the initiative also receives support from THRIVE, a new collective impact group being incubated in the mayor's office

Approach to data: Chicago Mayor's Office building an interagency data warehouse with Chicago Public Schools and service providers

Funding: Initially funded through an equal public-private match of \$50,000 to each community school that provided \$300,000 per site over three years, public funding has dwindled to rely more heavily on funds raised by the school partners

What differentiates the region: Unmatched scale and sizeable investment from private foundations



MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON (PORTLAND AREA)

Scale: 70 schools across six school districts participate in Schools United Neighborhoods (SUN Schools)

Longevity: 14 years; began system-wide initiative in 1999

Formal home for coordination and staffing: County Department of Human Services

Cross-boundary leadership structure: SUN System Coordinating Council in collaboration with the All Hands Raised Partnership collective impact group

Approach to data: Service providers input participation and demographic data into Sharepoint, and school districts match their data for aggregate-level analysis and reporting

Funding: City and county non-education dollars blended with money raised by the local "Children's Levy" to fund \$100,000 in core operating dollars for each school

What differentiates the region: Collaboration between city and county governments and robust organizational structure focused on realigning health and human services for delivery at school hubs



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Scale: 27 out of 86 total schools have been converted to community schools through the Community Schools, Thriving Students initiative

Longevity: 3 years; began system-wide initiative in 2011

Formal home for coordination and staffing: Oakland Unified School District

Cross-boundary leadership structure: Forming leadership council

Approach to data: Have a district data warehouse and building partners database, but they are not yet integrated

Funding: A parcel tax dedicated to funding full-time coordinators at 52 of the highest-need schools

What differentiates the region: Comprehensive strategic planning and community involvement process; overhaul of district organizational structure and policies to align with outcomes and work areas in strategic plan; focus on equity and special populations



CINCINNATI, OHIO

Scale: 36 of 55 schools are full-service Community Learning Centers

Longevity: 11 years; began system-wide initiative in 2003

Formal home for coordination and staffing: Cincinnati Public Schools central office, two dedicated staff

Cross-boundary leadership structure: Cross-boundary Leadership Team with linkages to Strive Partnership collective impact group

Approach to data: Cincinnati Public Schools built a Learning Partners Dashboard for resource coordinators to view student data and input service utilization and interventions data

Funding: District blends Title I dollars with private grants to hire full time resource coordinators at 26 schools; several other coordinators are hired and funded by the Cincinnati Community Learning Center Institute

What differentiates the region: Aiming for “every school a community school” and service providers well-integrated into school-level management and operations



TULSA, OKLAHOMA

Scale: 16 schools

Longevity: 9 years; began system-wide initiative in 2005

Formal home for coordination and staffing: management team, steering committee

Cross-boundary leadership structure: Human Service Council

Approach to data: Currently building data dashboards and early warning system

Funding: District blends private and public dollars to fund a full time coordinator at \$100,000 for schools that have gone through a tiered learning process that can take as long as three years

What differentiates the region: Centralized supports from third party council and extensive planning process reflecting the stages of development coined by National Center for Community Schools

Core Community School Standards

It is imperative to put forth a set of clarifying standards for what all fully developed community schools should look like and be able to do. School-community partnerships across the city will have their own methods and different timelines, so standards must be broad enough to be inclusive but concrete enough to ensure that all schools in the citywide initiative are pursuing a strategy that will support and improve education for their students.

- 1. Community schools must have partnerships that support a holistic definition of student success.** High expectations for all students and a strong, clear instructional vision are critical to ensure that schools are focused on academic success, socio-emotional development and physical health. Without partners, however, many schools have a limited capacity to help students achieve that holistic vision of success. The number of partnerships varies with the model: some community schools may have one high-capacity nonprofit that can both take the lead on coordination and provide multiple services, while other models have one lead coordinating partner that brokers relationships with a number of partners that are each an expert in their field.
- 2. Schools and community partners must be fully integrated.** Adopting a community school strategy is more than just adding another program within the school. Rather than a service-delivery framework, in which CBO staff are supplemental to—or “wrapping around”—the core functions of the school, community schools should have a co-leadership model. To determine vision and programming at the building level, a team of school and CBO staff, parents, youth (when appropriate) and other relevant community stakeholders needs to engage in site-based planning. Day-to-day implementation should integrate school and CBO staff into one cohesive team, which allows both sides to share their respective academic and youth development/social work perspectives and stay abreast of the daily issues that students and their families face.
- 3. Community Schools must have a dedicated person and support team responsible for coordination.** At least one staff person at a community school should be dedicated to coordinating relationships between schools and their community partners. Trained, talented professionals need to integrate and target all the services in the building to meet the shared goals of the school and its partners. This person or team is dedicated to ensuring that school staff and community partners are communicating and tracking their progress toward shared goals. These tasks are even more complex and necessary in a building that serves multiple schools.
- 4. Community schools must implement a comprehensive needs and assets assessment.** To set long-term goals and benchmarks, a community school must know the needs of its community and the types and quality of supports that are available to address those needs (often referred to as asset mapping). This requires an inclusive representation of all community stakeholders, such as parents, youth, teachers, school staff, clergy, elected officials and business leaders. A comprehensive needs and assets assessment is done at both the initial planning stages to design universal support structures and on an ongoing basis to track improvement over time.

- 5. Community schools must collect, track and analyze data.** After a needs assessment and asset map are completed, the community school coordinator and partners need real-time student and school-level data. Quantitative and qualitative data ensure that interventions and supports are not only tailored to the actual needs of students, families and communities, but are also effective in achieving their objectives. Although community schools differ in terms of data collection procedures, types of data collected and sources of data, all community schools must define indicators and measure that their programs are constantly improving.
- 6. Community schools must be located in safe and accessible buildings and be open during evenings and weekends.** Community schools must be able to safely accommodate the various populations they engage, including children, teenagers and adults, or be near other schools or community centers that can. They must be able to stay open into the evening and through summer vacations and other school holidays, since student, family and community needs do not pause when normal school schedules do. In cases of co-location, all principals in a building must adopt a “campus approach,” where all schools work together for the support of all students.

Chapter 1

Community School Readiness

Rigorous Selection Process

Many schools that serve predominately low-income students are likely to find the community school strategy a compelling approach to addressing poor student performance. However, not all schools or CBOs will have the capacity and technical assistance required to do the work. Community school systems ranging from Tulsa, Oklahoma to Cincinnati, Ohio all agree that schools lacking experience with deep school-community partnerships must spend significant time building capacity in order to truly realize the potential that community school strategies offer.

As New York City launches its initiative to create 100 new community schools, it must include schools that already have high-capacity partnerships in place as well as schools that lack them but are willing to commit to the six Core Community School Standards. This section of the report lays out principles for identification and selection of both types of schools, striking a balance between sites that have an interest in the community schools strategy and capacity to accommodate what that strategy entails.

To formulate the readiness criteria outlined in the rubrics below, we interviewed more than 65 practitioners and experts from New York City and across the country, asking the question: “What should we look for when deciding if schools and community partners are ready to be integrated into a system of community schools?” These essential characteristics for schools, community partners, buildings, and neighborhoods of effective community schools serve as a road map to identify ready community school sites as well as a guide to schools interested in pursuing a community school strategy.

In the past experts and practitioners have indicated that similar selection processes in NYC have inadequately investigated the strength of partnerships on the ground, relying too much on the characterization of the partnership on paper. To address this concern, the selection committee should use a “trust but verify”¹³ hands-on review method during the selection process. Evaluators should visit

qualifying applicants (both the school and their community partner(s)) at the school building to truly get a sense of the essential characteristics of readiness.

... every successful applicant should be able to demonstrate a commitment to shared leadership and resources.

Schools that do not yet have partnerships in place should be able to demonstrate a commitment to the Core Community School Standards through compelling plans of action to meet the readiness criteria along with concrete steps to meet the goals. For example, not every successful applicant needs to have completed a robust needs assessment in collaboration with a community partner. However, every successful applicant should be able to demonstrate a commitment to shared leadership and resources. Applicants should also be able to show a basic awareness of programs and services that are needed and how they plan to fully integrate community partners into their schools and achieve a high level of parent and community engagement.

School Leadership Readiness

Many of the indicators in this section specify characteristics and goals for schools to strive for rather than standards and qualities that are already in place. Ready schools are not limited to schools that can prove they have already put these indicators into action, but also include schools that mention characteristics or goals included below. These will be most helpful in gauging which schools are already in a “community school mindset” by identifying applicants whose proposals include similar language or themes.

Mission alignment

High expectations for all students and a strong, clear instructional vision lay the foundation for any successful community school, but this foundation rests on the belief that students are most ready to learn at their highest potential when they come from stable families and strong communities. The school must also be committed to an expanded understanding of student success to include, for example, fostering age-appropriate social and emotional skills and good health and wellness. All partners at a school—faculty and staff of the school and social service and other community partners—must share responsibility for academic success and human capital development. Both school and community partners must work from this shared vision toward clearly defined goals and outcomes.

Principals sit at the helm of their schools and so must be catalytic agents working toward aligning the missions of schools and their community partners. Principals must not only invest in the community school mission themselves but inculcate this broader commitment in their faculty and staff as well. They must ensure that there is one vision that all stakeholders agree on, and work to eliminate competing agendas. Ultimately, the community school strategy of integrated supports is not merely another program within the school. Community schools have supports, resources and relationships that emerge as schools and community partners collaborate.

For schools that plan to pursue a community school strategy but don’t necessarily already have community partners, principals must be able to demonstrate that they fully understand the collaborative nature of community schools, beginning with a common mission shared by the school and its community partners.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- The school and community partner have a shared agreement document that lays out a common mission to support the school’s students, their families and the broader community.
- The agreement document includes clearly defined goals and outcomes that are mutually beneficial.
- Principal and other school staff can articulate their mission and how their partners fit into the broad vision of the partnership.
- Other school literature confirms the community-wide focus that aligns the mission of schools and their community partner(s).

Openness to collaboration and integration

In successful school-community partnerships, cross-pollination is part of the added value: faculty often work in after-school enrichment programs and community partner staff have opportunities to engage with students during the regular school day. Community partners typically bring culturally competent social work and youth development perspectives that emphasize individual student attention. These programs are organized around social-emotional growth and moral character development through mentoring and peer learning opportunities. This can be of great value to teachers who may not have mastered this particular set of skills and are often hard-pressed to find the time for intensive interventions with students. In turn, community partner staff benefit from the expertise and knowledge school teachers and administration have regarding student classroom experience, academic instruction and curriculum content.

However, successful cross-pollination depends on strong leadership to make clear to school staff, faculty, students and parents that community partners are contributing something valuable to the school and should be fully integrated into the fabric of school life. For example, collaboration and integration between partners includes shared leadership in governance and decision-making, including community partner staff sitting on School Leadership Teams (SLTs), or School Safety and Attendance Teams. When school and community partner staff both are represented on advisory boards, attendance teams and other structures, it can help achieve an effect of “seamless programming” so that students hardly distinguish between the regular school day and after school.

Principals must also be willing to cede some degree of control over decision-making processes to community residents, parents and community partners, who all can offer expertise around family and community needs and how they should be met. Principals must allow programming to be community-driven, not simply through needs

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- There are advisory boards, School Leadership Teams and/or community councils that consist of (or approach) equal numbers of teachers, administrators, community partner representatives, parents, youth and local residents.
- There are advisory teams, subject teams, pupil personnel teams and other structures designed to enable community partners and school day staff to work together to support students in the building.
- Final products and documents have shared authorship and are exchanged on a regular basis.
- Grants have been pursued by school and community partners in collaboration with each other.
- Partners report feeling empowered to voice issues, share ideas and initiate dialogue.
- Partners report that the school is willing to share in-kind resources (such as sports equipment and enrichment materials).
- Principals and school staff have received professional development regarding collaboration such as “shared decision making” workshops or “cross-boundary leadership” training.
- Community partners have opportunities to interact with students, parents and teachers during the school day.
- Teachers have the opportunity to participate in enrichment programs offered by community partners after the end of the traditional school day.

assessments and asset mapping, but also by allowing community representatives to inform program selection, development and implementation. Likewise, partners must be willing to get input from the principal and other school leadership on their own key hires, program selection, development, implementation and regular reviews of results. School staff and faculty must also share accountability for results with community partners, which means jointly developing, blending and investing human and financial resources.

Professional development that focuses on collaboration in general is an excellent indicator that principals are serious about cultivating a culture of partnership at their school. Principals that have sought out “shared leadership training” or “cross-boundary leadership training” will have shown a commitment to learning about how they can leverage the expertise that partners and even their own staff bring to the table. Hayin Kim, community schools director for the San Francisco Unified School District, illustrates this point well. “When principals ask for money you know they are missing the point,” she says. “When they ask for capacity-building assistance, then they have asked the right question.”¹⁴

Culture of communication

Communication enables partners to learn from one another and inform each other’s practice through shared reflection. Successful partnerships have two-way communication that flows easily. This means that principals encourage frequent and regularly scheduled meetings with various stakeholders.

Advisory boards, School Leadership Teams and community councils that consist of (or approach) equal parts teachers, administrators, community partner representatives, parents, youth (where appropriate) and local residents are excellent indicators that a principal is willing to embrace input from diverse sources. These meetings should not focus only on student issues, but must broaden their scope to include a focus on the surrounding community. Principals must be willing to make themselves available to community residents, parents and of course their community partners, and treat them as equal stakeholders.

This same logic applies to how principals communicate and include their own staff and faculty in decision-making. Assistant principals, guidance counselors, social workers and teachers all should have opportunities to inform strategy and program development so that the principal is not the only gatekeeper of the school, but shares this responsibility with many “co-pilots.”¹⁵

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- Individual and collective reflection is a formal part of the assessment process.
- Learning Environment Survey results are high regarding communication for the school.
- The principal and other school staff are familiar with their community partners. They know community partner staff names and positions.
- Community partner staff report that school staff are accessible and respond to inquiries in a respectful and timely fashion.
- There are frequent and regularly scheduled meetings where various combinations of school staff, community partners, parents and students meet together to address student needs.
- Data sharing is a two-way exchange.

When all partners and staff are familiar with the overall community schools strategy and the daily minutiae that make it successful, it builds confidence in the strategy, increases commitment and makes the effort more sustainable. Principals should be able to demonstrate that they encourage frequent meetings so that the infrastructure for communication and strategy development is in place.

Parent engagement is also central to the community schools strategy; opportunities for parents to be active in school life are essential and have a key role in decision-making. Families of students and the broader communities in which they live may also need to be supported by community schools. Indeed, a core function of community schools is to reduce the barriers to services families and communities might face. To achieve such community-driven education, principals can encourage activities such as neighborhood walks, home visits and active community involvement, all of which enable school faculty and staff to understand the context in which they work.

Effective data collection and sharing

The issue of data sharing between schools and community partners arose in every interview we conducted. Schools should value quantitative and qualitative data (both student-level and school-level) as an essential component of how to tailor services and programs to student, family and community needs. Many practitioners indicated that in their experience, principals that were most ready to pursue a community schools strategy were those who were data-driven on their own, even before beginning partnerships with community organizations.

Each school's strategy should be based on a needs assessment that captures student data for academic achievement and other indicators of well-being including behavior, mental health and health factors, and other social-emotional contributors. Familiarity with this data should help principals as they make decisions about how resources are allocated, what types of services and partners are needed and how they track outcomes. Data collected, tracked and shared with community partners include suspension rates, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), grade promotion stats, Regents and credit accumulation information, grades and attendance rates in school as well as information gathered from enrichment classes and other programs offered by community partners.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- Schools are willing to share student level data with community partners to assist them in knowing the school population they have committed to serving. This can include but is not limited to suspension rates, IEPs, grade promotion stats, regents and credit accumulation info, grades and attendance records.
- School collects data that illustrates the social-emotional and physical health needs of students, not simply academic standing.
- Community partner staff report that the school shares useful data in a timely fashion.
- Partner and school staff share a common system of metrics with which to measure their efforts.
- The school can produce a needs assessment for their students, families and broader community.

Community Partner Readiness

The proposals of the community partners that are most ready to participate in a community school will be able to meet the standards and qualities outlined below as an integral part of their approach.

Deep community roots and expertise in community development

Community groups that actually know the community well are more likely to gain the trust of families to attend programs, know or learn what works in the specific cultural and socio-economic environment of the community, and be able to identify and work with local leaders, formal and informal, to help bring in resources, ideas and support to make the community school successful.

It is rare that any amount of training can replace the trust and empathy that is built when staffs have longstanding relationships with the residents of communities. Partner organizations should have a long history of serving the community, employ staff that live in and/or come from the community, or both. Deep roots in the community, coupled with expertise in community development, allow staff to assist in a methodical and well-planned approach to developing and delivering support services.

Community partners should be effective and organized in achieving the outcomes they set. Staffs of the best community partners are able to avoid a “random acts of programming” approach, when programs are implemented without a broad vision of how they all relate to each other and how they reinforce efforts toward a common goal. Experts understand that a large amount of planning and coordination precedes the first programs that schools and their partners offer. They are committed to robust needs assessments that don’t simply rely on the collected data of other groups, but actually require that they themselves knock on doors, speak with human beings and place importance on qualitative reviews, not just large numerical spreadsheets.

Expert community organizations that plan to work as part of a community school team must be able to answer the following key questions:

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- Long history of serving the community.
- Employs staff that actually live in and/or come from the community they have committed to serving.
- Demonstrated use of evidence-based practices and models.
- High rate of success in achieving their objectives. This can be evidenced through repeated success in winning competitive grants and/or through verified reports that demonstrate the completion of milestones and achievement of projected outcomes.
- Can articulate a clear strategy that summarizes the population they are working with, the baseline data they are using to measure progress from, the desired results they are pursuing along with indicators for success, and a clear plan of action to achieve those results.

- What population are we attempting to serve?
- What specific conditions and obstacles do the various segments of our community live with?
- What is our common goal? What do we want to achieve for the people we are working to serve?
- What baseline are we moving from and what indicators do we have in place to measure the success and progress we achieve?
- What clear strategy have we developed that summarizes the population we are working with, the desired results we have along with indicators for success? What is our plan to achieve those results?¹⁶

When organizations and leaders can answer these questions with ease and clarity (along with their school partners), they are demonstrating that they have a system in place to enact their community school strategy.

Effective data collection and sharing

Just as principals and school staff should be data driven, community groups should be informed by statistical trends to allocate resources and select and develop programs. One excellent way for community partners to build bridges into schools and prove the value of partnerships is to collect and share data that the school staff will find useful. For instance, teachers are much more likely to engage with community partners if those partners can help determine which students attended enrichment programs and how students perform when reviewing specific subject material. Furthermore, when teachers can glean important information regarding student family life or other out-of-school struggles they will appreciate that community partnerships provide an important perspective that helps them better understand their students. It will be difficult for organizations with little experience in data collection and analysis to do this.

Under increasing pressure to quantitatively demonstrate success for public and private grant applications, most CBOs have established protocols for data collection to track various metrics. Providers are quick to note, however, that each grant may come with a different requirement on how or what to track, which can be cumbersome and inefficient. CBOs who have found a way to streamline these systems and cater them to the metrics they have identified with the school as most important will be the most ready to implement a community school strategy.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- Community organization can easily produce evidence of current data that they have shared with schools.
- Community partner collects data that illustrates the social-emotional and/or physical health needs and intervention outcomes of students.
- School staff report that the community partner shares useful data in a timely fashion.
- Partner and school staff share a common system of metrics with which to measure their efforts.

Compatible culture and set of values

Because schools and community groups work so closely in a community school, it is imperative that they are aligned in how they view the work. Even organizations with a similar goal—working to help low-income students succeed in school and in their lives—can have markedly different approaches. A school might use a “Zero Tolerance” method of dealing with discipline issues, for example, while the community partner adheres to a “restorative justice” approach. In a case like this, students would receive mixed signals that undermine efforts of both partners.

Smaller details can be telling, too. What are expectations, for example, for students to be on exactly on time for a course? Are staffers addressed by first or last name by students? If students call teachers by their first names, community partner staff should also be comfortable with this expectation. Responsibility falls on both community partner and school leaders to determine if the cultures of the two groups match each other well.

Ability to deliver services to diverse and multigenerational, multi-age populations

Organizations that already offer multi-generational and multi-age services, such as many Beacon programs across the city, Zone 126 in Astoria and Long Island City, Queens, and the Center for Family Life in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, are poised to support young people as they graduate from their community schools and transition to new schools and different phases of their lives. Sarah Zeller-Berkman of the Youth Development Institute notes that the institutional knowledge and expertise of serving young people across their childhood and adolescent years allows organizations to deliver “seamless transition programming.”¹⁷ They are familiar with balancing students and families’ diverse needs and can adapt their programming as needs change over time. Conversely, if community partners have a very specific approach to targeting only a very narrow population group, they are unlikely to be helpful in efforts to engage whole families and the broader community.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- The language used to describe the mission and approach of the community partner is similar to the corresponding language the school uses to describe itself.
- In interviews, community partners can easily describe the culture of their partner schools and explain how their culture is compatible, with examples.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- Organizes opportunities for whole families and groups of people with different skills and needs to interact together.
- Designs programs and services that are designed to grow with participants as they make progress and/or age.
- Focus on working with young people in key transitions years, such as between elementary, middle and high school.
- Can demonstrate that they do not shy away from working with “harder to serve” populations such as court- involved youth.
- Have meaningful strategies to help parents play an active role in school and help their children become high achievers.

Research has shown that transition years are especially important. “There are high levels of absenteeism in each of the three important transition periods: the start of elementary, middle and high school. These periods of dramatic change can be perilous for marginal students who may rack up absences quickly and find themselves falling behind,” write Andrew White and Kim Nauer in their The New School’s Center for New York City Affairs report *Strengthening Schools, Strengthening Families*.¹⁸

As the community school initiative grows, opportunities to connect participating schools by proximity will emerge, allowing community schools in the same neighborhood to share best practices and information about community partners. Clusters of schools could also benefit from economies of scale around specific resources, such as school-based health centers, or for technical assistance, program evaluation or other stand-alone community programs. Early child care centers could develop relationships with the nearby elementary schools their students feed into. As those children grow older, they could graduate to a community middle school and eventually a community high school that already know their needs and help to ease their transitions. Steps could also be taken within these local networks to share and compare data on available resources or even the progress made by individual students or cohorts as their community school strategy improves over time.

Experience in convening large multi-stakeholder meetings

Community partner staff should have experience in community organizing. CBOs with grassroots pedigrees that are familiar with local politicians and powerbrokers and have experience convening large multi-stakeholder meetings that focus on resident voice are well-suited for community school work. Such partners can help principals welcome community voice into their schools and can model the type of shared decision-making and culture of community-driven collaboration that is so fundamental to community schools.

Community partners with experience running youth, parent and community councils where young people, parents and community residents are empowered as leaders are likely to cultivate that same sense of engagement and leadership among the school itself.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- Has advisory boards or other governance and accountability bodies in which community residents participate.
- Is able to demonstrate experience working with local politicians and powerbrokers through advocacy campaigns, public private partnerships and similar initiatives.

Building Readiness

The Building Readiness indicators are a tool to discern how well the school's physical site supports the community school strategy. It is likely that many schools will not be able to meet all the readiness indicators set forth below. For these schools, this will be helpful in forecasting potential challenges to consider and overcome.

The building accommodates large groups of people and multipurpose activities

The physical condition of a school plays an important role in how ready a school is for a community schools strategy. If school staff and community partners intend to offer multi-generational and multi-age services to families and community residents beyond traditional school hours, the school building itself must be able to accommodate that. Buildings should be large enough to safely accommodate large groups of people and multi-purpose activities, so spaces like gyms and auditoriums are important criteria to consider for appropriate schools. To be accessible to the wider community, it is also helpful for buildings to be close to public transportation.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- There is a gymnasium.
- There is an auditorium.

The space facilitates the integration of community partner staff

In addition, because deep collaboration is necessary between a school and community partner, the building should have a dedicated space for community partners to work, so that they are easily accessible during the day and truly feel part of a team. Shared space between school and community partner staff is often a workable compromise, but both staffs should still be able to work in the building simultaneously.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- There is a space in the building for dedicated rooms and offices for community partners to work in.

The building accommodates programming beyond regular school schedules

Buildings must be able to operate late into the evening, "on weekends, during holidays and over the summer. For example, Full Service Children's Aid Society community schools typically stay open until 9 p.m. weekdays, and on Saturdays. As of summer 2014, Beacon Schools were expected to be open until 11 p.m. weekdays, and on Saturdays and Sundays as well.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- The school building can remain open in evenings (as late as 9 p.m.)
- The school building can remain open on weekends.
- The school building can remain open on school holidays.
- The school building can remain open through summer vacation.

The primary barrier to keeping a building open later are the costs associated with the mandated custodial staff and safety agents after 6 p.m. Currently the DYCD only helps Beacon programs cover their building costs; fees for other after-school, family outreach or community programming after 6 p.m., on weekends or during holidays have to be covered by the providers themselves. We will come back to this point in the next chapter on funding recommendations, but it is important to note here that schools with a Beacon program or a principal willing to dedicate some of his or her other funds to custodial and safety costs will be more able to initiate a full community school strategy than ones who have to find additional funds. Alternatively, the school district or another city entity can cover these costs, as Cincinnati and other cities have demonstrated.

Sometimes Beacon programs must switch school buildings over summer break for various reasons such as asbestos removal or construction. Staff report that when community programs move to new locations unintended consequences often arise. Particularly for programs aimed at adolescents and young adults, issues of local gang territorial boundaries where participants may feel unsafe must be considered. Staff have also encountered an increase in adolescents and young adults being stopped and frisked by police unfamiliar with them as they come to the same program in a new area.

Buildings are accessible to wider community

When gang territories and local police presence is less of a consideration, it may be appropriate for neighboring schools and community centers to share space. Often nearby schools and community centers have much of the infrastructure already in place to accommodate a community schools strategy, and they form agreements with each other to allow students and participants to access different programs within walking distance. For example, because not all schools have the space to accommodate a school-based health center, it may be possible for neighboring schools to share such valuable resources and give any local children and families easy access to healthcare.

While ideally, every community school would be able to house all the needed programs and services in their own building, in crowded urban settings where space may be in short supply, it may make sense for schools to enter into these types of agreements. The positive news is that this arrangement may in turn shore up relationships between feeder schools and other resources like community centers.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- The building is within several minutes' walk of at least one MTA metro or bus stop.
- The building is within several minutes' walk of at least one community center that can serve as a hub for resources if the school building itself is not suitable.
- The building is within several minutes' walk of at least one health center that accepts Medicare, Medicaid and other forms of government sponsored health assistance. Or the building has its own school-based health center.

Co-located schools work together

When schools are co-located in the same building, a community school strategy requires a “campus approach.” This often requires that co-located schools enter into formal agreements to exchange in-kind resources, expect to share space, and co-plan and execute efforts to offer services and supports. Co-located schools that serve similar populations and that demonstrate a track record or strategy that ensures collaboration are well-suited for a community school effort.

POSITIVE INDICATORS

- There are agreements between schools to facilitate:
- an exchange of in-kind resources
- sharing of space
- co-planning and executing efforts to offer services and supports for all schools on the premises.

Neighborhood Readiness

Neighborhood readiness for community schools is a tricky topic. Certainly it is important to consider whether the community’s infrastructure and resources are in place to ensure the strategy is successful. However, planners should also identify communities that are distressed and truly in need of the community development focus that community school strategies offer. Neighborhoods that have already benefited from significant community development infrastructure investment and capacity-building should not be unduly privileged in the decision-making process. Instead, the focus should be on understanding the capacity neighborhoods need to build—a subject that should be part of an ongoing, broader conversation on community development across the city, of which community schools is just one component.

Neighborhoods should have layered resources in place able to address the range of residents’ needs and existing service gaps, as well as community organizations that are able to engage multiple age groups. Neighborhoods should have the capacity to organize consensus around what the priorities of a community school strategy are. Often this means that neighborhoods have various community partners that have worked well with each other in the past.

Interviewees pointed to neighborhoods with strong grassroots community-organizing CBOs as being able to ensure community school strategies are in fact community-driven. With deep roots and strong knowledge of community assets and needs, these CBOs represent an invaluable resource to coordinate the efforts of myriad smaller actors toward shared goals. They serve as wellsprings of collaboration that are connected to community needs and in touch with the local tools of community development.

While no interviewee suggested a specific number that would represent a “critical mass” of community organizations, several practitioners and community school advocates suggested identifying a constellation of community organizations whose collective scope and catchment area encapsulate an entire neighborhood as a helpful way to assess neighborhood readiness. The more experience these community organizations have in partnering with each other, and local schools, to create a dense web of support for families, the better.

Promise Neighborhoods and other communities that are developing Collective Impact models around cradle-to-career pipelines have both the need for community schools and the capacity to support them. Collective impact occurs when organizations from different sectors agree to solve a specific social problem by using a common agenda, aligning their efforts and using common measures of success. The Promise Neighborhood program, a federal Department of Education initiative, was launched in 2010 “to create comprehensive pathways of cradle through college to career supports to improve children’s educational outcomes, fostering long-term success and helping young people transition successfully to adulthood.”¹⁹ Since 2010 four nonprofits in New York City have been awarded a collective \$1.8 million in Federal Promise Neighborhood funds: CAMBA leads the Flatbush Promise Neighborhood Initiative (Brooklyn), Lutheran Family Health Centers (LFHC) works with the Sunset Park community (Brooklyn), Zone 126 targets Astoria/Long Island City (Queens), and The Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation is centered in Cypress Hills (Brooklyn).²⁰ While federal budget sequestration in 2013 has partially delayed the second phase “Implementation Grants,” each organization has undertaken important planning efforts that have laid the foundation for Collective Impact initiatives. Together, these partnerships have already “served 9,000 children and families, and leveraged nearly \$3.1 million in private, federal, state and local dollars toward changing educational opportunities in high-need neighborhoods.”²¹ All four are currently implementing or planning community schools within their broader place-based initiative.

The diversity of community development efforts across NYC also creates excellent opportunities to conduct comparisons of effective approaches to supporting community schools. A comparative tracking process could become very useful as the city explores how to use place-based strategies to support community schools and community development around the city more broadly. During the Request for Proposal process, for example, applicants could be asked to indicate whether their schools and community partners are participating in Collective Impact initiatives such as Promise Neighborhoods. While funding and other forms of support should remain identical between schools participating in Collective Impact initiatives and those that aren’t, the city can begin tracking outcomes between the two groups to learn more about what works best for community schools.

Interviewees also talked about the importance of having strong, active Community Boards and other local councils and bodies of governance that provide community-level leadership and access to larger power brokers. If these groups are well-established and active, it is likely that they already have, or can easily form, relationships with schools and their community organization partners so that community school strategies include all groups that can contribute. These local councils may also be excellent pathways into partnerships with local business communities, higher education institutions in the area and the City Council.

School-Community Partnership Map

This virtual map (bit.ly/1wJzCMC), created with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, shows every public school in New York City and color-codes the schools by the number of partnerships they have. It allows you to hover over each school and view the various types of partnerships the school has, the school's lead partner(s) or co-applicant and the school's health partner. It is also equipped with toggle bars that allow you to filter schools by type of partnership, number of partnerships, percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch at a school and percentage of students at a school that are chronically absent.

We selected “partnership types” from existing networks or models of service delivery that already resemble community school partnerships: schools with School Based Health Centers, schools who participated in Mayor Bloomberg’s Taskforce on Chronic Absenteeism, schools participating with Graduate, Prepare, Succeed (GPS)—a United Way NYC initiative, UFT Community Learning Schools, participating schools in all 4 Promise Neighborhood Initiatives (PNI), DYCD’s Beacon programs, Full Service Children’s Aid Society Schools, DOE Transfer Schools, and all schools that were chosen or applied for the NY State 2013 Community Schools Initiative Grant (CSIG). It was beyond the scope of this project to collect information on all the various partnerships that many schools have organized through their own independent efforts. Therefore many high-quality partnerships may exist at schools that are not reflected on this map. Also, not all partnerships captured on this map demonstrate the same levels of community partner integration or family/community focus. Some partnerships, such as the Children’s Aid Society Full Service Community Schools, enjoy a very high level of partner integration. Other partnerships, such as Beacon Schools, have some schools with high levels of community partner integration while other Beacon partnerships do not.

We also tried to capture capacity for and interest in the community school model. For example, in addition to schools that were awarded the New York State 2013 Community Schools Grant Initiative grants, we also included schools that applied for the same grant unsuccessfully. School-based health centers were included because these schools have made considerable investment and have significant capacity to become service hubs given their existing infrastructure, though we recognize that many are not yet fully integrated into the leadership or day-to-day infrastructure of the school. As the city’s new community school initiative grows and more school-community partnerships formalize their commitment to the community school strategy, these schools should also be included in the map.

Chapter 2

Funding the Community School Strategy

For community schools to be successful, it is important to make a significant investment in the capacity of the community lead partners. Building this capacity takes time, money, technical assistance and professional development. Policymakers are only beginning to understand what is needed at both the community and governmental level.

Policymakers are only beginning to understand what is needed at both the community and governmental level.

The city's new use of state Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention (AIDP) funds will seed 40 community schools with around \$300,000 a year for the next four years. These funds will be used to hire Resource Coordinators in each school and build community partnerships for a wide range of direct services to help improve school connectedness, attendance and academics. However, at this early stage in the initiative, several questions remain: Is this amount of money enough to fund an effective community school strategy? What funds are available to complement this money for the first 40 schools? And assuming New York City's share of state AIDP funds will not expand in the near future, what other funds can be used to scale the community school initiative to the goal of creating 100 or more schools by the end of the current mayoral term?

Challenges to Community School Financing

It is clear that there are a variety of significant funds available to community schools in New York City. However, in the absence of a citywide community school strategy, many to date have struggled to access, manage and sustain funding for a full array of programs and services over the long term. Providers and policy makers we interviewed locally and nationally all face the following fiscal challenges:

- **Limited knowledge of existing funds:** We identified more than 60 local, state and federal funding sources available to community schools in New York City, and a similarly deep and broad pool of private funding exists that was beyond the scope of this report. But most schools and CBOs are unaware that these funds exist—or can be used for a community school strategy—or choose to focus their efforts on the few large funding sources. Many city policymakers do not know what it takes to fund a full community school strategy, or think that the private sector can float much of the bill.
- **Inadequate capacity:** Even if all community schools had full knowledge of all available funds, they would still have varying abilities to access, manage and report on the use of grants. The fact that each fund has its own application, timeline, restrictions and reporting system is a barrier to small CBOs. Although many funds come with built-in training and technical assistance, such as budget review and risk management, grant recipients dealing with multiple funds can find these more onerous than helpful. And too often, they pursue grants that are available rather than ones that best meet the needs of their communities.

In contrast, large CBO lead partners have a team of school and central office staff with technical skills in grant writing, budgeting, contract management, program evaluation and advocacy, all of which make them better able to access and manage funds. They can braid these funds internally to ensure that all requirements are fulfilled, while at the same time work to see that student and family needs are met. It is important to note, however, that while larger CBOs have these abilities, they may not have the historical knowledge of and deep roots in the community that they serve.

- **Restricted and conflicting funds:** Braiding multiple funds is not always possible in the face of limited or conflicting eligibility and use requirements. Many funds come with a specific program model that may, for example, specify the number of hours and type of activities that a program must adhere to. Some even explicitly prohibit blending their grant with certain similar funds. For example, after the Beacon program shifted their emphasis to “structured middle school supports,” the most recent Out of School Time request for proposals prohibited any Beacon site from applying. This meant that Beacon providers were still required to run after-school programs—but without the Out of School Time funds they had previously relied upon to complement their Beacon funds. This diverted funds even further away from the community development services Beacons were originally intended to provide.

- **Prohibitive building use fees:** As mentioned in the previous chapter, community schools that can use the school facilities into the evening hours, on weekends and holidays and even during the summer will be able to provide a more robust menu of services for children and families. Keeping a school building open, however, requires additional pay for custodial staff and school safety agents after 6 p.m. that often falls to the CBO providers. A noteworthy exception is the Beacon programs, which benefit from a central office agreement that transfers DYCD funds to the DOE for the evening and weekend hours that the Beacons are required to stay open. Other programs—even the Out of School Time program also funded by DYCD—have to use their scarce dollars that they could otherwise be using for coordination or programming. Furthermore, the current guidelines that cover these charges have not been implemented consistently. This issue seems ripe for a citywide systemic solution.
- **Limited funds for coordination:** A community school needs a team of experienced professionals with strong connections to their community, access to data about the needs and assets around them, and long-term goals with benchmarks to assess progress. These elements ensure that a school is not engaged in “random acts of programming” but effectively aligning and targeting resources to the children and families who need them most. Unfortunately, these essential components are often the hardest to fund in a landscape dominated by short-term, programmatic funds for direct services. Although many funds will allow for a small percentage to be spent on “administrative costs,” this often falls short of the true cost of the community school infrastructure. The few public grants that are explicitly designed to fund coordination in a long-term, flexible way are much more competitive, ensuring that the schools with an existing capacity and infrastructure are more likely to win than the fledgling community schools that need it most.

In the context of these fiscal challenges, this chapter details the landscape of available local, state and federal funding for community schools and suggests some solutions the city can bring to bear in its new community schools initiative.

Cost Estimates and Funding Opportunities

The costs of implementing an effective community school strategy fall into two categories: coordination costs and programmatic costs. The former are relatively fixed because all community schools need a director or coordinator, a needs assessment, a data system and professional development. The latter will vary based on the number and type of programs in each school as well as the number of children and families needing services. This section of the report compiles estimates of what each element of the community school strategy costs from publications by the Campaign for Educational Equity (CEE), United Way and The Finance Project, as well as internal budget documentation from local community school providers. Where multiple cost estimates are available for similar line items, they are expressed as both a range and an average. They have been adjusted to 2014 dollars using the Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator²² and include fringe benefits for all full-time employees.

Within each spending category we also highlight key local, state and federal funding opportunities. Private corporate or philanthropic contributions are also options for the mix of funding that supports community schools. However these figures show how community schools have the potential to add value to a significant public investment that is already being made in social services by targeting and aligning them more effectively. Indeed, so many public funding streams can be used by community schools that we have compiled a separate fiscal map (bit.ly/1wtvKfQ) that extends far beyond these highlights shown.

Financing Coordination

Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention (AIDP)

- Eligibility: Schools with higher-than-average rates of chronic absenteeism
- Average award: \$300,000 each year for four years
- Number of awards: 40 to 45 schools

Recently repurposed by the de Blasio administration as seed funding for the new citywide community schools initiative, AIDP funds come from the state education budget according to an eligibility formula based on rates of student absence across each district. In New York City, the money flows through the DOE's Office of Safety

TOTAL COST ESTIMATE FOR EACH COMMUNITY SCHOOL: \$193,300 PER YEAR:

- Director or Coordinator with a master's degree in social work, public health or community organizing, salary plus benefits ranging from \$73,418²³ to \$95,040.²⁴
Average cost: \$84,200
- Half-time clerical support at \$24,076²⁵ or full-time office manager at \$43,446.²⁶
Average cost: \$33,800
- Building use fees including custodians, safety agents, facilities and overtime school administrators ranging from \$6,400²⁷ per year to \$68,400 per year.²⁸
Average cost: \$37,400
- Supplies, materials and administrative costs, ranging from \$7,592²⁹ to \$24,352.³⁰
Average cost: \$16,000
- Training and professional development, ranging from \$3,134³¹ to \$5,600.³²
Average cost: \$4,400
- Data tracking and case management systems, ranging from \$1,636³³ to \$39,545.³⁴
Average cost: \$7,500
- Program evaluation: \$10,000³⁵

and Youth Development, which has contracted out to United Way of New York City since 1990, who in turn subcontracts to CBOs who partner with schools to provide the required services.³⁶ Over the years, AIDP efforts in New York City have fluctuated in size and scope, at times prescribing certain targeted interventions or a focus on specific grades or categories of students.

For community schools, the AIDP grant will fund a “resource coordinator” from a CBO lead partner who will work closely with school leadership to implement tiered interventions that increase school connectedness and reduce chronic absenteeism.³⁷ In the past, United Way provided software to track student credit accumulation and attendance, and the United Way announced at its recent (July 2014) AIDP bidders conferences that it will provide an enhanced version of the software again in this round of the initiative.

By our cost estimates above, about two-thirds of each year’s allocation will be needed to fund coordination costs, while the rest can be used to partially fund direct services. The city’s Request for Proposals lists a handful of services for which a community school could use the funds, but does not limit them in any way. This will provide the community schools who receive it with much needed flexibility to seed new projects for which they do not have funds.

Because this funding stream has thus far been represented as the fund jumpstarting the city’s community school initiative, it is important to note that state AIDP dollars are not anticipated to grow in scale along with the initiative. If the city wants to make the same initial investment in its next 60 or more community schools it will have to repurpose funds or apply for others.

Title I School-wide Program (SWP)

- Eligibility: Schools with greater than 40 percent low-income students
- Average award: \$390,000 each year (based on number of students enrolled)³⁸
- Number of awards: 1,235 schools

Unlike the traditional Targeted Assistance Title I federal program, which focuses only on low-income students, schools with SWP Title I funds may use them toward interventions that benefit the whole school.³⁹ SWP Title I funds allow for more flexibility as well as the “coordination and integration” of other Federal, state and local funds to upgrade the entire educational program and supports, including a comprehensive needs assessment, a long-term reform strategy based on the results of the needs assessment, and the creation of benchmarks for its evaluation.⁴⁰ In addition, under new Elementary and Secondary Education Act provisions on coordination and integration of services, schools can use their SWP Title I funds to “hire a coordinator to facilitate the delivery of health, nutrition, and social services to the school’s students in partnership with local service providers.”

However, two challenges arise with the use of this funding for coordination. First, the “supplement not supplant” clause embedded in the Title I fine print means that schools cannot use these funds for the

above purposes “if funds are reasonably available from other public or private sources.”⁴¹ This would be hard for schools to prove in the landscape of available funding we detail here. Second, many NYC principals are already accustomed to receiving and allocating these funds for other purposes. Dedicating part or all of their Title I funds to a community school strategy would mean a trade-off in staff, textbooks, technology or other essential school elements.

New York State Community School Grant Initiative

- Eligibility: High-need school districts or non-profits in collaboration with a district
- Average award: \$500,000 per school over three years
- Number of awards: 30 schools statewide in round one, 32 schools in round two

Last summer Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a \$15 million grant to districts or individual schools implementing the community school strategy. Although the timing of this grant and the Governor’s support helped launch the topic of community schools into the education policy conversation at the time of the city’s mayoral election, it did not make a large enough investment to fund both the coordination costs and programmatic costs it called for. Recipients were charged with building partnerships, coordinating multiple funding streams, continually taking measurements against performance benchmarks and targeting the students with greatest needs, all of which fall under tasks of coordination. But the Request for Proposals also stipulates that “funds must go toward providing additional school-based or school-linked services that are not already being funded in the community.”⁴² Grantees following this stipulation and trying to use the approximately \$166,000 they receive per year to cover both coordination and programmatic costs will have to supplement both with other funds.

Full-Service Community Schools Program

- Eligibility: Consortia of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and CBO(s)
- Average award: \$470,000 per consortium each year for 5 years
- Number of awards: 10 new and 10 continuation awards nationwide each year

The Full-Service Community Schools Program is federal funding to establish interagency collaboration, program planning and capacity building for a community school system. In fact, the program places such a strong emphasis on coordination that it allows new grantees to devote their entire first year to planning and capacity building in lieu of direct services. After a year of slashed funding in the federal budget, the 2014 Full-Service Community Schools program is back to its high point of \$10 million that was available from 2010 to 2012. This year also marks the first since 2010 that new awards (as opposed to continuation awards) will be handed out. Still, as a highly competitive national competition, the funding remains stretched thin. Hopefully, the amount of planning New York City has invested in its citywide initiative starting this summer will greatly increase its odds for the round of applications next June.

In-kind contributions from schools

It is important to consider the non-monetary contributions that schools and districts can make in shared school building space, principal and faculty time dedicated to planning meetings and the extent to which school data is used to inform community school work. Several grant applications that require a funding match allow for in-kind contributions to count as a percentage of those “funds.” Acknowledging and expecting this contribution will go a long way toward ensuring a high level of school-CBO integration for all community schools in the initiative.

Financing Extended Learning Time

Out of School Time (OST) program (recently renamed COMPASS and SONYC)

- Eligibility: All district elementary and middle schools in partnership with a CBO
- Average award: \$3,000 to 3,200 per participant
- Number of awards: 329 school-year sites, 410 summer sites

New York City’s Department of Youth and Community Development runs the Out of School Time program, the nation’s largest municipally funded after-school initiative.⁶⁰ The program contracts with community-based organizations, which apply through an RFP process every three years. Because the contract amount falls far short of the estimated costs above, many providers pursue other public and private funds to supplement OST funds or pay for extra hours or Saturday programming, which are not currently funded.

Providers see 100 participants as the “critical mass” in a budget to support the required positions of a program director and an education specialist. Providers with multiple OST sites have less trouble funding their core functions, but are frustrated with OST restrictions that tie one contract to one program and prevent money from being allocated to most effectively support multiple programs.

TOTAL COST ESTIMATE FOR EACH PROGRAM PARTICIPANT: \$4,230 PER YEAR:

- One program coordinator and two assistant coordinators, ranging from \$296 per participant (pp)⁴³ to \$426 pp.⁴⁴
Average cost: \$360 per participant
- Tutoring supervisor or education specialist ranging from \$135 pp⁴⁵ to \$183 pp.⁴⁶
Average cost: \$160 per participant
- One-on-one tutors ranging from \$252 pp⁴⁷ to \$874 pp.⁴⁸
Average cost: \$560 per participant
- Enrichment supervisor or arts specialist ranging from \$183 pp⁴⁹ to \$734 pp.⁵⁰
Average cost: \$460 per participant
- Enrichment facilitators, group leaders or counselors ranging from \$487 pp⁵¹ to \$2,959 pp.⁵²
Average cost: \$1,700 per participant
- Clerical support ranging from \$145 pp⁵³ to \$167 pp.⁵⁴
Average cost: \$160 per participant
- Supplies, materials, administrative costs ranging from \$81 pp⁵⁵ to \$1,185 pp.⁵⁶
Average cost: \$1,200 per participant
- Food and snacks: \$30 per participant.⁵⁷
- Personnel training and education ranging from \$19 pp⁵⁸ to \$167 pp.⁵⁹
Average cost: \$90 per participant

Out of School Time money comes with central training and technical assistance, such as budget review and risk management. However, the detailed level of reporting for OST and the School Age Child Care license requirements are onerous, especially for small providers. Compared to reporting for the Administration for Child Service’s subsidized child care, which is a one-page report for a lump-sum amount, OST reports require much more information and detail.⁶¹

Beacon Community Centers

- Eligibility: CBOs that would like to partner with the existing Beacon schools
- Average award: \$346,000 per program
- Number of awards: 80 schools

Beacons have served as multigenerational community hubs in school buildings for over 30 years. Managed and funded by DYCD, they keep the school building open to at least 11 p.m. on school days, weekends, holidays and during the summer to serve at least 1,200 individuals yearly.⁶² To deepen the range of services Beacons are able to provide to children and families, the model has extended to new “Cornerstone” sites in New York City Housing Authority public housing and 16 dual Beacon-Administration for Children’s Services programs that focus on foster care prevention. Despite these innovative efforts toward providing comprehensive services, pressure has been mounting from both the DOE and the individual principals who host Beacon programs in their school to shift the focus more toward academics. Specifically the most recent RFP called for 216 hours of “structured activities for middle school youth.” This new focus does not preclude services for other community members, but it does place the Beacon funding stream firmly in the arena of after-school provision.

When Mayor David Dinkins established the Beacon program in 1991, each site was funded at \$400,000 per year. After years of instability from budget cuts and stop-gap City Council restorations, funding is at a lower level than it was in 1991. Although providers are optimistic that Beacon funding was finally baselined in the FY15 city budget, they all say that the current level of funding is grossly inadequate to meet all of the Beacon program’s goals. Most Beacon directors pursue outside funding to cover costs, including the required 10 percent CBO cash match. The nonprofit Youth Development Institute has provided technical assistance and capacity building to all Beacons since their inception and DYCD does cover building usage fees, but even with these supports many Beacon programs struggle to provide quality programming at the current funding level.

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)

- Eligibility: LEAs, CBOs or private entities
- Average award: \$325,000 per school per year for five years⁶³
- Number of awards: 129 statewide in round six

The 21st CCLC program is the largest federal funding stream for after-school programs, funneling \$1.17 billion to states based on a formula each year.⁶⁴ For the most recent cycle, NYS received \$78 million and distributed it to 129 partnerships between CBOs and either Local Education Agencies or schools across the state. New York City won 71 of those grants totaling \$42 million, but this is spread across more than 105 schools. All of these schools receive technical assistance, professional development and grant management support from a resource center directed by the DOE's Office of Safety and Youth Development in partnership with Children's Aid Society. This support helps small providers overcome some of the funding challenges discussed earlier, but the trade-off is a small allowable expense per participant. Programs are not allowed to spend more than \$1,500 per student—less than one-third of our cost estimate above—to provide academic assistance, a wide range of enrichment programs and family literacy development. This low spending requirement combined with the higher federal and state priority on academic improvement means that many 21st CCLC providers choose to use their funds for reading and math tutoring over other areas of student enrichment and wellness that community schools typically prioritize.

Financing School-Based Health Care

Medicaid

- Eligibility: Children in families below the federal income threshold
- Average reimbursement: \$165 per visit⁶⁶

Federal Medicaid dollars are currently the primary source of school-based health center (SBHC) operating revenues, providing between 96 and 98 percent of all health insurance reimbursements they receive.⁶⁷ Historically, school-based health centers have been able to bill the state to access Medicaid dollars directly, which has worked well for ensuring student access to care and the centers' access to quick and regular reimbursements.

However, Governor Cuomo's Medicaid redesign may severely threaten this source of funds for certain types of school-based health centers that are required to switch to managed care organizations. Rather than billing the state directly, these SBHCs will have to contract with all the managed care organizations

TOTAL COST ESTIMATE FOR EACH SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CLINIC: \$1,460 PER CHILD PER YEAR.⁶⁵

- Pediatrician to serve as the clinic director: \$310 per child
- Physician's assistant: \$180 per child
- Nurse: \$100 per child
- Dentist: \$300 per child
- Optometrist: \$230 per child
- Mental health professional: \$110 per child
- Administrative support: \$80 per child
- Supplies, materials, equipment and operations: \$100 per child
- Prescription eyeglasses: \$20 per child
- Personnel training and education: \$10 per child
- Amortized capital expenses: \$20 per child

their students belong to, which are likely to be evenly distributed across the 12 managed care organizations who tap Medicaid funds. This presents a new administrative burden, as it can take 6-12 months to contract with each managed care organization to approve the credentials of every doctor and nurse and establish set rates for services. Medicaid redesign will also require the SBHC to request prior authorizations for services when a student comes in to the clinic, which expands cycle time and reduces service capacity. There is also a major financial concern that managed care organizations will reimburse at a lower rate. Medicaid reimbursements currently do not cover the full cost of most services SBHCs can provide, so this will require even more outside funding to fill the gap.

All of these changes were originally scheduled to come into effect this October, but the most recent state budget agreement delayed implementation and set aside money for a planning process to help health providers make this transition. Michael Rebell and Mary Anne Schmitt-Carey's proposal to the New York Education Commission offers an elegant solution.⁶⁸ Rather than divert reimbursements for care at SBHCs through managed care organizations, they suggest an SBHC at a school with at least 75 percent of students below 200 percent of the federal poverty level should be eligible for an annual per capita fee for each child enrolled in the school. This fee could be based on the average Medicaid reimbursement rates for the recommended utilization of services for the students at that school. SBHCs would in turn be held accountable to perform health needs assessments, identify goals, and track utilization of services to meet those goals.

DOE Office of School Health

- Eligibility: Schools with more than 1,200 students and sufficient space
- Average award: \$1.5 million per school
- Number of awards: 20 schools

In 2012, former Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott announced an initiative to allocate \$30 million to build 20 new SBHCs in middle and high schools over the next three years. But in the context of uncertainty around Medicaid redesign, even this large capital investment has not been attractive enough to hospital and nonprofit sponsors who would be responsible for the operating costs of the centers. Despite the high demand for SBHCs among schools and school principals, only a few hospital and non-profit sponsors have been willing to make this investment.⁶⁹

Financing Early Child Care and Education

Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)

- Eligibility: School districts and CBO providers
- Average award: up to \$10,000 per child per year⁷¹
- Number of awards: 4,000 classrooms in schools or centers

TOTAL COST ESTIMATE FOR EACH COMMUNITY SCHOOL: \$15,200 PER CHILD PER YEAR:⁷⁰

- High-quality early childhood teacher: \$10,500 per child
- Program director: \$1,900 per child
- Clerical support: \$800 per child
- Supplies, materials and administrative costs: \$1,500 per child
- Personnel training and education: \$500 per child

Mayor de Blasio's signature campaign promise—universal full-day pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds—is already being put into action under the expansion of UPK with increased state funding. All children in New York City will be eligible for UPK seats at the age of four, but only for the length of the school day during the 180 days of the school year. Community schools serving elementary students would benefit from a linkage to a UPK program in their building for many aforementioned reasons, particularly building early relationships with those children and families to help ease the transition to elementary school and provide sustained preventative supports from a young age. But given the limited hours, shorter calendar and older age requirement, families may see the UPK services as too little, too late.

EarlyLearn NYC

- Eligibility: Providers of informal, center- or family-based childcare
- Average award: \$23,952 per child per year⁷²
- Number of awards: 468 sites

Through the EarlyLearn NYC program, city funding is available for CBOs that want to offer full-day child care and early childhood education for children aged six weeks to four years. Only some of these programs are hosted in school buildings, but because the schedule is much more conducive to working families it can be a much more robust service for a CBO partner of community school to provide as part of a cradle-to-career strategy.

In 2012, the Administration for Children's Services, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the DOE and a mayoral steering committee initiated a groundbreaking effort to blend New York City's patchwork of funding streams and child care providers. EarlyLearn NYC funnels federal Child Care and Head Start contracts, New York State Universal Pre-Kindergarten funds, city tax levy and private dollars all through ACS to increase access to quality, full-day, year-round child care. It also unified the previously wide-ranging requirements tied to each funding stream: now all EarlyLearn programs require a high standard of teacher training, educational curriculum, developmental and mental health screenings,

child-teacher ratios and family supports, many of which existed under Head Start but not under UPK or ACS-funded child care. EarlyLearn providers much achieve all of this for eight to ten hours per day for 12 months per year, compared to the typical Head Start program of three and a half hours per day.⁷³

Although these higher standards mean better outcomes for children and a better fit within a broader community school strategy, Kendra Hurley and Abigail Kramer at the Center for New York City Affairs have found that there is a “mismatch between funding and expectations.”⁷⁴ Providers are expected to meet the more rigorous standards modeled after Head Start programs for less money per child than Head Start. This affects both salaries (EarlyLearn staff are paid a child care worker salary while their peers in school UPK-only sites are paid a higher DOE teacher salary and benefits) and enrollment (rather than paying for empty slots as it once did, the city now ties funds to enrollment).

Although streamlined funding has eased the procurement process for providers, it has put smaller programs with fewer resources at a disadvantage for several reasons. First, not all providers have been able to meet these higher standards with the staff willing to accept the lower child care worker salary. There is a risk that some programs will lose teachers to the city’s new UPK sites. Second, EarlyLearn has not eased the complex web of eligibility requirements. A provider who taps into EarlyLearn funds still has a certain number of child slots funded by each stream, which means they can only accept children from families at certain thresholds of income for each slot. In other words, when a position opens up at a program, the provider cannot enroll just any child on the waiting list; it must be one who meets the eligibility criteria. Another source of frustration is that each funding stream has different reporting and performance measures; while some align well, others conflict with each other and cause providers to fill out more paperwork than they did prior to Early Learn.⁷⁵

Financing Family and Community Supports

Each of these above programs would be funded by various small grants. Information about these and many other funds is described in our fiscal map, available at bit.ly/1wtvKfQ.

COST ESTIMATES FOR VARIOUS FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS:

- Parent education classes range from \$450⁷⁶ to \$1,400⁷⁷ per parent participant.
Average cost: \$900 per parent participant
- Family Support Centers range from \$102,500 to \$763,700 total.⁷⁸
Average cost: \$433,100 total
- Food bank: \$41,800 total⁷⁹
- Legal services: \$188,800 total⁸⁰
- Tax clinic professionals: \$14,300 total⁸¹

Recommendations to City Hall

To scale the citywide community school initiative to at least 100 community schools, City Hall will need to help schools and CBOs build sustainable budgets from the diverse funds we list above (and others) and overcome the challenges associated with funding for community schools. Our recommendations are listed in ascending order of difficulty, from a suggestion that could be implemented almost immediately to significantly larger political and administrative lifts that will take years to fully develop.

- **Create an on-line database, provider toolkit and series of supports that publicize and assist creative uses of existing funds.** Many existing community schools are unaware of the full array of available funding streams. This, of course, is even truer for schools and CBOs that are only beginning to explore the community school strategy. The city's community schools coordinating entity should develop an online, up-to-date tool for providers based on the fiscal map that accompanies this report, with links to open RFPs, deadlines for applications, and analysis of the pros and cons of each funding stream.
- **Establish policy guidelines and expectations for shared investment in the community school strategy.** At the individual school level, schools and their partners should see this work as a shared, long-term investment that is mutually beneficial. Raising and managing funds is best achieved when it is a team effort, not simply the responsibility of the CBO partners to pay their own way. This can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, from truly collaborative efforts on grant applications, in-kind donation of supplies or office space, or contributing school funds to the coordination or programmatic costs listed above. The DOE should incentivize or even require principals who participate in the citywide community school initiative to contribute resources in such ways.

At a more macro level, city agencies like the DOE, DYCD and the Department of Parks and Recreation should also be expected to find ways to share the financial burden of the citywide community school initiative. The DOE has already shown a willingness to invest some of its operating budget into the coordination and implementation of the citywide initiative by establishing a Director of Community Schools in the Office of Safety and Youth Development. This should set a precedent for other city agencies to follow suit and can be encouraged by the Children's Cabinet, as explored in Chapter 3 of this report. One of the first fiscal issues this body should address is the prohibitive building use fees that all programs except Beacons have to pay after 6 p.m., on weekends, and holidays. The cost-sharing agreement between the DYCD and the DOE to cover building use costs for Beacon programs sets a helpful precedent for similar inter-agency agreements.

- **Strengthen existing community school funding streams to make them more consistent with the city's systemic initiative currently under development.** The funding stream that currently most closely aligns with this initiative is the Beacon program. Many Beacon providers already see themselves as community schools, but adherence to all the Core Community School Standards varies across the 80 Beacon sites. A realignment of the Beacon program to the Core Community

School Standards would require a more flexible program model in the next round of funding, allowing each Beacon site to determine its programs, hours and participants based on a needs-and-assets assessment. It would also require more emphasis on integration with the school, prioritizing a shared leadership orientation, rather than the service delivery relationship that many Beacons currently have with their partner schools. Principals and Beacon directors would need to meet in the middle: the former will need to be willing to offer programs that open their building up to community members beyond their students, and the latter will have to integrate programs that can also provide more academic supports—and there would need to be funding to do so. This alignment will require strategic planning and interagency cooperation.

- **Align other state and city funding streams toward the community school initiative.** Many existing funding streams can be brought to bear to support the expansion of community schools. Beyond the funding streams that already support some of the programmatic components of community schools such as after-school and school-based health dollars, the initiative could also include funding streams from juvenile justice, family literacy and child welfare preventive. A complete fiscal audit of existing funding streams that can be brought to bear on this initiative is needed. Once identified, both New York State and New York City can employ strategies aimed at aligning their investments such as giving competitive preference to funding proposals that demonstrate how they will align with community schools.
- **Apply for and blend state, federal and private competitive grants as a district, and sub-contract to individual community schools.** Several other cities around the country and school districts in New York state have already begun to apply for and manage various community school grants on behalf of their schools. This would give the city the capacity to blend and distribute funds based on need, collective impact initiatives, or other neighborhood strategies, rather than allow schools that are best at grant-writing to have the greatest access to funds. A unified system of contract management and technical assistance would also allow for greater economies of scale, as has already been initiated within the NYC DOE's Technical Assistance Resource Center for recipients of the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant. There are numerous state and federal grant opportunities that the NYC DOE could apply to as a Local Education Agency. (For more details on each, please see our fiscal map available at bit.ly/1wtvKfQ):
 - 21st Century Community Learning Centers
 - Extended Learning Time Grant Program
 - Extended School Day/School Violence Prevention
 - Full-Service Community Schools Program
 - Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP)
 - High School Graduation Initiative (formerly known as the School Dropout Prevention Program)
 - Investing in Innovation (i3)
 - NYS Community Schools Grant Initiative

- Race to the Top: Equity and Opportunity
- School Innovation Fund
- School Improvement Grants (SIG)
- Smaller Learning Communities
- Successful, Safe and Healthy Students Program, a proposed consolidation of the following:
 - Carol M. White Physical Education Program
 - Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program
- Title I, Part A: College and Career-Ready Students
- Title X of McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
- Upward Bound
- A new interagency grant opportunity through the following:
 - “Now is the Time” Project AWARE Local Educational Agency Grants
 - School Climate Transformation Grant—LEA Program
 - School Justice Collaboration Program: Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court

At least three important considerations must go into braiding these funds, according to Saskia Trail, vice president for policy and research at The After-School Corporation (TASC), which currently blends multiple funding streams that it subcontracts to CBO providers.⁸² First, the city would need to strike a delicate balance between prescription and flexibility in the rules it sets for community schools participating in the program. It can do this by creating “priority areas” that each provider is required to address, but allowing schools to choose their own methods, indicators, or target populations within each priority area.

Second, the city should be explicit about the need for shared leadership and decision-making in the use of these funds. Current funding streams either go through the school or the CBO that provides the service, with few application processes requiring more than a memorandum of understanding between both parties. With greater amounts of money at stake, any Request for Proposals requiring a partnership should specifically include criteria for identifying robust co-leadership models and outline a plan for shared ownership of the funds.

Finally, if the city provides more stable, long-term funding, it should require greater accountability and performance-based measures. Funding cycles of at least seven years (five years guaranteed and two years based on performance) would allow providers to settle into the program in a meaningful way that allows them to feel secure. They should also be rewarded with increased yearly funding for reaching their targets or innovating within their model. In this way, a city-blended grant could balance the strengths of the more formulaic, automatic funding streams with the more competitive and high-stakes funds.

Please note that this section only addresses the use of public funding. A strong financing model for community schools should leverage all available funding, both public and private.

Chapter 3

Citywide Leadership for Community Schools

While some isolated community schools have excelled on their own in recent decades, New York City has yet to provide centralized supports to schools and community-based organizations doing this work. Community schools are comprehensive in their approach to serving children and families, thus building and sustaining a robust strategy will require leaders in education and health and human services to collaborate in new ways. Smart, focused citywide leadership can clear the path and point the direction for service providers and educators to provide much-needed services to students and their families. A strong investment in leadership will also ensure that the initiative can take advantage of economies of scale, achieve sustainable growth in future years, and enable new community schools to learn from one another.

Bringing Leaders Together: Cross-Boundary Leadership and Collective Impact

Increasingly in recent years, both public and private funders of education and social services have required collaborative planning, leadership and service delivery as prerequisites for large-scale investment. Community schools strategies call for deep and sustained investment from a variety of partners and stakeholders, and cross-boundary work that requires leaders to develop a shared vision and adopt a new way of doing business, reflecting together on the ambitious changes they wish to see for their community. These leaders create collective “networks of responsibility” for comprehensive, shared outcomes.⁸³

The Coalition for Community Schools identifies cross-boundary leadership as an essential ingredient to build and sustain system-wide infrastructure for community schools. Cross-boundary leadership calls for leaders of schools, government, community organizations, and businesses to reach beyond their own sector and traditional focus to uncover new ways of organizing and building systems with cross-cutting benefits. A fundamental reliance on cross-boundary leadership distinguishes community schools from other school reform strategies. Regions that are successfully scaling the community school strategy have convened broad and diverse stakeholder groups that included schools, businesses, government and service providers. Reuben Jacobson, senior associate for research and strategy at the Coalition for Community Schools explains that Cincinnati's Cross-Boundary Leadership Team was one of the pioneers of this type of leadership. "Now it's seen as a standard or model for more effective service delivery," he said.⁸⁴

The term "collective impact" has been gaining prominence in recent years among place-based efforts across the country. Collective impact describes a process in which stakeholders representing all the constituencies of a community convene to define a theory of change for a particular catchment area. In order to meet new and bold outcomes, stakeholders meet on an ongoing basis to plan for attracting new investments and repurposing existing investments to align with the new strategy. Organizations actively seek opportunities to partner and leverage others' resources toward greater impact rather than compete for scarce resources in isolation. These initiatives are typically hyper-local and driven by community residents and community-based organizations, with technical assistance from outside experts. In 2010, the federal government promoted the collective impact model through its Promise Neighborhoods grant initiative, which required neighborhoods to convene collective impact groups as part of their applications. Cincinnati is also leading the way in collective impact with the Strive Partnership, a diverse stakeholder group that focuses on improving education outcomes by better supporting and organizing resources along the cradle-to-career pipeline such as early childhood, after-school and anti-poverty services. The partnership holds members accountable to a common set of benchmarks developed as part of its theory of change.

Several collective impact efforts exist in New York City today. In the Morrisania/Crotona area of the South Bronx, for instance, Children's Aid Society and Phipps Community Development Corporation co-convene South Bronx Rising Together, which focuses on education, employment and health outcomes for local residents. Similar efforts are under way in Brownsville and Flatbush, Brooklyn, and Astoria, Queens.

New York City recently established a Children's Cabinet, one example of a collaborative effort that is undergirded by cross-boundary leadership and collective impact. Although currently it is focused on issues of child safety, health and well-being, this new leadership body can lead large-scale policy and management efforts that propel the community schools initiative forward.

Children's cabinets share much of the same purpose and objectives as collective impact formations, yet they focus more narrowly on convening government executives to address interagency governance issues. However, non-governmental partners also play a critical role as advisors and participants on working groups, task forces or other configurations.

The Forum for Youth Investment (FYI), the foremost policy outlet for children’s cabinets, defines them as decision-making bodies that “typically consist of the heads of state government agencies that support child and youth-serving programs, including human service agencies. Children’s Cabinets are often established through executive order or statute. Members meet on a regular basis to coordinate services, develop a common set of outcomes, and collaboratively decide on and implement plans to foster the well-being of young people in their state.”⁸⁵

Children’s cabinets have significant increased earned income tax credit utilization, child care subsidies, funding for cross-agency preventative strategies, and better alignment of multi-agency services.⁸⁶ The number of children’s cabinets across the United States has been steadily growing since the earliest cabinets began in the 1980s. Today there are cabinets in more than 20 states, including New York. Most are organized at the state level either from the governor’s office, another executive office, or a state-level agency.⁸⁷

While New York City can draw lessons from promising practices adopted by many of the nation’s cabinets, the most relevant to New York City’s community schools work is the city of Providence, Rhode Island. Established in 2010, the Providence Children and Youth Cabinet (CYC) convenes a wide swath of city, state, and neighborhood stakeholders under the purview of the mayor’s office. Rebecca Boxx, CYC director, estimates today that there are roughly 150 active members representing 55 organizations. High-level city and state officials meet with local service providers to envision and plan for improved outcomes for children.

Despite its success, the CYC may soon have to find a new home. The CYC began under the previous mayor and won the support of his successor, Angel Taveras, who is now running for governor. To withstand future leadership transitions, the CYC is actively seeking independence and sustainability.⁸⁸ The CYC began with the support of one education advisor in the mayor’s office and a part-time consultant, but Boxx said that after roughly two years, this situation “became untenable.”⁸⁹ The group developed a business plan and secured seed funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and a local foundation to hire Boxx and another employee, from the Annenberg Institute, to provide more dedicated, full-time staffing.⁹⁰

Providence’s CYC adopted a similar approach to that of Strive Partnership and other cradle-to-career efforts—using data to organize the strategy around indicators and outcomes leading to overarching goals. Boxx explained, “The trick was identifying priority indicators that were measurable, malleable, predictive of success, catalytic to our community and inclusive enough so that we gain collective traction around them.”⁹¹ In addition to ongoing strategic planning, the Cabinet convenes groups to develop collaborative fundraising proposals when opportunities arise. Member organizations are increasing their fundraising capacity through participating in the Cabinet, and some even claim they “wouldn’t be able to get major grants without the CYC,” as it gives a valuable stamp of approval to proposals.⁹²

Vision and Responsibilities for New York City’s Children’s Cabinet

Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Richard Buery is responsible for convening and guiding the NYC Children’s Cabinet. The current charge of the Children’s Cabinet, as articulated in the April 2014 announcement, is “a multi-agency initiative to bolster communication among city agencies and develop strategies for a holistic approach to a child’s safety and well-being.” Its initial focus was limited to keeping children safe from abuse and neglect following the tragic death of a four-year-old in the city’s custody.⁹³

Although this focus has widened to include child health and well-being, it still does not explicitly address the community school agenda many advocates were hoping for. However, it will naturally extend to issues that are relevant to community schools, like data integration and sharing across agencies. Deputy Mayor Buery says that the Children’s Cabinet is the place to tackle the thorny issue of “how to create a pool of child-level data that any city case worker has access to,” and hopes that this system could ultimately extend to community schools where “all the partners in that school have access to that data—the social worker at the CBO should have access to school performance data, homeless services data, HRA data, etc. if appropriate and if necessary.” In this way, data agreements may provide an entry point for broader guidance of the Community School Initiative, but this transition away from its safety focus is not expected in the immediate future.

Based on the collective experience of cabinets in the Children’s Cabinet Network at FYI and guidance from cabinet directors interviewed, that set of goals is too narrow to maintain the long-term interest of participating agencies and the public. The city should consider broadening the scope to include education, family stability, and other indicators of child and family success. With that expansion, the Cabinet could consider developing a workgroup that would prioritize child safety issues, which would both honor the initial vision and motivate the executives. Another workgroup could serve as a steering council for community schools planning, which we describe in detail below.

The Children’s Cabinet must begin its work by deciding on a set of outcomes and begin to develop indicators, goals, and projects to achieve those outcomes. Elizabeth Gaines, policy director for the Children’s Cabinet Network at FYI, emphasized that successful cabinets focus on issues that are fundamentally interagency and cannot be resolved by one or even two agencies alone. The work should include eliminating bureaucratic hurdles where possible and building joint, coordinated efforts to advocate for increased policy support and resources that further the Cabinet’s agenda.⁹⁴ Howard Knoll, senior director of Casey Family Programs, asserted that the Children’s Cabinet must be something new and different. “Programs typically over promise and under-deliver,” he said. “We need broad policy change and a new way of doing business. People are fed up with programs; they don’t want more.”⁹⁵ To fulfill expectations, New York City now should begin to:

- Plan for sustainability of the Cabinet’s funding, vision and strategy.
- Avoid becoming intrinsically tied to one elected official or appointee.
- Ensure an effective division of labor between cabinet and agencies.

- Service delivery, programmatic functions, and budgets must remain a sole responsibility of the agencies; the Cabinet should not assume this role.
- Eliminating red tape must remain a Cabinet-level responsibility and not be delegated to the agencies.
- Foster a trusting and open environment in which executives feel comfortable stating their opinions, whether or not they align with that of the mayor's office.
- Ensure each member takes ownership of specific interagency projects to keep them engaged and responsive.⁹⁶

According to a member of Deputy Mayor Richard Buery's staff, the Children's Cabinet will meet bi-monthly for the remainder of 2014, and begin a regular quarterly meeting schedule thereafter. Each mayoral office and agency is designating a high-level point person, such as a chief of staff or inter-governmental affairs officer, to convene between these official meetings and keep the work moving. Following the inaugural meeting, Cabinet members sent the Mayor's Office their priorities to inform development of future taskforces and the strategic direction of the Cabinet.

The Children's Cabinet should be comprised of the commissioners of the agencies most central to children's issues. Our research shows that these structures work best when membership is reserved for government executives. Failure to foster a trusting and open environment in which executives feel comfortable stating their opinions, whether or not they align with that of the mayor's office, will stymie progress, lower overall productivity, and limit the scope of what the cabinet can accomplish. Gaines suggested that ten agencies would be a viable number of agencies for New York City given the Cabinet's charge to make cross-cutting executive decisions, and she and other experts stressed that much of the challenge lies in scheduling cabinet members to attend regular meetings despite their busy executive calendars.⁹⁷ For this reason, a leaner cabinet with only the essential players at the table is more likely to make significant change at a fast pace. According to materials from the inaugural meeting of the Children's Cabinet on April 30, 2014, 22 agencies and mayoral offices participated,⁹⁸ in alphabetical order:

| | |
|---|---|
| Members of NYC Children's Cabinet | Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) |
| Administration for Children's Services (ACS) | Housing Authority (NYCHA) |
| Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO)* | Human Resources Administration (HRA) |
| Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI)* | Law Department, Family Court Division (Law) |
| Department of Corrections (DOC) | Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA)* |
| Department of Education (DOE) | Mayor's Office of Operations (OPS)* |
| Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) | Mayor's Fund to Advance New York* |
| Department of Homeless Services (DHS) | Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ)* |
| Department of Probation (DOP) | Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV)* |
| Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) | Office of the First Lady of New York City (FLONYC)* |
| Fire Department of New York (FDNY)* | Parks & Recreation Department (Parks)* |
| | Police Department (NYPD) |

To keep the Children’s Cabinet size more in line with similar bodies that have been successful around the country, Deputy Mayor Buery could consider assigning offices of the mayor and agencies less directly involved with children, noted with an asterisk (*) above, to one or more advisory councils. These members could join full cabinet meetings upon request and meet more frequently with smaller groups of members as they divide up and begin to shepherd specific strands of work. Advisory councils should also include non-governmental partners: advocates, grassroots and community organizations; parents and community residents; youth; service providers; researchers; private foundations and corporations; large quasi-public institutions such as libraries, museums, and hospitals; and intermediaries providing financial and technical assistance. The Mayor’s Office could use the Children’s Cabinet as an opportunity to establish a venue for youth leadership and advocacy. Several other cities have established citywide entities to coordinate and amplify youth voices.

Higher education institutions are notably absent from the list. Both CUNY and SUNY are critical institutions in children and families’ lives. They represent irreplaceable stepping-stones along the cradle to career pipeline for many low- and moderate-income New Yorkers, and both institutions are currently involved in technical assistance efforts to better connect K to 12 and post-secondary education, including SUNY’s Cradle to Career Alliance that is currently working with community schools.

To make the Cabinet effective, Buery should designate City Hall employees to staff the Cabinet. The Mayor’s Office should also begin planning to institutionalize the Cabinet. Mayor de Blasio can, for example, issue an executive order establishing the Cabinet as an official entity. Cabinet staff can also work with the City Council to pass authorizing legislation that will help cement and sustain its authority.

Children’s Cabinet Support of the Community Schools Initiative

The Children’s Cabinet has the executive visioning and interagency capabilities that are required to build and sustain a citywide community schools initiative. The Cabinet can assist the Community Schools Initiative by:

- Setting citywide policy and guidance; identifying and resolving policy barriers and inconsistencies
- Reallocating and aligning existing financial resources, and encouraging collaborative fundraising
- Setting the evaluation and research agenda
- Championing and planning for data integration
- Seeding neighborhood collective impact groups that support clusters of community schools; working with collective impact groups to identify and close gaps in human services where families need them the most
- Exchanging practices with Albany’s NY State Community Schools Initiative
- Developing a narrative that champions community schools and encourages long-term investment.

Given the Cabinet’s current focus on child health and well-being, the planning and governance of this budding initiative will fall to the recently convened Community School Advisory Board. Composed of stakeholders from various sectors—foundations, business, education, research, health, and non-profit providers—the Board will meet over the late summer and fall months to create a white paper with recommendations around funding, data, community engagement and communications, capacity building and policy alignment for the community school initiative.⁹⁹

However, it is our recommendation based on best practices from other cities that when the Advisory Board has completed its start-up work, its role should evolve into a Community Schools Steering Council that partners with, and could be considered a sub-committee of, the New York City Children’s Cabinet to advise on the planning and monitoring of interagency work streams. The Community Schools Steering Council would be comprised of key stakeholders critical to successful implementation.

New York City’s Community Schools Steering Council can divide its work in several ways according to members’ priorities. For example, Oakland has created four working groups of its Community Schools Leadership Council focused on technical assistance and professional development, community partnerships, lead agency advisory and evaluation efforts.¹⁰⁰ Oakland’s Community Schools Leadership Council includes other members such as post-secondary institutions, local education funders and the probation department.¹⁰¹

Another model for a Community Schools Steering Council is the SUN Service System Coordinating Council in Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon. Council membership consists of representatives from six school districts, county and state human services agencies, and service providers. This group develops policy and guidance for the community schools initiative and plans for the coordination of technical assistance and other supports to sites and providers.¹⁰² It has 16 representative seats of two-year terms. Seats are allocated to key stakeholders, including the county, state and city governments, school districts, and other groups that represent the system, such as youth, parents, communities of color, business and the United Way.¹⁰³ Leadership pays critical attention to diversifying the composition of the council; for example, one seat is reserved for a leader representing “Non-Profit Service Providers,” and another seat is reserved for “Culturally Specific Providers.”¹⁰⁴

At the outset of New York City’s community schools initiative, it is probably too soon to replicate Multnomah County’s representative governance and term limits. However, New York can revisit this as a model for future iterations of the steering council.

Based on promising practices from other community schools systems, we recommend a set of interagency coordinating tasks for the Community Schools Steering Council to support the community schools initiative.

Establishing new community school sites

- **Select new sites and lead agencies; connect sites to specialized service providers.** The Community Schools Steering Council can advise the Administration on selecting additional community schools and CBO lead agency partners through a competitive RFP process. The council can provide strategic counsel on connecting schools and lead agencies to local collective impact groups and other organized community groups that may be helpful in identifying eligible partners that can subcontract for specialized services—for example, a class in English as a second language taught by a community-based organization.
- **Support a needs-and-assets assessment.** As Jane Quinn, director of the National Center for Community Schools, explains, “Every school needs an after-school and a summer program, but not every school needs a health center.” A thorough needs assessment will provide these data to design the right strategy for each school community.¹⁰⁵ The steering council can ensure that each lead agency and school partnership receives technical assistance toward collaboratively developing and conducting a needs and assets assessment of their school communities.

Supporting existing sites

- **Develop clusters of community schools sites.** Three of the community school initiatives we researched (Chicago, Multnomah County, and Oakland) are creating clusters of community schools. Representatives from Chicago’s Community Schools Initiative explain that they create clusters for three reasons: to share resources and mobilize assets, disseminate best practices and research, and assist each school with hiring and management challenges. Officials with the Chicago Public Schools describe the clustering strategy as building a “community of community schools.” In this way, the school system is exploring moving to a “hub and spoke” structure where a neighborhood-level infrastructure supports multiple independent, yet interconnected, community schools sites.¹⁰⁶ In Oakland, the school district is helping neighboring schools share resources such as clinics, activities, and referrals.¹⁰⁷

New York City can advance the Chicago vision one step further by integrating the clustering idea with a neighborhood collective impact strategy. One option, as the initiative matures, is for the Mayor’s Office to share responsibility for supporting clusters with the “backbone organizations” that are leading local collective impact groups.

- **Monitor performance and provide ongoing technical assistance.** Since the 2011-12 school year, Chicago Public Schools has offered centralized coaching to CBO and school leader teams. CPS coaches now work with community school resource coordinators, site advisory councils, principals and lead agencies to ensure high performance and continuous improvement. However, because coaching is resource-intensive, limiting the number of sites the team of coaches can focus on, CPS is currently developing a self-assessment rubric that will empower sites to identify areas for growth and improvement.¹⁰⁸

New York City’s Department of Education could hold regular performance management meetings with leadership from the CBOs selected as lead agencies and principals of participating schools. This will help monitor overall outcomes and fidelity of implementation, as well as assist CBO executives and principals in supporting their staff to continuously improve quality and performance. When a site is not meeting performance expectations, technical assistance providers can intervene to diagnose the problem and help the site with corrective actions. In the initial years of the program, The Children’s Aid Society National Center for Community Schools can provide this technical assistance or can lead a network of TA providers. As the system matures, the DOE can consider developing coaching supports for community schools within their regular school support infrastructure. Effective coaches for community schools would have competencies relating to academic as well as student and family supports.

- **Manage areas of work and metrics, and provide data support.** The Mayor’s Office and the Community Schools Steering Council will need to define a theory of change for the new system of community schools and develop methods for holding sites accountable to their site plans and the larger theory of change. The city can draw lessons from the Center for Economic Opportunity’s anti-poverty and Young Men’s Initiative work, in which they defined areas of work and indicators for the entire portfolio, as well as for the specific programs in each initiative. To get the needed data, the council can be in charge of equipping community schools sites with the data capacity and support they need to operate their programs and track their progress. This includes systems that facilitate data sharing for case management, analysis and reporting. Many schools and lead agencies may also require regular assistance with data requests and data-driven decision-making. The city can consider developing a contract with a technical assistance provider with expertise in data support for schools and CBO service providers. The Deputy Mayor and chair of the steering council can receive updates about the initiative’s performance, and in turn report progress to the mayor.
- **Convene communities of practice and support pilot projects.** New and developing community schools stand to learn a lot from mature community schools. To promote this cross-pollination, the Mayor’s Office has a number of options. It can convene communities of practice, perhaps by geographic cluster or groups of clusters in each borough, which include both new and experienced community schools. It can pair these schools in formal and informal mentorships. As shared issues arise that call for investment beyond the core site activities, the city can consider using demonstration projects across small groups of sites to test new strategies and foster cross-pollination of promising practices.

In Multnomah County, CBOs and principals at community schools meet regularly during the school year to “recognize successful efforts and share challenges among peers,” says Diana Hall, program supervisor for the SUN Schools.¹⁰⁹ Small groups of schools also conduct pilot projects to address recurrent issues impeding success. For example, a group of six schools are currently in a demonstration project to combat chronic absenteeism. SUN is providing these

sites with mini-grants to partially cover costs and provide incentives to deliver programming outside of their current community schools plan. Another group is focusing on data-driven decision-making, and other schools are investing in community engagement. Hall says they began by convening the pilot schools and initiating a “very honest conversation about what it would take beyond what they already had” to achieve measurable results.¹¹⁰

In New York, there is precedent for convening partners and sites. The United Federation of Teachers does this, and so does the DOE. Serge St. Leger, director of School-CBO Partnerships in the DOE’s Office of Safety and Youth Development, began hosting “school-CBO symposiums” to exchange information and strategies in December 2012.¹¹¹ Although these meetings are a good start, communities of practice for the New York City Community Schools Initiative should meet more frequently and organize around common themes, rather than convening all interested schools that are working with partners. St. Leger expressed a future desire to bring together principals that are succeeding at partnerships with principals that are struggling to establish and maintain partnerships.¹¹² DOE has set the foundation for this work; the city can build on school-CBO symposiums to convene communities of practice.

Sustaining the strategy

- **Coordinate evaluation for the initiative.** To sustain a system of community schools over time, the Community Schools Steering Council will need to explore which components of the strategy are working, which are not and determine course corrections. To this end, it will be essential to plan early in the initiative for various stages of evaluating progress and outcomes. The Mayor’s Office, and specifically the Center for Economic Opportunity, in partnership with the Community Schools Steering Council, can be the first point of contact for evaluators. They can construct the evaluation proposal and select firms to conduct studies. CEO can shepherd the evaluation research design and implementation process, serving as liaison between evaluation firm, sites and partners. The next chapter will explore in more depth a possible evaluation design for the initiative.
- **Raise and organize funds for sites and the overall initiative.** As discussed earlier, the comprehensive nature of the community schools strategy often requires systems to braid multiple funding streams and generally be creative about financing. In New York City, the Mayor’s Office, in partnership with DOE and the other city agencies, can help leverage existing funding to secure future investment for a sustainable strategy, both for individual sites and the overall system.

One way to divide the work could be to put the Mayor’s Fund and the Fund for Public Schools in charge of fundraising from private sources. Participating agencies, especially the DOE and DOHMH, could be responsible for securing federal and state grants in their program areas. When a new public grant opportunity is released, the Mayor’s Office and the steering council could convene to agree on an interagency vision and select one city agency to be the lead applicant, where applicable. Other matters of allocating funds, such as repurposing agency funds or pooling interagency funds, can be decided at the executive Children’s Cabinet level with advisement from the Steering Council.

- **Perform an annual vulnerability review.** In a complex interagency effort, issues will likely arise from time to time that may threaten the sustainability of the system. In Multnomah County, the SUN Service System Coordinating Council proactively plans for the future by identifying areas of possible vulnerability every year. Funding drives most of the analysis; however, it is not the only consideration.¹¹³ New York City can adopt the SUN Schools practice of developing a sustainability plan and revisiting it yearly.
- **Develop a public awareness campaign and other ways to engage the public about community schools.** While there is heightened awareness and political will for the community schools strategy today, advocates will face an uphill battle to sustain adequate funding, other resources and political attention in years to come. Community schools initiatives elsewhere are engaging their residents, elected officials, and community and education advocacy groups in a public dialogue about the purpose and impact of community schools. This is a long-term need, but public engagement should happen early and often over the course of the community schools initiative.

In addition to this initial list of functions, the city should also scan existing efforts where the city manages multiple sites and partners to look for ideas. Organizations like Children’s Aid Society, the United Federation of Teachers, Good Shepherd Services, and Settlement Houses could illuminate additional roles and clarify some of the proposed functions for interagency coordination.

Restructuring the Department of Education’s Central Office

To support community schools on a large scale, participating city agencies will likely make significant changes to internal structures, programming, policy and operations. These changes will vary according to agency mission, capacity and unique role in the community schools initiative. This report focuses on changes to the Department of Education, the agency that likely require the broadest and deepest changes.

Following a successful phase one of the initiative, if New York City decides to greatly increase its investment in the community school strategy, the Mayor’s Office could consider moving a share of interagency coordination to the Department of Education. Once the system is better established and stable, giving the DOE more of a leadership role would enable further culture shift for the school district similar to regions such as Oakland and Cincinnati that are making every school a community school. In Oakland, for example, the community schools work is led by an Assistant Superintendent for Family, School and Community Partnerships—a cabinet-level position that reports directly to the Superintendent. Evansville, Indiana has a similar structure.

School systems across the country have undergone significant restructuring to accommodate and promote the unique complexity of community schools.

School systems across the country have undergone significant restructuring to accommodate and promote the unique complexity of community schools. While each locality has handled this slightly differently, they all stressed that New York City should place the community schools initiative in an office that is fairly high-ranking, and in a position to be integrated with, yet differentiated from, academics. Based on this recommendation and existing organizational infrastructure, the DOE could:

- **Consider creating a new office for School-CBO Partnerships.** The office could function under the new cabinet-level Division of School Support, and locate most community schools initiative planning there. Residing in the Division of School Support would give the community schools initiative critical access to network leaders and staff that interact directly with school leaders on a variety of operational, curricular and extracurricular matters. That being said, it will also be critical for the community schools initiative to form and maintain relationships with the Division of Operations and the Office of the Chief Strategy Officer.
- **Relocate the offices of Safety and Youth Development and School Health and Wellness.** Offices could move to the Division of School Support to ensure consistency among central staff coordinating student and family supports.
- **Create a cross-functional coordinating team for community schools.** The team could be chaired by Senior Deputy Chancellor for School Support Dorita Gibson, staffed by school support team members responsible for the community school initiative and include one fairly high-ranking representative from each of the following areas at the DOE: Office of Family and Community Engagement, Office of Early Childhood, Office of Safety and Youth Development, School Health and Wellness, Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support, Operations Division, Division of Teaching and Learning and Office of the Chief Strategy Officer.
- **Hire an executive-level leader with expertise in community schools development.** The leader could serve as the point of accountability internally and externally. The DOE would need to provide this executive with the staff needed to do the work well.
- **Maintain communication between the School-CBO Partnerships Office and community district and high school superintendents.** This is particularly critical for districts containing clusters of community schools and for the superintendents who will oversee principals of community schools.

The governance bodies and roles outlined in this report are intended as recommendations for structuring leadership over the long term. At the outset, the Mayor's Office has established a Community Schools Advisory Board capable of setting policy until the Children's Cabinet is ready to create the Community Schools Steering Council as a subcommittee. Going forward, the Steering Council will provide strategic direction and counsel for the initiative. The Council will solicit the help of the full Cabinet when necessary. The Steering Council will organize, prioritize, and guide the work of the participating agencies. Each agency will be responsible for managing its contracts and implementing any policy work related to its share of the community schools system. Ultimately, the Mayor's Office will hold participating agencies accountable for their share of the work and the Council leaders collectively responsible for meeting overall performance targets for the initiative.

Chapter 4

Tools for Managing Community Schools

Representatives from community schools systems around the country agree that building a system-wide community schools strategy, beginning with a projected 100 new sites, is the perfect opportunity for New York City to conduct broader systems thinking and change. Over time, these maturing community school systems have developed supportive policy and tools that hold sites and the overall initiative accountable to an over-arching framework for community schools. While the policy and tools described in this chapter are intended for the existing and 100 new community schools, their visibility and utility will help the city create broader awareness about the strategy among schools, service providers and families, which may ultimately spur future growth and investment.

Policy and Tools for the Department of Education

Conversations with community schools leaders in other regions illuminated several policy and management questions that require creating new, or modifying existing, policies and tools. The Department of Education and its partners in city government already have the rudiments of such tools. The next step is to modify these tools to meet the unique needs of community school staff and city agency managers. Carefully designing supportive policy and tools will enable New York City to shore up existing partnerships and position the system for growth. In the meantime, DOE can apply many of the basic tenets of the community schools strategy to increasing the effectiveness of smaller-scale partnerships across its system, such as schools that maintain a small number of on-site partners providing after-school or health education, and schools developing referral relationships with organizations in their community. The result will be a better support system for partnerships throughout the city, with more schools increasing their readiness to adopt the community schools strategy.

Strategic Planning

The proposed Community Schools Steering Council could work with the Department of Education to create a strategic plan for the overall community schools initiative. The plan would outline the community schools theory of change for the overall initiative. Each community school could develop an individualized site plan by tailoring interventions to the unique needs and assets of their school community, in keeping with the overarching priorities of the initiative's strategic plan.

Supporters of community schools in Oakland used a strategic planning process to create the blueprint for transitioning traditional schools to community schools. The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) first conducted listening tours to construct a new, shared identity for the school system, and then selected 10 strategic initiatives to be developed by 14 task force groups. Task force members included school parents, community members, district personnel and school leaders. Over the course of two years, the district held roughly 350 meetings with 5,500 stakeholders and prioritized soliciting student feedback through surveys and other means.¹¹⁴

OUSD's central employees are using the district-wide strategic plan to engage school leaders in conversations as they envision a site plan for their community school. Centrally, OUSD is adding new measurements specific to community school principles to its scorecard to hold schools accountable to performance standards.

Site Planning

Oakland recently converted its former school site plan, confined to planning for the allocation of categorical funds and other compliance measures, into a tool encouraging deeper community engagement and input. OUSD schools now use the Community Schools Strategic Site Plan (CSSSP), which is based on strategic priorities and school quality indicators established in the district's overall strategic plan. Former superintendent Tony Smith explained, "the CSSSP will be a multi-year road map for each school to become actualized as a full service community school."¹¹⁵

A school's site council, Oakland's equivalent of the School Leadership Team, first completes an assets scan of the school and community. The council then crafts a three-year vision that aims to promote existing assets and close service gaps. Councils issue new plans every three years and write annual updates in the intervening years. Each planning document articulates where the school is in the process of developing into a full-service community school.¹¹⁶ Site councils solicit community feedback before submitting the plan to the district for approval. Employees in the district's central offices provide extensive support services to site councils as they develop, monitor, review, and modify plans as needed.¹¹⁷

New York City can begin adapting Oakland's site planning methods by converting the existing Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) into a dynamic tool for site-based participatory planning. The current CEP template asks schools to articulate how they will align resources to support instruction, but that is

limited to budgeting, staffing, professional development and scheduling. The plan does not mention aligning partnerships to leverage greater access to services and opportunities for students and families.¹¹⁸

The expanded CEP could ask schools to establish a site-based community schools theory of change, including the partners involved and how they would help the school better serve students and their families. Beginning with a needs-and-assets assessment of the students, their families and the school building, interventions would detail plans for delivering specific academic and student and family supports, and how the school will manage its work with academic and non-academic staff, partners, families and the broader community.

New York City's Department of Education could advocate to the New York State Department of Education with the help of the Children's Cabinet for a more inclusive planning template that expands district goals to include community school strategies. DOE could also consider coordinating with state education officials to expand and align site, regional and district plans to incorporate community school principles across the state. Encouraging common competencies and policies will begin to establish a foundation for a statewide network of community schools in the foreseeable future.

The Department of Education could also make minor changes to the CEP process to enable deeper planning for community schools while minimizing additional burden on the schools, superintendents and central employees:

- Begin site planning for the following year at the beginning of the current year rather than the end.
- Require sites to write new plans once every three years, rather than every year.
- Submit brief updates in the off years.

Expanding Site-Based Governance

Community schools achieve their mission by opening decision-making to a broader range of stakeholders than at traditional schools. At the root of the partnership is the need for regular communication between stakeholders making decisions about instruction and those planning for integrated student and family supports. In Multnomah County, for example, schools interested in becoming a SUN school must demonstrate that they have an advisory council in which youth, residents and SUN Community Schools professionals (partner agency or county staff) each comprise one-third of total membership.¹¹⁹

At the root of the partnership is the need for regular communication between stakeholders making decisions about instruction and those planning for integrated student and family supports.

Currently, New York City's School Leadership Teams (SLTs) have few required members. School staff and parents must be represented at all schools, and high schools require a minimum of two student representatives. Schools are not expected nor encouraged to reserve seats for community residents or CBO service providers.¹²⁰ To broaden and deepen participation, DOE can consider expanding the membership of site-based leadership teams and empowering these groups with greater decision-making rights. Community school Site Coordinators should be considered core members of School Leadership Teams.

However, schools should not be required to use the SLT to coordinate a community schools strategy. The city can encourage schools in the initiative to find the site-based governance structure that works best for their school community and culture. For example, schools hosting Out-of-School-Time programs sign a partnership agreement welcoming the CBO providing after-school programs to the School Safety Committee, in addition to the SLT.¹²¹ Another model for site leadership is the School Wellness Council, which typically includes a variety of health-related community organizations in addition to staff and parents.¹²² Schools could also explore creating a community advisory board similar to that of the Beacon Schools Initiative.¹²³

Currently, new SLT members attend a mandatory DOE orientation before beginning their term of service. DOE's Family and Community Engagement division could use this opportunity to also train new members on community school fundamentals, such as how to participate in needs and assets assessments and how to use the expanded site plans. The DOE could add a similar training to the Parent Academy's voluntary workshops, and parent coordinators can also play a role in communicating these fundamentals to a broader group of parents.

Reviewing School Performance, School Quality and Principal Performance

Once schools and the district establish their new governance structures and complete the strategic planning process, they will require tools to measure their performance and progress against their plan. Because community schools provide more services than traditional schools, they require a unique set of activities and competencies that are largely going unrecognized and unmeasured in New York City's education landscape today. Specifically, principals' performance on the job and schools' accountability and quality ratings do not take into account the work and value of delivering student and family supports through coordination and partnerships. Leaders of established community school systems around the country are beginning to discuss this same issue; however, they are only at preliminary stages of planning for new performance reviews. New York City has the opportunity to lead this effort and develop a model for replication in other places.

Oakland, which is developing an expanded rubric for principal evaluation that aligns with the district's strategic plan for community schools, is perhaps the district furthest along in developing a quality review process. During Oakland's strategic planning process, a taskforce that included 30 school leaders agreed to eight dimensions of effective leadership, five of which appear to differ from those used in New York City. (New York's are equity, vision, relationships, resilience and partnership.) Oakland's draft plan

describes each dimension as interconnected. Less visible foundational dimensions—equity, vision, relationships, and resilience—are necessary pre-conditions to partnership, management, instruction and accountability.¹²⁴

Because community schools provide more services than traditional schools, they require a unique set of activities and competencies that are largely going unrecognized and unmeasured in New York City’s education landscape today.

Developing these tools for New York City will help distinguish the unique and diversified expectations of a community school and its staff. The new tools will assist staff in focusing on the right set of goals and metrics. Central community schools staff, at the DOE and elsewhere, can use the tools to guide schools toward slightly expanded quality and performance targets. The public will also benefit from the alternative quality review: parents and community members can view how well school staff and partners are executing the strategy in the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan.

Making the School Quality Review Work for Community Schools

School quality review is a critical component of DOE’s work with schools, particularly to monitor activities, promote accountability and achieve continuous improvement. This is especially true for new schools or those undergoing significant transition. The NYC DOE website states that the purpose of the School Quality Review Team’s visit is “to develop a well-rounded perspective of the way in which schools use information about outcomes to guide teaching, set goals for improvement, and make adjustments (e.g., to the curriculum or via the use of resources).”¹²⁵ For community schools, quality reviews could serve a second purpose: to understand how schools use student academic and other outcomes, such as housing stability and mental health, to plan and deliver student and family supports.

For community schools, the DOE could add a fourth domain, measuring community partnerships, to the existing domains of the instructional core, school culture and systems of improvement).¹²⁶ This could be optional for all schools and required for those included in the community schools initiative. If the DOE develops a new domain, it could phase in indicators for new community schools, as it currently does for new schools as part of the New School Quality Review Process. In this system, some indicators are required of all schools, and others are reserved for maturing schools.¹²⁷

Alternatively, the DOE could make a more minor change by adding community partnerships as a new indicator under the school culture domain. The downside to this approach is that it would be weighted less heavily and might focus narrowly on student supports rather than capturing the nuance and complexity of partnerships serving families and community members.

The Community Schools Steering Council and its advisors can determine what benchmarks are expected of a community school, lead agency and other key partnerships at various stages of development. The National Center for Community Schools, which has developed several tools that are helping community school systems across the country establish and maintain successful partnerships, most notably “Stages of Development” and “Conditions and Commitments,” could serve as a technical assistance partner.

Evaluating Community School Principals

The DOE could meet with a group of experienced community school principals, and possibly CBO lead agencies, to develop standards of principal practice for a new community schools principal observation tool. The DOE may want to measure key competencies, such as how well principals:

- share leadership with CBO partners
- integrate student and family supports with core instructional activities
- welcome parents and community residents into the school for activities during non-school hours.

When designing a community schools observation tool, DOE could take direction from some New York City non-traditional school models that use specialized principal evaluations, (e.g., the “alternative principal observation tools” for Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Transfer High Schools). These tools supplement required domains, indicators and questions with “additional examples of practice and guiding questions.”¹²⁸ The CTE observation tool, for example, measures whether the school’s industry and secondary partners review the CTE curriculum.¹²⁹ To adapt this to community schools, DOE could easily substitute CBO partners and parents for industry and secondary partners.

Modifying quality review and principal practice observation standards will be challenging and require collaboration and consensus among partners affected by the changes. These groups include central DOE administrators, local superintendents and Community Education Councils, the Council of Supervisors and Administrators union, the United Federation of Teachers, principals of traditional and community schools, and CBO staff partnering with schools.

At high-functioning community schools, principals will easily excel when measured using the additional standards. High marks in these areas will recognize the principals’ hard work in developing strong relationships with CBOs. After New York City decision-makers reach a consensus, the Children’s Cabinet, led by the Community Schools Steering Council, will likely need to lobby the New York State Education Department to approve changes to school quality review and principal evaluations. If the city and state agree to collaboratively develop templates, this will help set the foundation for a statewide network of community schools.

Training Community School Leaders and Supporters

Cultivating talent through training and professional development is a critical priority for the DOE and must be integral to planning for a system-wide community schools initiative. Several of the community school systems around the country are developing curricula to train site-based and central staff in concepts and core competencies at the heart of community schools practice.

- In Oakland, superintendents and central district staff met to design training and professional development resources for principals. District officials also worked with school leaders to develop a standard training curriculum that introduces the eight dimensions of “leading for equity.” Oakland is aligning these and any future resources with the expanded rubric for principal evaluation.¹³⁰
- Cincinnati Public Schools offers robust training and professional development through an external entity, the Mayerson Academy. The Coalition for Community Schools reports that the District and Mayerson Academy collaborated to develop a training program for new community school coordinators to supplement training they receive from their host CBOs.¹³¹
- Chicago Public Schools integrates community school-related professional development into existing school leader training. At CPS, the Principal Development Department conducted a “pathways to leadership” training series for assistant principals and principals consisting of nine modules drawing from Anthony Bryk’s five essential elements of successful schools. Staff from the Community Schools Initiative office facilitated the module addressing family and community engagement. Unfortunately after a few years, a new CEO of the school district dissolved the Principal Development Department, and the training went with it.¹³²

Key potential training recipients in New York City include principals, teachers, non-instructional staff, CBO partner staff, as well as central staff at the DOE and its partner agencies (such as the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Youth and Community Development and the Administration for Children’s Services), especially those in contract management and strategic planning roles. Partner agencies would ideally collaborate with DOE to develop a curriculum and individual training sessions. For example, the best way to train DOHMH school-based health center staff may be for an agency health professional to help develop, and possibly facilitate, sessions. Critical partners would be other agencies on the Steering Council and technical assistance providers such as the Children’s Aid Society’s National Center for Community Schools, the Youth Development Institute and the United Federation of Teachers. The more these can be integrated with existing trainings and become standard components of training and professional development across the human services and education system, the better. This will prepare the initiative for growth across the system of schools and providers.

While the Community Schools Steering Council is planning for the new collaborative trainings, the DOE can tailor existing trainings to the needs of the community schools initiative:

- **The DOE could fairly easily add community school competencies to the Leadership Education Apprenticeship Program, its on-the-job training for principals.** DOE could add training on new community schools domains and indicators to the “summer intensive” training that covers the domains of the Quality Review rubric. Trainees wanting to serve in community schools could complete their one-year residency at a mature community school under an experienced community schools principal mentor.¹³³ The Council of Supervisors and Administrators could implement similar changes to their Executive Leadership Institute.
- **DOE could partner with local universities such as CUNY and SUNY to incorporate community school principles into existing certification programs for teachers and support staff.** Programs could offer elective coursework for aspiring teachers interested in working at community schools. The DOE could also work with universities to place teachers in mature community schools for their student teaching or residency period. This will develop the next generation of community schools teaching staff and connect new and maturing community schools to a high-quality pipeline of teachers committed to the community schools strategy.
- **In addition to instructional certification, agency partners, including the Department of Youth and Community Development and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, can partner with local universities on a certification program for community school coordinators.** This idea comes from Chicago, where the University of Chicago’s School of Social Service Administration provides a master’s-level social work track that prepares graduates to work in community schools.¹³⁴

Data Sharing and Integration

The Community Schools Initiative will rely on increased access to data, increased capacity to make data-driven decisions, and the ability to measure and tell its success story. These data improvements are essential to both inform which students and families receive which services, and assess quality and progress to outcomes.

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Accessing and acting on additional data points means the difference between using student and family supports as targeted interventions and simply assigning students to programs and services based on factors as basic as gender or age. CBOs currently use individual student-level DOE data to plan extended learning and social-emotional interventions. In the data-driven approach, community school coordinators and principals can make informed referrals and more thoughtfully connect students and their families to a wider range of services. “The best tool you can give a community school resource coordinator is the ability to perform and act on the analysis that school personnel want but cannot do themselves,” says Abe Fernandez, director of collective impact at Children’s Aid Society.¹³⁵ For example, if a community school coordinator knew from the Department of Homeless Services that a family recently moved to a shelter after being evicted, he or she could provide the child’s parents with a housing referral, legal services and case management if appropriate.

Led by the Mayor’s Office, the Community Schools Steering Council must plan for an improved data-driven strategy. Beginning with the Children’s Cabinet, city leaders can identify interagency data-sharing priorities and commit to removing existing barriers preventing providers and central staff from accessing the information. This process can go hand-in-hand with designing a results-accountability framework for the community schools initiative, including standards for measurement.

Once the Steering Council establishes priority information and metrics, the Cabinet can more easily identify which data use cases are of the highest priority. Cabinet members can use that list to determine the most pressing gaps in existing data systems. Two major decision points are 1) whether the city can meet these needs using existing systems and tools and 2) what type of training and technical assistance would help providers and managers capitalize on the improved data landscape.

Before the city can design a warehouse or other integration method, the Children’s Cabinet subcommittee must identify who will use data and for what purposes. The following chart outlines the proposed data needs for each entity involved in community schools work, and provides suggestions for how to improve on their current access to data.

Data Use and Applications: A Work in Progress

| Person/Role | Common Data Activities | Areas for Growth |
|---|---|---|
| Community schools coordination team (employed by CBO lead agency) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access academic data such as grades, discipline and attendance • Share service consumption and activity participation data with school staff • Report outcomes to city agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access aggregated and individual, student-level information about student and family interactions with key city agencies and associated services, e.g., foster care, mental health, welfare, shelter services • Use new data sources to assess which students could benefit from which services |
| City agencies and other funders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure performance and quality using aggregated program data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort by special population to measure equity within and across population groups • Match data to other agencies' data sets to identify multi-system special populations receiving one or more city services • Compare program results to budget data to estimate the return on investment through analysis of cost per input, output and/or outcome |
| Intermediaries providing technical assistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist schools and CBOs with more sensitive data sets for which they have limited viewing privileges by blinding the sensitive information and matching less sensitive information to existing data sets • Step in to fulfill critical data requests that exceed school and CBO capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train CBO, school and city agency staff in data analysis and how to use new and existing data systems |
| Mayor's office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect management reports from agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create dashboard for overall initiative • Facilitate evaluation process using CEO and third-party evaluators |

The Evolving Landscape of Data Sharing and Integration

Local leaders across the country, often as part of collective impact and cradle-to-career partnerships, are increasingly advocating for increased data sharing and integration among agencies addressing children and families. Despite ingenuity and innovation, efforts are mostly aimed at vertical data sharing within education. Community schools professionals cannot afford to wait for delays by the state and federal agencies that continue to hamper progress at the local level.

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Planning for vertical data sharing within education is critical. However, a cross-boundary strategy like community schools and the larger mandate of the Children’s Cabinet also require horizontal data sharing. Two state children’s cabinets have developed promising projects. Maine’s cabinet has made the unique identification number for students uniform across all levels of education and is planning, with other state agencies, to use the number to enable easier data integration and longitudinal evaluation.¹³⁶ Florida’s cabinet is conducting a pilot project to integrate specific data points from eight agencies to inform case management decisions. Linked data points will include public assistance, unemployment and secure detention outputs. Florida’s education department is not yet contributing to the new system because of concerns about Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations.¹³⁷

A recent San Francisco project also holds promise. Three agencies, the departments of Public Health, Juvenile Probation, and Human Services, are collaborating to build a shared database. Initially, city lawyers feared the initiative would not comply with privacy regulations. Subsequently, the District Attorney became a champion of the project and helped advocate for the group to eventually develop a plan that the authorities would approve. The school district has since joined and will be adding data from the Pupil Services Division. In the short time that these agencies have begun sharing data, they have found several actionable data points, including the fact that 51 percent of youth involved in multiple systems commit a serious crime, and that 88 percent of those crimes occur more than 90 days after the youth becomes a “cross-over client.” This simple analysis identifies a 90-day window for city agencies and their service providers to plan for prevention.¹³⁸

Data Tools for Community Schools

A few community school systems across the country have achieved considerable progress toward innovative data solutions; all are eager to improve their data access and integration. Cincinnati’s Learning Partner Dashboard is a data tool tailored to the day-to-day needs of community schools, specifically. Chicago’s data warehouse project is less developed; however, when the tools are fully

functional they will serve the community schools initiative and a broader set of citywide needs. In New York City, the Community Schools Steering Council need not wait for the city to develop more comprehensive data solutions to equip community schools with the appropriate infrastructure. However, the Steering Council can work with the larger Children’s Cabinet to design systems and tools that will eventually integrate and align with any larger solutions down the road.

Chicago

The Mayor’s Office is building a bold and comprehensive data warehouse that will integrate city agency data and share it with partners at the item and aggregate levels. Tawa Mitchell, former director of education policy and partnerships for the City of Chicago, explains that to date, city agencies collect a lot of data from contracted service providers, but they rarely share corresponding administrative data with partners. Mitchell says that the City of Chicago wanted to “create a system whereby nonprofits are getting real-time info to do course corrections.”¹³⁹

Leading the initiative is THRIVE, the citywide Cradle-to-Career Collaborative being incubated within the Mayor’s Office. Members of THRIVE felt strongly that in order to dramatically improve educational outcomes for Chicagoans, city agencies and nonprofit service providers needed increased ability to make data-driven decisions. Once complete, the warehouse will allow users that have the requisite permissions to look up information about their clients collected by other city agencies. For example, an after-school provider could see whether a particular child who is struggling academically has an open child welfare case.¹⁴⁰ Permissions to access the different data types were established based on a “common program taxonomy” so that, for example, after-school art programs can access the data they need the most, which would be different from data for school-based health centers.¹⁴¹

Currently, the city is leveraging the work of its partner, Chapin Hall, a research institute for child and family policy at the University of Chicago, to integrate nonprofit service provider data with that of city agencies. Through program evaluation contracts, Chapin Hall receives access to data from many nonprofits delivering after-school programs and city agencies providing human services. Chapin Hall receives a match of student data from Chicago Public Schools and uploads it to the warehouse.¹⁴²

As of mid-May, the Mayor’s Office had completed the use cases and program taxonomy, and intended to launch pilot programs enabling specific users to access aggregate reports by mid-June, with further refinements to follow.¹⁴³

Cincinnati

Cincinnati, one of the earliest adopters of system-wide community schools, has a fairly advanced dashboard that helps community school coordinators manage a caseload of students and families. The Learning Partner Dashboard offers side-by-side displays of program data from schools, CBOs and city agencies. For example, community school coordinators can view students’ reading and math scores,

as well as attendance, risk indicators, whether or not the student exhibits one or more of five “priority factors” the school district tracks, their service referrals, and program enrollments.¹⁴⁴ The dashboard also offers some integration and custom fields for specialty users and purposes.¹⁴⁵

Resource coordinators prioritize service coordination for students deemed at risk because they present one or more of the following priority factors:

- Five or more school absences
- Five or more instances of being tardy
- Five or more behavioral referrals
- Scoring less than proficient on the state reading test
- Scoring less than proficient on the state math test¹⁴⁶

Other agencies integrating data into the Learning Partner Dashboard are Children’s Services and the juvenile court, made possible by data sharing agreements with the school district. The dashboard stores data considered to be more sensitive (e.g. data from wellness services provided by school-based health and mental health centers, and scores from a social-emotional assessment administered by United Way) in private fields, and access to these fields is limited to specified partners and users.

Like Oakland, Cincinnati Public Schools built their system with the help of a pro-bono developer they secured at a hack-a-thon hosted by Microsoft and the one of the city’s signature private sector employers, Procter & Gamble.¹⁴⁷ STRIVE is currently collaborating with Microsoft on a second platform that will build on the success of the Learning Partner Dashboard. This “student success dashboard” will integrate program data from service providers operating inside and outside schools with the district’s student data. According to a STRIVE overview, the dashboard “can play a critical role in helping schools, providers and districts assess how community-based programs impact student achievement in the classroom.”¹⁴⁸ The overview lists nine different types of data that will potentially flow to the dashboard, which include early childhood, health services, after-school programs and college enrollment.¹⁴⁹

Cincinnati is also helping other regions develop similar data systems through technical assistance contracts with the Strive Together national network, a group formed to help interested communities replicate the best practices from Cincinnati’s Strive Partnership.¹⁵⁰

Data Sharing and Integration in New York City

Current efforts in New York City to share child and family data among city agencies and service providers are neither comprehensive nor actionable enough to adequately serve the needs of a community schools initiative. This is likely also true for other initiatives the Children’s Cabinet will want to address. There are, however, three relevant local instances of data sharing and integration.

Health and Human Services Worker Connect

HHS Worker Connect represents the largest-scale effort to share data between human services agencies in the city; however, the system is designed for one-time investigations rather than ongoing case management and coordination of care. To date, it represents New York City’s farthest-reaching governmental effort to integrate data.

Established in the office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, Worker Connect allows caseworkers to conduct one-time queries about current clients for information that may be collected by other city agencies. As of September 2013, Worker Connect was available to 6,800 authorized users representing 10 agencies. Caseworkers can access data from up to six sources maintained by five agencies. For example, an ACS child protective services worker investigating an allegation of child abuse may want to locate and verify information on the child and family involved. Through Worker Connect, he or she can conduct a query to search whether other agencies have collected addresses for the child and family members, benefits status, family composition and childcare provider’s location.¹⁵¹ Once the worker completes the query, the information disappears—it is not stored in any database for further use.¹⁵²

Agencies partner with the Mayor’s Office of Operations to draft and approve proposals for new business needs and use cases. Each proposal defines the potential users’ purpose, the information required, how they will use it and exactly which workers require access.¹⁵³ As of May 2013, 12 new data sources had been approved, including DOE’s Automate the Schools database. Each of these data sources is at varying stages of the development process, from defining the business need to legal and policy review.¹⁵⁴ 20 new user groups are also undergoing a review process. Most pertinent to community schools are workers representing DOE’s School Meals and Universal Pre-Kindergarten, DYCD’s In-School Youth and Summer Youth Employment program and DOHMH’s Facilitated Enrollment (for public health insurance).¹⁵⁵ While the vast majority of users are city employees, HHS Worker Connect did extend access to contracted service providers running home health programs such as the Nurse Family Partnership.

CARES at the Department of Homeless Services

Community school coordinators want the ability to identify supports and possible trauma in students’ lives, and plan interventions for them and their families accordingly.

The Department of Homeless Services’ Client Rehousing Enterprise System (CARES) database allows shelter intake and other workers who are confirming eligibility for shelter and housing placement to import data from HRA’s Welfare Management System, certain ACS data and parole information.¹⁵⁶ In a

small way, this system mimics what community schools advocates and practitioners desire in a data system.

Community school coordinators want the ability to identify supports and possible trauma in students' lives, and plan interventions for them and their families accordingly. Ideally this would include the ability to collaborate with caseworkers from the agencies involved. If the Children's Cabinet chooses to advocate for a more comprehensive integrated database, members can explore the policy and legal frameworks behind CARES.

Existing Data Sharing Agreements

To date, the Department of Education has existing data share agreements with the Administration for Children's Services and the Department of Youth and Community Development. The ACS partnership grants the agency's workers access to item-level academic data for foster children currently in ACS custody. DOE also grants aggregate and some item-level data access to DYCD programs operating in schools, such as Beacon Schools providers. Critical data points include attendance and behavior metrics. It does not appear that either agency reciprocates access to their data in a formal manner.

These agreements serve as possible models for future data sharing agreements because they drill down to the item level, rather than simply matching aggregated data sets, which is limiting and typically helpful only for reporting purposes. Going forward, agreements should be integrated into a coherent citywide data-sharing strategy.

Improving Data Collection, Access and Integration

In addition, the Community Schools Steering Council, with the support of the full Children's Cabinet, should plan for the following short- and long-term improvements:

Short-term (immediate)

- **Extend permissions to designated staff at lead agencies partnering with a community school to view academic, behavior, and attendance data.** This recommendation is a quick win—some partners currently contracting with the DOE and others with DYCD already have this permission. When more data sources are integrated into a comprehensive data warehouse, CBO and school staff will engage in richer conversations and inquiry. Concurrently, the steering council should review and modify existing parental and student consent protocol with input from students and parents.
- **Fund an intermediary to provide data support for community schools.** An intermediary organization, preferably with expertise in data within both education and health and human services, could perform start-up training and ongoing capacity-building for site-based personnel. This intermediary should have the bandwidth to fulfill day-to-day requests relating to case management

and intervention planning, as well as assist sites with routine reporting. There is precedent for this work in New York City, including the After-School Corporation, which provides data support for schools implementing 21st Century Community Learning Center grants, including coaching sites on how to make data-driven decisions.¹⁵⁷ One critical aspect of this work is to develop training materials and sessions to support school and partner staff in holding regular data conferences on topics such as chronic absenteeism, mental health and behavior issues.

Long-term

- **Expand data collection efforts by identifying current gaps and inefficiencies.** The Children’s Cabinet must determine the list of metrics community school sites will collect and investigate whether or not there are gaps in data collection and access. The Children’s Cabinet must also look ahead to anticipate and propose solutions to challenges likely to arise when integrating interagency data. For example, Betty Holcomb of the Center for Children’s Initiatives highlighted one salient challenge: Given the current landscape of diverse delivery for early childhood education, there is no existing standard system for tracking participants. Thus, item-level analysis across systems is impossible and aggregated data will often include duplicate records that cannot be removed. One potential alternative would be to grant Eligibility Information System numbers to children younger than five. This is already standard practice for young children enrolled in school-based early childhood programs.¹⁵⁸
- **Better integrate data, starting with existing data tools and interagency data-sharing agreements.** After clarifying the need, the Community Schools Steering Council can meet with the city’s Law Department and the Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications (DOITT) to define system requirements and options for security and privacy. Concurrently, it is essential that the Mayor’s Office plans for protecting clients’ privacy and seeks input on new protocols from parents and other community members serving on Children’s Cabinet advisory boards. If program needs cannot be met with existing tools, the Mayor’s Office could host a hack-a-thon to present problems of practice to pro-bono web developers, as several other localities have done.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The Mayor’s Office and Community Schools Steering Council will need to develop accountability and evaluation systems that both foster growth at developing sites and hold them responsible for improving outcomes for students and their families, according to appropriate contract goals.

The city should select performance and quality metrics in concert with providers to ensure that expectations are realistic and that all parties understand and accept the standards. Several providers interviewed for this report feel that previous contracts made unrealistic demands in such areas as funding levels, staffing ratios, reporting requirements and milestones. The expansion of middle school after-school programs sets a helpful precedent. Based on its own conversations with providers, the

city raised the funding allocation per participant to close the gap between the existing city allocation and the amount that providers that had greater fundraising capabilities were spending to run high-quality programs.¹⁵⁹

Designing Logic Models

A logic model for a system of community schools defines the big-picture outcomes desired and the inputs and outputs necessary achieve them. The model serves as the road map for all of the system’s stakeholders. One good resource is the Coalition for Community Schools, which has defined a logic model based on the aggregated experiences of its member organizations across the country.¹⁶⁰ New York City can also consider Multnomah County, which has created a robust logic model that captures community schools’ added value: attention to, and linkages between, both academic and health and human services outcomes for students, families and community residents. The SUN Service System’s program model is based on two comprehensive logic models (one for “school-based” services and one for “school-linked” services) that are part of an overall cross-boundary framework for results, set by the citywide cradle-to-career collaborative, All Hands Raised Partnership.

Multnomah County’s SUN Service System program model also aligns with more localized and specific frameworks at the county, city and school district levels of governance. The model establishes five core services that are “school-based” (located on-site) and another five services that are “school-linked” (offsite services accessible through on-site referrals). Each service category lists targets for enrollments by population, yearly outputs, yearly outcomes, and the evaluation tool or method stakeholders will use to track progress.¹⁶¹

Multnomah County’s Office of Diversity and Equity is developing an Equity and Empowerment Lens tool that will help the SUN Service System and other service providers include equity in evaluations, subsequent planning and continuous improvement efforts.¹⁶²

Measuring Performance

Sites joining the New York City Community Schools Initiative will develop Comprehensive Education Plans that reflect the priorities of the citywide logic model. Plans should include projected service levels, for example the number and percentage of students that will receive each service such as after school and health care, according to the results of their needs-and-assets assessments. The Community Schools Steering Council can hold sites accountable for maintaining the service levels, service distribution and projected outcomes in their plan. When selecting measures for these outcomes, the Steering Council can refer to the Forum for Youth Investment’s “Soft Skills, Hard Data: Measuring Youth Program Outcomes” report for an in-depth comparison of some of the leading youth development survey and rating methods. However, many of the service providers’ outcome targets and measurements will be pre-determined by existing contracts with government and private funders they are leveraging as part of the community schools strategy.

Measuring Quality

Arriving at a standard set of quality measures for New York City’s community schools will be challenging. Quality ratings and improvement systems are fairly new to the field of child and family services, and the existing frameworks tend to be fragmented across systems. For example, among after-school program providers in New York City, some use the New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) quality rating system while others use the Youth Program Quality Assessment developed by the Weikart Center affiliated with Forum for Youth Investment. Other types of services, such as early childhood, have separate quality rubrics. Helpful resources include the Forum for Youth Investment, particularly the “Measuring Youth Program Quality” report and the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities at Stanford University.

The Community Schools Steering Council can lead efforts to:

- Develop a framework in which sites can be evaluated on a common rubric for citywide reporting and evaluation that allows for a potentially wide variation of service components across sites.
- Select the best indicators of quality from each source and develop indicators for service areas that do not yet have established rubrics.

Ensuring Continuous Improvement

It is not enough to measure progress; the Community Schools Steering Council must also develop formalized protocols for intervening when sites struggle and for replicating promising practices when sites succeed. The steering council can take lessons from DYCD’s program management protocol. When a report shows unsatisfactory performance or quality, DYCD holds trainings for affected Beacon schools staff to try to get the program back on track.

Representatives from existing school-CBO partnerships expressed that there is often little or no recourse available when a school or CBO is not holding up its end of the bargain. In response to this concern, the Community Schools Steering Council can establish a formal process for resolving leadership issues. Leadership teams would seek a transfer of either a CBO site director or principal and replace that vacancy with new leadership that is fully committed to deep collaboration around a shared vision.

To assist developing sites, and even maturing sites that may be struggling, the Community Schools Steering Council could establish demonstration sites that serve as models of promising practices. School and partner staff from developing and struggling schools could visit demonstration sites as part of their ongoing training, and especially when the data show a need for course correction. Specific activities to showcase include School Leadership Team meetings and high-quality expanded learning programs.

Evaluation and the Research Agenda

To date, there are few rigorous evaluations of the community schools strategy, although many community school systems and initiatives have implemented preliminary, less rigorous evaluations. A few summaries of evaluations to date, in particular those assembled by the Coalition for Community Schools, Joy Dryfoos and the Urban Strategies Council, discuss the methods and results of these studies. The Urban Strategies Council, an organization supporting community schools development in Oakland, finds that most evaluations have focused on assessing indicators of change in academic achievement. The evaluations typically followed whole cohorts of students over a period of a few years to measure school progress on various measures including reading and math scores. Some compared state or city benchmarks, while fewer selected comparison groups either using administrative data for like schools, or by conducting random assignments.¹⁶³

... evaluations should assess the impact of particular services on students receiving them, rather than attributing overall student success to a community school approach.

However, there is a need for a different type of evaluation, given that community schools strategies target select groups of students within schools to provide tailored services. More evaluations should assess the impact of particular services on students receiving them, rather than attributing overall student success to a community school approach. Cincinnati has begun this work using its Learning Partner Dashboard to disaggregate students by participation in various services and assessing the effect of services on various student sub-groups.¹⁶⁴

The most rigorous and comprehensive evaluation to date is from Communities in Schools, a national non-profit operating 200 local affiliates in 27 states as of 2013.¹⁶⁵ The evaluation consisted of 10 stages, each addressing different research questions to advance and learn about the effectiveness of the CIS strategy. Four of these stages are most applicable to a potential research design for New York City: critical processes survey, school level quasi-experimental study, national variation study and randomized controlled trials.¹⁶⁶

In New York, the Children’s Cabinet can convene a cross-section of agencies, providers and researchers to plan for evaluation. Responsibilities would include selecting metrics, outlining technical assistance necessary for sites to prepare for future evaluations and selecting evaluators for Children’s Cabinet projects. Researchers should represent diverse methodological expertise including “theory of change” evaluation and more traditional quasi-experimental evaluation.

A robust evaluation plan can help the initiative and individual sites advance in several areas, such as performance management, program monitoring, honing program models, identifying promising models for replication and assessing impact. New York City’s Community Schools Initiative can harness the evaluation strengths of the DOE’s Policy and Research Group, particularly for its strength in quantitative research, the Center for Economic Opportunity’s consortium of nine evaluation firms, and the Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence to create a multi-pronged research design.

A Potential Research Design

The New York City Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI) Executive Director Maryanne Schretzman and Research Director Benjamin Charvat describe what an optimal research design would look like, assuming that the city allocates sufficient funding for community schools evaluation. They suggest using a hierarchical linear model in which data is nested in a larger structure to allow for evaluation on three distinct levels. The study would measure outcomes for students attending community schools, students not attending community schools, the overall school performance for community schools, and various indicators of outcomes within neighborhoods hosting community schools. Data could track cohorts of students over the course of three to five years, measuring change against a baseline recorded prior to community schools implementation.¹⁶⁷ CIDI leadership suggest several of the methods the Communities in Schools evaluation utilized; however, they cautioned against conducting random assignment.¹⁶⁸ This is likely because it would not be possible to isolate school-level effects on students not receiving services, and denying services would be counter to program objectives.

- **Prior to assessing impact, evaluators would conduct an action theory-based process evaluation.** Evaluators would engage closely with sites during early phases of implementation to assess fidelity to the model and intervene to help sites take corrective action where necessary. This type of approach would require monthly calls between sites and evaluators. Because a process action evaluation requires intensive resources, the initiative may want to select only a sample of schools to participate in this strand. The evaluation would closely investigate potential factors affecting implementation such as the quality of critical relationships and potential threats to success including personnel and leadership changes. After completing a process evaluation, leaders of the initiative would be able to define the prototype of a successful community school.¹⁶⁹
- **A program theory evaluation would nicely complement process and outcome studies.** Schretzman and Charvat explained that this study, also known as a “theory of change” evaluation, would measure the extent to which the practice of running a community school reflects the underlying assumptions and hypotheses stated in the community schools logic model. They note that this study in particular would be important for political reasons. It would confirm and validate the linkages between program partners and the added value each brings to the school and community.¹⁷⁰ It would also provide future city leadership with a clearer path when attempting to replicate the successes of the school models with the most effective processes.

Evaluation experts have identified several challenges facing formal evaluations and more informal program monitoring efforts. Schretzman and Charvat assert that aspects of recent school reform would complicate evaluation procedures: no two schools are created exactly alike; school choice sends students to school sometimes far away from their home communities; and co-location of small schools in one building complicates service delivery and conditions. CIDI leadership also explained that while the Community Schools Steering Council will likely be very interested in measuring two groups of outcomes, evaluators have yet to determine sufficient indicators for capturing change. These include outcomes of increasing collaboration between public agencies and service providers and indicators of social-emotional well-being, leadership and parent engagement.¹⁷¹

The City of New York has an unprecedented opportunity to develop a systemic approach to support community schools in the largest school district in the United States. Building on the strength of existing school-community partnerships, families, students and educators, New York City can ensure that its children have every opportunity to grow up to be healthy, productive citizens. Community partners, advocates and families stand ready to work with the administration to make this dream a reality.

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