

Hal A. Lawson · Dolf van Veen *Editors*

# Developing Community Schools, Community Learning Centers, Extended-service Schools and Multi- service Schools

International Exemplars for Practice,  
Policy and Research

 Springer

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Learning Centers, Extended-service Schools  
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# An Overview of the Book

This book features a new school-related design, which is structured to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families who reside in challenging places. The full realization of its' enormous potential hinges on enhanced understanding developed among a broad array of leaders and other key stakeholders. Three questions are especially important:

- What can be done to speed up the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of these new school related designs, including taking them to scale as needed and warranted?
- How might the innovation-related risks be reduced at the same time that the costs of innovation-related flaws and errors prevented?
- What other innovations are needed to reduce and prevent young people's risk factors as they are provided with opportunity structures and pathways that enable them to realize their human potential and achieve their aspirations?

These three questions were instrumental in our planning for this book. We have structured it to serve two main audiences: Newcomers to this work and colleagues who are knee-deep in implementation, scale-up, and scale-out.

The three chapters constituting Part I are connected. Chapter 2 presents the rationale for this new school-related design. Building on this foundation, Chapter 3 provides an overview of this new design. Chapter 4 provides operational details, emphasizing alternatives and the choices they entail for local leaders.

All three chapters are jam-packed with information, so much so that they risk information overload. Mindful of the need for all-important practical details, we have provided relevant resources in Appendix A. In other words, the first three chapters address what, why, and so what questions. Appendix A provides practical resources for addressing “how to do it questions,” setting the stage for more of the same in Part II.

The chapters in Part II are one of this book's most important contributions. We have invited leaders of advanced initiatives in diverse parts of the world to share their respective developmental journeys with this new school-related design. They

include success stories, progress markers, ongoing challenges, and key lessons learned.

All of these contributing authors have gained considerable experience with the new design featured in this book. Although none of the authors claims that their work is done or that their learning is finished, all offer demonstrable progress markers and important achievements, enabling them to provide bridled advocacy for their respective versions of the new design.

In Part III, we take stock of the individual and collective achievements and lessons learned from the advanced exemplars provided in Part II. We also outline the next phases in this design and development agenda, spicing the narrative with a pinch of advocacy. In Chapter 13, we identify nominees for the next phases in the design and development agenda. In Chapter 14, we provide an introductory platform for all-important issues of start-up, scale-up, scale-out, and sustainability. We conclude the book with a focus on the universities and governments, framing their engagement as a systems change agenda.

Our narrative is advocacy-oriented, albeit bridled. Advocacy is by its very nature structured to create infectious enthusiasm. To this healthy dose of innovation commitment, we add a measure of caution to newcomers as well as experienced colleagues.

For example, avoid the temptation to assume with us that different names for the same kind of school-related design are inconsequential; and also that these designs are essentially the same—or will be at some future time. Instead, take the view that these new school-related designs are best viewed as rapidly expanding social experiments, which are influenced by their leaders' perspectives, backgrounds, competencies and aims, together with the influences of their respective locales and unique policy contexts.

Use the four design principles—*invention, intentionality, causality, and contrast*—as you appreciate each alternative. Take stock of the commonalities, but do not stop there. Attend to and evaluate each alternative's unique features, asking penetrating questions about how and why they are structured and operate in particular ways and what they are able to accomplish and achieve.

Perhaps above all, avoid the well-known pattern of studying a particular design developed in a different place with the expressed intent of transporting it wholesale into a different locale. Beware the idea of wholesale "replication." Substitute the idea of "scale-up" because it accentuates the need for locally tailored design priorities at the same time that it provides a transportable blueprint for certain core components, operational processes, and new roles, responsibilities, practices, and relationships developed to achieve better student, school, family, community, and workforce outcomes.

Continue to ask and address important questions as you proceed with your reading. How do leaders in diverse parts of the world make informed choices and develop new school-related designs? What are the results? What are the salient lessons learned for others, especially those considering new school-related designs?

The authors of the chapters in Part II provide their own views on these questions. They share their respective developmental journeys with this new school-related

design, and their accounts include success stories, progress markers, ongoing challenges, and key lessons learned. Although all of these contributing authors have gained considerable experience with the new design featured in this book, none of the authors claims that their work is done or that their learning is finished.

However, all offer demonstrable progress markers and important achievements. Together these progress markers and achievements signal the promise of community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools. This book will achieve its primary aim if readers initiate place-based innovations that help to realize this promise on the behalf of the children, youth, families, and communities that need it most of all.





# Acknowledgments

These book's contributions are attributable in part to the countless colleagues in several parts of the world who have permitted us to learn with and from them. Our wives top the list. Both are accomplished, innovative leaders, and they have made significant contributions to our professional development. They are joined by other colleagues who have coauthored some of our previous publications and others who have worked side by side with us in community school settings.

Several colleagues graciously have provided informative reviews of early drafts of our work, and this book is a better product because of their feedback. They include Sarah Zuckerman, Francesca Durand, Lynn Lisy-Macan, and Nisa Felicia. Widarto Adi transformed some of our rough-cut sketches into professional figure diagrams.

Both of us have had the honor and pleasure of working with innovative policy officials in state/provincial ministries and education departments. We remain appreciative of all that they have enabled us to learn and do.

Additionally, we owe a debt of gratitude to the organizations that have been providing funding and other supports for our work. They made investments with the aim of garnering future benefits. This book is one such return on investment. Ideally, it enables our colleagues in different parts of the world to launch and advance a new school-related design, together with companion systems changes. Such is the work needed to provide much-needed assistance, social supports, and resources to vulnerable children, youth, and families who reside in challenging places, also benefiting educators, health and social service professionals, community development specialists, and public policy leaders.



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

**Hal A. Lawson and Dolf van Veen**

**Abstract** Despite differences in their names, community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools share important, defining features. These features enable them to be classified, analyzed, and promoted together, and then they can be joined as part of a growing international movement to develop new designs for schools. Like all new designs, this new school-related design can be introduced and evaluated with reference to four criteria: (1) Invention or creation; (2) Intentionality; (3) Causality; and (4) Contrast. When these criteria are applied to the new school-related design featured in this book, its' differences from conventional, stand-alone schools and other innovations such as community collaboration models become apparent. For example, community schools, community learning centers, extended service schools and multi-service schools are specifically designed to address place-based social and economic disadvantage. Not merely another school improvement strategy, these new schools can be appreciated legitimately as ever-changing social experiments that represent progress toward new institutional designs for vulnerable young people, their families and the school communities that serve as their homes.

**Keywords** Institutional design • Organizational change • School improvement • Educational policy • Community school • At-risk youths

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The growing number of alternative designs for schools worldwide is an important development. More than a nation-specific phenomenon, cross-national exchanges and deliberate replication initiatives are underway. Community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools are prominent examples.

All such interchanges are a defining characteristic of twenty-first century societies connected by globalization. In fact, these interchanges have been instrumental in the production of “global–local hybrid schools,” a descriptor that applies to the new designs featured in this book. Many such global–local hybrids are stimulated and facilitated by one of globalization’s defining characteristics—digital teaching and learning technologies.

Digital technology-enabled “anytime, anywhere, anyone learning” challenges three traditional ideas. One is that school is the only place where serious, meaningful academic learning occurs. The second is that “seat time” (time in class) is the same as academic learning time. The third is that education and schooling are synonyms.

For example, digital teaching and learning technologies in concert with special educational enrichment opportunities such as summer science camps, on-line courses, and community-based, project-based learning initiatives are yielding three consequential, paradoxical outcomes. In certain specialized knowledge and skill domains, a growing number of students have more expertise than their teachers. At the same time, a young person’s age no longer predicts and restricts their learning and content mastery, a development that challenges the idea of age-graded curriculum and instruction. What is more, borderless teaching and boundary-less learning facilitated by technology-enabled, cross-national learning networks provide international learning interactions and resource exchanges that transcend particular places.

Together these three developments rattle the foundation of conventional schools’ social organization and operation at the same time that they stimulate new school designs. In fact, a growing number of proposals focus on the future of learning, not merely the future of schooling (e.g., City, Elmore, & Lynch, 2012). For example, Prince, Saveri, and Swanson (2015) provide a path-breaking framework for learning and education overall. Their proposal for vibrant and equitable learning ecosystems emphasizes the opportunities associated with digital teaching and learning technologies. Their new framework is tailor-made for particular urban neighborhoods, inner ring suburbs, isolated rural communities, and detention centers and prisons. Proposals like these and the alternative designs for schools they provide will increase quickly in the next 10 years.

## **Four Other Reasons for New School Designs**

Worldwide policy leaders are positioning schools to become economic development resources. New school designs in the so-called advanced democracies with their postindustrial economies are driven by the clarion call for a twenty-first century

workforce prepared for the new demands and fresh opportunities accompanying the global economy. The economically-motivated idea of schooling in service of workforce development, officially known as human capital development (Becker, 1993; Raffo, 2014), is a familiar theme to people from all walks of life in many nations of the world. This theme is accompanied by a strong emphasis on new workforce competencies and configurations as well as new workplace designs.

This human capital development aim is accompanied by a strong emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics—the STEM disciplines. This STEM emphasis is augmented by new priorities for so-called “soft skills” (also known as twenty-first century skills). These skills include creative thinking, the ability to work in teams, and complex digital/quantitative problem-solving skills. In fact, these soft skills have provided the rationale for proposals to connect the arts with the STEM fields. In shorthand, these proposals recommend the shift from STEM to STEAM—science, technology, engineering, *the arts*, and mathematics (<http://steam-notstem.com/>).

In nations prioritizing these STEAM skills and abilities, secondary school completion, while essential, no longer is the prized outcome. Postsecondary education completion with advanced competence is the new priority. This new outcome gives rise to other new designs such as early college high schools and innovative career academies and also to “Cradle-to-Career Pipeline” configurations that unite programs for infants and young children, K-12 schools, and postsecondary education (Lawson, 2013).

A new genus of proposals is developing alongside these new cradle-to-career configurations, which are designed to mass produce graduates with advanced college and university degrees. These proposals focus on competency-markers other than formal school and college degrees, especially employment related knowledge, skills, attitudes and values acquired in non-school settings. Stewart (2015) provides multiple examples, while leaders from the USA-based Lumina foundation (2015) add competency-based taxonomies that are useful to employers and educators alike.

A second and critically important priority for new school designs is framed by the importance of education for citizenship in democratic societies. Democracy fundamentally depends on an educated citizenry (Goodlad, 1994; Harkavy, Hartley, Hodges, & Weeks, 2013). Schooling and education, in this view, are the main drivers for civic engagement in democratic societies.

A third reason stems from the massive migrations of the world’s people. As immigration continues at an unprecedented pace, schools are tasked with another important outcome: The social integration of diverse children and their families. This agenda is driven by varying combinations of concern, fear, anxiety, and aspiration, and it is accompanied by questions regarding the feasibility and desirability of wholesale cultural assimilation in service of the boundary-maintaining nation state. Touraine (2000) raises the most important question is: Can increasingly diverse people live and work together, especially as inequality grows?

The challenges are compounded when divided family systems are commonplace, i.e., some family members are immigrants in a receiving nation, while others remain

in the host, sender nation. When children travel back and forth from the receiving nation to the host, sender nation, educators and schools are impacted profoundly.

Furthermore, the most vulnerable children and families, especially new immigrants, increasingly are clustered in particular places or locales. The new social geography of education and schooling (Kerr, Dyson, & Raffo 2014; Tate, 2012) is developing accordingly, and it emphasizes the challenges, needs, and opportunities associated with growing, dense concentrations of children and families challenged by a terrible trilogy—poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation (Lawson, 2009).

Three such locales pose both and unique shared challenges. Selected urban neighborhoods, inner ring suburbs, and rural communities challenged by this terrible trilogy make it difficult for educators working in stand-alone schools focused exclusively on student academic achievement to succeed sustainably and at scale. Especially in these special places, new models for education and schooling are needed. These new designs, especially the schools featured in this book, need to be dovetailed with the full array of services, social supports, and resources children and families need to enjoy well-being, at the same time enabling the schools that serve them to succeed (Bosdriesz & Van Veen, 1999; Briar-Lawson, Lawson, & Hennon with Jones, 2001; Walraven, Parsons, Van Veen, & Day, 2000).

The fourth reason for new school designs derives from the growing gap in many nations between privileged families and those challenged by social and economic disadvantage. Granting child and family strengths as well as local community assets, place-based social and economic disadvantage challenges schools, families, and communities (broadly defined) to achieve desirable outcomes, especially over extended time periods. Conventional, stand-alone schools in particular encounter persistent, complex challenges when they are surrounded by social and economic disadvantage. Many cannot and do not offer the same educational opportunities available to young people attending comparatively privileged schools located in communities ripe with economic advantages.

When these circumstances prevail, two related questions are inescapable. What is to be done with schools that cannot perform as needed? And, what is to be done with and for the young people who do not fit these conventional schools (Deschenes, Cuban, & Tyack, 2001)?

This fourth reason for new school designs is equity-oriented (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014; Prince et al., 2015; Raffo, 2014). It focused on the relationship between new school designs and both educational and life course development opportunities, together with norms of social inclusion. To paraphrase Rothstein (2004), demography should not and cannot be destiny. In other words, the circumstances surrounding a child's birth should not determine this person's chances, especially so when the quality of a child's schooling and education are concerned. The new school-related design featured in this book responds to the need for innovations in service of educational equity.

## **Beyond One Size Fits All Schools**

Community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools, and multi-service schools are being developed in response to an intractable reality. Conventional, stand-alone schools and many alternative schools do not achieve desirable outcomes at scale with identifiable sub-populations who reside in particular places. After decades of reformist tinkering with the stand-alone school in which educators work alone and focus entirely on the school day, it is apparent that the inherited, twentieth century model for “school” depends on certain conditions to succeed. Many of these conditions are ones that signal social and economic privileges and advantages involving children, families, and communities. Take away these favorable conditions, and result is predictable: The conventional, stand-alone school cannot succeed at scale.

### *Place-based Challenges for Conventional Schools*

More specifically, conventional schools do not achieve desirable outcomes at scale, especially over the long haul, when children, youth, and families struggle to achieve and maintain well-being amid multiple hardships. Racial, ethnic, and linguistic-cultural diversity adds to the challenges when diverse families are highly mobile and challenged by poverty and its correlates.

A visible pattern gives expression to the challenge. The greater the number of vulnerable people, the more they are concentrated in particular places experiencing multiple hardships, and the higher these places’ residential turnover/mobility rates—and particularly student transience rates (Quiroz, Milam-Brooks, & Adams-Romena, 2013; Rumberger, 2015)—the more likely it is that educators working in stand-alone schools will be hard-pressed to achieve desirable results. One reason is that high student and family mobility tracks into high workforce turnover, particularly among teachers and principals. When workforce turnover is high, and so is student turnover, the net result is strangers interacting with strangers. This is not a formula for success.

So, the search for innovative solutions is underway world-wide. Although one solution involves research-supported school improvement models and pedagogical strategies, many important strategies amount to modest reforms that do not alter the basic institutional design for a conventional school. Most of all, these strategies do not tackle social and economic disadvantage. In brief, when “school” is the problem because it is not tailor-made for the changing condition of children, families, and communities, these important reform strategies surely are necessary, but by themselves, they will not improve student, staff, and school outcomes at scale.



## ***Toward New School Designs***

When educators and schools are charged with serving significant numbers of vulnerable children and families who reside in the same place, and conventional stand-alone schools do not yield desirable outcomes at scale, new organizational and institutional designs are needed. These new designs both invite and require the participation of local community leaders, social and health service professionals, policy makers, governmental officials, representative youth leaders and their parents, and higher education faculty and students.

Unfortunately, many educators typically are ill-prepared to address this design challenge and capitalize on the opportunities it presents. This manifest need can be traced back to the shortcomings in university-based schools, colleges, and departments of education (Lawson, [in press](#)), and it also implicates conventional professional development programs that reinforce the status quo (Geelen, Van Veen, & Walraven, 1998; Van Veen, 2006a). Harkavy et al. (2013) neatly summarize the challenge: No change in higher education, no change in schools. In brief, when higher education and particularly schools, colleges, and departments of education in the universities are added to the problem set, systems thinking and systems change frameworks are imperatives.

Systems change work brings daunting complexity because, when the several components in the education system are related, action must be taken on several fronts, simultaneously and synergistically. Questions arise regarding how multiple initiatives will be coordinated and, more poignantly, who will cross conventional organizational and professional boundaries to facilitate this important work. Questions also arise about who will provide public policy leadership.

Confronted with so many challenges, it is relatively easy to become complacent and even adopt a defeatist attitude. Imperatives to act are introduced by an old saying from the USA. “Business-as-usual today promises to yield results-as-usual tomorrow; and results as usual are unacceptable.”

In other words, something new and demonstrably different is needed. Inspired by a call to action in service of educational, social, and economic justice, bold innovation without a comprehensive, justifiable, and feasible framework promises to add to the difficulties and may even cause harm.

## ***Taking Stock of the Questions That Drive New Designs***

Under these conditions, basic design questions matter. Why are leaders from all walks of life investing in new designs for schools? What outcomes are they prioritizing? How do they frame their agendas, and what language systems do they employ? Which aspects of the inherited model of the stand-alone school are leaders striving to maintain and strengthen? Which ones are they modifying and eliminating? What kinds of innovations have leaders designed, implemented and evaluated?

Are these innovations designed and configured to strengthen this inherited model, or are they signature features of new institutional designs for school? Are these innovations harbingers of a new education system, one that encompasses schools, but also transcends them?

Furthermore, what policy innovations are being piloted, and what others are needed? To what extent do these policy innovations entail new connections among once-separate, categorical policy sectors (e.g., educational policy, economic development policy, social policy, health policy)? To what extent are these new school designs and policy innovations transportable from particular places in unique nations to others?

When systems thinking is added, the questions multiply. How do these new designs impact university-based preservice education and professional development programs, especially for school leaders and teachers but extending to other helping professionals? How do they impact university faculty members' and policy researchers' preparation, roles, and responsibilities? In fact, will these new institutional designs for schools become catalysts for new designs for postsecondary education? For early childhood education and birth-to-age three programs? For innovative family support and community development initiatives linked to schools?

All such design-oriented questions serve as indicators of the novel, complex and turbulent environment for the new school-related design featured in this book. Readers need to be forewarned: There are no easy answers. In every nation, the work of developing new school-related designs is an adaptive challenge that requires justifiable, strategic social experimentation.

The new school-related design featured in this book provides an important case in point. Because design, not merely implementation is the priority, this new exemplar is a perfect candidate for the newly-proclaimed science of improvement (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2015; Lewis, 2015), especially the emphasis placed on networked communities of practice and small wins in service of big victories (Weick, 1984).

## **A Boundary-Changing Design for Schools and Their Partner Organizations**

The alternative names for this new design are indicative of its present-day variations. These names include community school, community learning center, multi-service school, and extended service school. All are dynamic, unfinished social experiments. All progressively challenge and expand the inherited, conventional idea of "school."

Above all, this new design departs from an inherited model of the stand-alone school. Although academic learning and achievement remain important outcomes, in this new design several related outcomes are equally important companions. These outcomes include healthy child development and positive youth development,

family support, community development and revitalization, and preparation for democratic citizenship (e.g., Brabeck, Walsh, & Latta, 2003; Crowson, 2001; Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011; Green, 2015; Kerr, Dyson, & Raffo 2014; Lawson, 2010; Patterson & Silverman, 2014; Van Veen, Day, & Walraven, 1998).

To reiterate, this new design presently operates with different names. Multi-service school, extended service school, community school, and community learning center are among the alternatives. Although these different names may recommend separate analyses, these bold innovations belong together because they set the same kinds of new directions, and they share certain core features.

For example, all are defined in part by new working relationships with external constituencies. These constituencies include community health and social service providers, youth development specialists, local neighborhood leaders, governmental officials, business leaders, and community developers. In fact, in some versions of this new design parents and young people (students) are enfranchised as co-designers and joint leaders.

These external constituencies mark the beginning of the end of educators working in relative isolation in stand-alone schools. These new people and the organizations they represent are instrumental in the development of more expansive programs and services. These new programs and services enable adults from all walks of life to exert shared, beneficial influences on young people's out-of-school time and experiences, ideally connecting extra-school benefits to school-related priorities.

Educators working together with parents/caregivers as well as community-based professionals and their programs and services have the potential to change a conventional school's functions, organizational structures, operational procedures, workforce configurations, and ultimately, its core technology—namely, what and how teachers teach and what and how students learn.

In fact, this new design may expand the idea of the core technology. Presently, the core technology is defined narrowly—the instructional core (Elmore, 2004), and it is controlled almost exclusively by teachers. A more expansive conception starts with the idea of instruction that is integrated to social and health service interventions and out-of-school time learning.

Community schools, community learning centers, and other like designs also prioritize technologies for child well-being, family support, and even community development. In short, the new school design featured in this book recommends the plural idea of “core technologies.”

Viewed in this way, these new schools are planned design experiments that maintain a clear, unrelenting focus on academic learning and achievement, but they also are structured to improve youth development, family, and community outcomes. The main idea is essential: These several outcomes are in some ways interdependent. Achieving one depends in part on achieving the others.

Furthermore, as these several well-being outcomes are achieved, demonstrable progress is made in closing two achievement gaps. One is the conventional one involving academic learning and achievement. The other is the more comprehensive one involving child well-being and its impact on persistent and perhaps increasing social and economic inequality.

## Four Properties of New School Designs

To facilitate readers' introduction to the new design featured in this book we begin with four important properties of every new, bold design. Arguably every kind of school design can be evaluated in relation to these four properties.

In no particular order, they are invention, intentionality, causality, and contrast. Together these four features prepare readers for inescapable variety. For example, they enable readers to look for, understand, and explain commonalities, similarities, and differences among alternatives of the same basic design. These alternative features serve as reminders that this new school-related design is an ever-evolving, adaptive social experiment.

### *Invention*

Design starts with the perceived need to invent something different and better—as in the case of conventional schools that do not achieve desirable outcomes. The late Peter Drucker's (1998) question for organizational design, learning and development is especially salient. *If we hadn't inherited it, would we do it this way?* This question introduces the critical, experimentalist posture adopted by a growing cadre of international leaders who have concluded that continuing with schooling in traditional, inherited ways is out-of-step with the needs, problems, and opportunities of twenty-first century, global societies.

To invent is to create. It entails a degree and kind of innovation that contrasts starkly with reform. Reform amounts to modest innovation that is constrained and curtailed by existing school structures and operational processes. In the words of two American researchers, reform amounts to “tinkering toward utopia” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). In contrast, design as creative invention targets dramatic organizational and professional change and perhaps institutional transformation, resulting in fresh visions for and actual versions of “school.”

Leaders for community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools, and multi-service schools possess a special talent—Inventiveness. They need to be studied so that leadership-as-inventiveness can be developed among others.

### *Intentionality*

When intentionality is added to creative invention, design is not self-justifying, nor is it a mere technical-procedural activity. It is a moral obligation and an ethical responsibility in service of societal and global purposes because, where schools are concerned, lives are at stake and so is the future of democratic societies. Intentionality thus adds meaning and significance to the idea of school design as purposeful planning.

## *Causality*

Causality is founded in part on intentionality but it also showcases other important features of new institutional designs for schools. To begin with, the best designs draw attention to connections among two or more forces, factors and actors, and so they provide coherent “big picture depictions” of what otherwise would be disconnected and forgotten phenomena. These same designs also emphasize how changes in one phenomenon influence and may be influenced by changes in the others. Causal designs for new schools thus have a systematic character, and they are enhanced by systems thinking and systems change models (Senge et al., 2012). What is more, a causal school design structure is complete when all such connected forces, factors, and actors are linked to desired outcomes.

## *Contrast*

Last, but not least, contrast illuminates the signature features of alternative versions of the same design. In other words, a new school design’s special and unique features are gained by thoughtful, detailed comparisons. These comparisons start with the search for a particular school design’s commonalities with other kinds of designs. Most of all, these comparisons enable appreciation of a new design’s unique features, ones that differentiate it from alternatives.

Alternatives for the same basic design are founded on different kinds of ideas about causality, and the contrasts between them are informative. For example, alternative strategies for addressing barriers to children’s attendance, engagement, learning, and academic achievement provide important contrasts. These diverse strategies amount to different navigational courses to achieve the different destinations-as-outcomes. Important, consequential choices are implicated in these contrasting strategies, and these choices derive from differences in invention, intentionality, and causation.

Contrasts also reveal that alternative designs vary in their clarity, comprehensiveness, coherence, alignment, apparent feasibility, and transportability. For example some designs clearly are aimed at making conventional schools more effective. In contrast to these “boosters” for conventional schools, other strategies are part grand plans to create new organizational and institutional designs. New institutional designs feature additional functions and accountabilities for schools and new responsibilities for educators, community-based health and social service professionals, parents/caregivers, and young people. Chief among these new responsibilities is joint leadership for the progressive redesign and daily operations of newly-configured schools.

All in all, these contrasts enable detailed or nuanced understanding, including the extent to which a particular design is place-based and context-specific. This understanding facilitates start-up, replication, scale-up, and scale-out, i.e., transporting a new design from one nation to one or more others.

Owing to this growing understanding, leaders increasingly caution against the idea of wholesale, “cookie cutter” replication. Instead they recommend selective scale-up. The reminder here is that imminent dangers accompany hasty decisions to imitate and transport others’ designs.

For example, when populations’ uniqueness and the importance of the local context are ignored, the predictable results extended beyond failed replication experiments. They often include wasted resources, disillusioned supporters, and even unintentional harm (Allen-Scott, Hatfield, & McIntyre, 2014). Scale-up and scale-out research provides an important safeguard and guide, especially so when place-based poverty, social exclusion and social isolation must be addressed.

## **The International Context: A Summary View of the Research on School and Community Relationships in Challenging Places**

Alternative versions of this new school-related design are a keynote feature, and different names for the schools featured in this book provide a case in point. However, community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools, and multi-services schools are founded on an important commonality. All are developed in response to growing recognition of the strong influence of social and economic disadvantage outside of schools on what schools are able to accomplish. Three basic design questions signal the design-related challenges.

- Can schools alone compensate for, and help address, multiple kinds of disadvantage, or are there needs for joint community development models and strategies?
- Can educators and other helping professionals eschew deficit-based strategies and language and progressively substitute strengths-based, solution-focused, aspiration-oriented, and culturally competent strategies and language?
- Has the time arrived to question the assumption that “professionals always know best” and emphasize and institutionalize new roles, relationships, and responsibilities for young people, their parents and caregivers, and local community leaders in new school and community agency designs?

### ***The Social Geography for the New School Design***

Dyson and Kerr (2012) completed an expansive review of research in the special field of school-community relations. They focused on schools located in places with multiple challenges and economic disadvantages. Consistent with the aforementioned emphasis on urban, inner ring suburban, and rural places, Dyson and Kerr’s vantage point was instructive. Their review was framed by a perspective increas-

ingly known as “the social geography” of school-community relations (Kerr et al., 2014; Sampson, 2012; Tate, 2012).

This perspective is geographic because it emphasizes places, i.e., the uniqueness of particular communities. However, communities are more than a set of coordinates on a map. Places also are social because schools, families, communities and their relations are constantly changing as a result of what local residents prioritize and do and also because of public policies and macro-level societal changes.

So, when researchers like Dyson and Kerr (2012) proceed with a social-geographic framework, they gain access to a dual perspective. On the one hand, they are positioned to analyze how macro-level societal and public policy changes influence particular place-based communities, schools, and their relations. At the same time, these researchers are able to shift from social analysis to social action.

Two types of social action are noteworthy. Researchers proceeding with what amounts to an “inside-out perspective” are able to investigate how a school’s or an entire school system’s planned changes and specialized interventions may extend beyond schools to benefit their surrounding local communities. Alternatively, researchers proceeding with an “outside-in perspective” investigate how local residents exert influence and produce important changes in the design, organization, content, and conduct of local schools.

The Dyson and Kerr (2012) review yielded eight categories of innovation. Modified slightly and not in rank order, they are: (1) Schools provide additional services (particularly health and social services) and offer facilities for local residents’ use; (2) Schools strive to develop communities’ social and civic capacity (e.g., residents’ ability to organize and mobilize for collective action); (3) Schools support the development of community infrastructures (e.g., housing, economic development); (4) Schools develop community-responsive curricula and place-based pedagogy; (5) Community members become involved in school governance (e.g., local site-based decision-making councils with the authority to hire and replace educators); (6) Outside-in community organizing is the priority with a special interest in school equity and educational justice; (7) New models for “school” are developed (e.g., charter schools, magnet schools, alternative schools for dropout prevention and recovery), and parents are provided what amounts to a consumer choice in a competitive school market; and (8) New designs are advanced for community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended schools—the kinds of schools featured in this book—and with special interest in whether and how they chart a course toward institutional transformation facilitated by public policy innovation (See also Dyson 2011).

A ninth alternative also merits consideration. It is to develop supportive communities for children, complete with whole-community design principles and strategies (e.g., Kimbrough-Melton & Melton, 2015). In shorthand, the aim is to create “Children’s Zones” (Dyson & Kerr, 2013).

Whether broad or narrower, this action-oriented perspective provides timely opportunities to examine three important priorities. One involves the overall aim for both inside-out and outside-in initiatives. Is the aim to support and strengthen

existing institutions, especially schools? Or is the aim to progressively transform them, ultimately resulting in new institutional designs (see also Lawson, 2013)?

The second priority shifts the examining lens to these initiative's leaders and other key actors. To what extent are these initiatives more or less restricted to highly educated professionals, elected governmental officials, and policy officials? Put differently, are these initiatives another iteration of "professionals know best what persons challenged by place-based disadvantage want and need;" and do professionals proceed with thinly veiled, deficit-based thinking and language? Or, are these local innovations co-designed and implemented by resident leaders who collaborate with professionals, elected officials, and policy leaders to exercise "relational power" (Warren, 2005)?

The third priority is the public policy context; and with special interest in two modal tendencies. One is how existing and emergent policies facilitate, constrain, and impede the progressive design, implementation, continuous improvement, sustainability, and scale-up of innovative school and community designs. Overall this regulatory policy tendency can be viewed as top-down and compliance-oriented.

The other policy tendency can be called "bottom-up." Here, the kinds of bold school-community designs prioritized in this book are akin to agricultural research and development initiatives for innovative plants. Policy leaders start by providing "seed monies" to get them started, and then these innovations are cultivated carefully over several years. Once these initiatives have matured, they are harvested for the policy learning and innovation—and with a sense of urgency founded on shared recognition that conventional, stand-alone schools do not and will not yield desirable results at scale.

## **The Defining Features of This New School-Related Design**

Essentially this new design in its current configuration features five core components: Health services, social services, parent and family engagement strategies, positive youth development priorities and out-of-school time learning. While each is an important addition to a conventional school, they are not separate enhancements. The new design begins to realize its potential when they are firmly connected to each other and also when a major shift occurs. *These five core components are firmly connected to teachers' instructional strategies and learning technologies in classrooms.*

Clearly, this new design is unavoidably complex because it prioritizes many innovations and emphasizes synergistic relationships among them. It requires cross-boundary leadership and coordination, particularly between schools, community agencies, and neighborhood organizations. Partnerships formed among organizations thus are one key feature, and collaborative teams are another. School-community policy councils and governance structures also are mainstays. Salient details are provided in several of this book's chapters.



## Delimitations: Contrasting Designs

A solid, useful definition starts with the core or defining features and extends to important delimitations and boundaries. In service of clarity, coherence, and advocacy for the new design presented in this book, we have excluded three such designs. Together they indicate what our new school design is not.

To begin with, our new school design is not the same as community collaboration models for school improvement (e.g., Baum, 2003; Mediratta, Shah, & McAlister, 2009; Shirley, 1997, 2002; Warren, 2014). Many of these community collaboration models have been pioneered in the United States. They entail popular mobilizations of everyday people for collective action in service of school-related, social and economic justice. Organizers typically proceed with political goals, including school personnel changes, more local decision-making power and authority regarding curricula and instruction, school and community safety, and policy innovations.

Granting the importance of all such organizing processes as well as the organizers' achievements, one goal rules them out. Many such community collaboration models appear to leave conventional schools more or less intact. In other words, the grand question is how to effect the improvements needed for conventional schools to serve every kind of student population in particular local communities and to enable local community leaders to gain power and authority over school decision-making. Viewed in this way, community collaboration models are political mobilizations that provide families and local leaders with voice, choice, and political leverage.

We also have excluded the growing number of specialized designs for particular kinds of school-related partnerships (e.g., Auerbach, 2012; Epstein, 2011; Warren, 2005). These partnerships tend to be developed sequentially (i.e., one at a time), and they usually prioritize new school relationships with a targeted external constituency in order to achieve a specialized outcome. These constituencies often start with parents and families, and they extend to neighborhood organizations, community agencies, businesses, and higher education.

The goals or outcomes vary as a function of the school's "partner." For example, so-called family partnerships target improved parent involvement. Partnerships with businesses prioritize school-to-work and school-and-work programs as well as college and career readiness. Partnerships with child-serving community agencies are formed to facilitate positive youth development during out-of-school time.

We commend all such partnership designs, but with the proviso that they presently fall short of the complex school-related design featured in this book. Risking a cynical view, many such partnerships continue a school-centered tradition of "community engagement" in which educational leaders seek ratification of decisions they already have made, albeit dressed up in the language of partnership.

The third exclusion marks a kind of grey zone amid cloudy circumstances. We have excluded frameworks for comprehensive systems of learning supports because they are universal designs for all manner of schools, and they prioritize several unique

components (Adelman & Taylor, 2005; Van Veen, 2002, 2012). This delimitation risks confusing readers because the design presented in this book includes a core feature found in many universal access schools—services for students. Indeed, this service component is announced in the names for these new school designs (e.g., multi-service school, extended service school, full-service community school). Suffice it to say for now that the new school design differs from those for comprehensive learning support systems because this design encompasses more than conventional student services. For example, this new design also is framed as a support for teachers, principals (head teachers), and student support professionals.

When we rule out these three alternatives and seemingly ignore other possibilities, we are not discounting their value. Nor are we claiming that, in comparison to the particular design featured in this book, these other alternatives are somehow inferior. To the contrary, we hold the view that a standardized, universal model of and for “school” no longer is tenable, and so we support justifiable school design innovation and experimentation world-wide. The main idea is to serve readers by defining what the new school-related design is, while also indicating what it is not. Only then can readers make informed choices.

## **From Designs on the Drawing Board to Improved Policy and Practice with a Sense of Urgency**

The full realization of the enormous potential of the new school-related design featured in this book, together with its several alternative versions, hinges on enhanced understanding and deeper appreciation developed among a broad array of leaders and key stakeholders. Educators’ readiness, receptivity, and competence top the list, and policy leaders are a close second.

But there is more. In contrast to conventional school improvement and educational policy, the priority list of stakeholders needing enhanced readiness, receptivity, competence, and capacity extends broadly to the full range of helping professionals with responsibilities for children, youth, families, neighborhoods and communities. This new school-related design moves them from interested and involved constituencies who are consulted periodically by school leaders to essential colleagues whose work is instrumental in the achievement of desired outcomes. Higher education faculty members, especially education faculty, also are an essential constituency, and we provide salient details in the last chapter.

School-community-family-higher education relationships and interactions are implicated here, and so are norms and operational processes for reciprocity, mutual supports, and resource exchanges among educators, community helping professionals, parents, and community leaders. The path-breaking idea is noteworthy, and it was introduced earlier. *A range of desirable outcomes once viewed as separate are in fact interdependent.*

For example, as student and school outcomes improve, so do child, family, neighborhood and community outcomes. As educators’ efficacy and resilience

increase, so do community helping professionals', community leaders', and parents'. As all such changes occur, university preservice education programs and faculty research agendas follow suit. Such is the logic of these new school-related designs with their enormous potential, manifest progress markers, and particular success stories.

However, this new school-related design brings formidable challenges, involves manifest risks, requires new net resources, necessitates professional development and policy learning, and promises to take a considerable amount of precious time. None of this is easy, and it requires policy entrepreneurs (Mintrom & Norman, 2009) who know how to facilitate policy innovation in school systems, community agencies, and governments (Van Veen, 2006a, 2006b). Understandably all time-consuming, inescapable needs and demands can dampen enthusiasm and temper a sense of urgency.

Meanwhile, vulnerable children and youth world-wide are crying out for attention, especially young people whose lives end prematurely and needlessly and others who succumb to the lures of the shadow economy of the streets and end up in detention centers and prisons. In a growing number of places, a growing sense of urgency is evident, and it compels collective action. Three questions are especially important:

- What can be done to speed up the development and continuous improvement of these new school related designs, including taking them to scale as needed and warranted?
- How might the innovation-related risks be reduced at the same time that the costs of innovation-related flaws and errors prevented?
- What other innovations are needed to reduce and prevent young people's risk factors as they are provided with opportunity structures and pathways that enable them to realize their human potential and achieve their aspirations?

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# Part I

## Introduction to Part I

Building on the overview provided in the introduction, the first three chapters are structured to accomplish three goals. The first goal is to introduce this new school-related design's rationale, striving to emphasize its' international relevance. In fact, an internationally-based rationale is a defining feature of this new school-related design. Chapter 2 presents it.

The second goal is to identify and describe briefly the immediate and direct connections between the needs, problems, and opportunities identified in this rationale and this new school-related design's five core components. Chapter 3 is structured to achieve this goal.

The third goal is to provide analytical and practical details regarding what this new design requires and entails. These details include the unprecedented complexity this new design brings as well as the coordinative mechanisms needed to make it manageable. Chapter 4 is structured to make progress toward this goal. All of the chapters in Part II add salient details.

Newcomers to this work risk being overwhelmed by an unavoidable combination of complexity and bold innovations. This reaction of being overwhelmed is predictable and understandable because world-wide the idea of what a school is, does, and can be expected to accomplish is firmly entrenched, which means that changing this design is very challenging work and requires considerable inventiveness.

Educators in particular tend to be challenged because they are attracted to their chosen profession because they have an affinity for this dominant image of a school. Indeed, many are devoted to it because it enabled them to be successful. Teachers in particular have long been attracted to their chosen profession because they relish the idea of working alone with their own students. Many are protective of traditional school designs, and they seek to conserve the autonomy they enjoy when the classroom door closes.

No one, least of all teachers, school leaders and educational policy makers, welcomes bad news. However, the fact is that the majority of stand-alone, conventional schools in particular locales serving large, vulnerable student populations will not be wholly successful at scale. The greater the social and economic disadvantage in

particular locales, the more challenging it becomes to sustainably achieve desired academic outcomes.

Two undesirable results follow from this pattern. Growing student sub-populations are denied equitable opportunities for teaching, learning, and overall healthy development, ultimately extending to their employment opportunities and well-being as adults. More than a problem for a single generation, inter-generational patterns present multiple challenges, all of which constrain initiatives for equitable, sustainable social and economic development.

Especially in today's accountability-rich educational policy environment, educators working in poverty-challenged schools are being blamed for sub-optimal student and school performance profiles, even though many of the social determinants for sub-optimal performance reside outside educators' and schools' spheres of influence and control. No wonder workforce turnover, particularly among teachers, is an urgent policy priority in several nations.

The three chapters in this first part provide salient details about this new policy and practice framework. It provides what amounts to "high altitude views" of the work underway world-wide. These chapters are jam-packed with new ideas and complex relationships.

With these features in mind, readers may wish to adopt two strategies. Delimit your reading to just one or two sections of each chapter. Spend some time thinking about each section before proceeding to the next one.

Alternatively, by-pass the first three chapters and proceed immediately to one or more of the Chapters in Part II. These several chapters provide details about particular exemplars that have been implemented in diverse parts of the world. Because all are works in progress, authors' descriptions of their respective research and developmental journeys may be easier to understand and appreciate. Readers opting for this second alternative can return later to the three chapters in this first part.



## Chapter 2

# A Shared Rationale for New School Designs with Place-Based Differences

Hal A. Lawson and Dolf van Veen

**Abstract** To fully appreciate the new policy and practice directions offered by community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools, it is best to view them as complex interventions; or more simply, as multi-faceted solutions for complicated needs and problems, which are rooted in particular places or locales. These complicated needs and problems, together with the search for local assets and opportunities, introduce a shared rationale for this new school-related design. This chapter introduces this rationale. Chief among these complicated needs and problems are concentrated poverty and overall disadvantage; high levels of family diversity and instability; the formidable challenges of social inclusion and social integration amid widespread perceptions of, and practices associated with, social exclusion; and the difficulty in attracting and retaining adequately prepared educators because they tend to be blamed when results are sub-optimal. These needs and problems often co-occur and nest in each other such that addressing one entails addressing one or more of the others. A full appreciation of the uniqueness and import of community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools starts with this shared rationale, setting the stage for succeeding chapters.

**Keywords** Poverty • Social exclusion • Social and economic disadvantage • Immigrant families • Educational equity • Social integration • Social geography • Community school • At-risk youths

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A significant institutional change involving the nearly-universal model for “school” is underway world-wide, albeit differentially and with predictable stops, re-starts, and adjustments in diverse regional, national, provincial, state, and local contexts. As with all manner of institutional changes, a design metaphor is instructive and useful. Like comparisons of alternative architectures for homes and apartments, inspections and evaluations of alternatives for “school” can focus on the essential elements of their respective designs.

The four design features presented in the Introduction—inventiveness, intentionality, causality and contrast—facilitate this special kind of planning and analysis. Together they facilitate comparative evaluations of alternative exemplars known as community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools and multi-service schools. These schools’ shared aim, whether explicit or implicit, is a special feature. All aim to ensure that every child has equitable access to high quality schooling and education. In many nations, *inclusion* is the concept employed to describe this access (Florian & Spratt, 2013; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Inclusion in school extends to broad access to salient opportunity structures and pathways toward productive citizenship, participation in the economy, social integration, and adult well-being. Viewed in this way, these schools are structured to improve child-well-being and, over the long haul, reduce social and economic inequality.

Building on this shared aim, this chapter provides useful, albeit still-evolving definitions. The best definitions have two important features. They identify and describe the core or defining features of a phenomenon, which identify and describe what it is. They also identify contrasting features and alternative models, which indicate what a particular school-related design is not.

This latter component enables analyses to be delimited. In other words, possible nominees for inclusion can be ruled out because their respective differences are ones of kind, not merely degree. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to such a two component definition for this new school-related design.

## **Getting Started: A School Improvement Configuration or a New Kind of Institution?**

This new design has been developed in some places as a more expansive school with several new functions as well as additional programs, and services. Despite a new name for the school (e.g., community school, community learning center), early in the development of this new design the overall impetus is improvement of conventional schools. Educational policy, especially weighty and demanding external accountability requirements, are instrumental in this reformist framework.

In other places, this new design progressively transforms “school.” Here, the aim is to create a new kind of child, family, and community-serving institution, both in

response to and in anticipation of the rapidly changing characteristics and needs of twenty-first century global societies.

This new design operates under different names even in the same nation, province and state. The names include multi-service school (e.g., Van Veen, 2001, 2006a, 2006b; Van Veen, Day, & Walraven, 1998; Warren, 2005), extended-service school and full-service school (e.g., Dryfoos, 1994), community school (Blank, Jacobson, & Melaville, 2012; Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011; Dryfoos, Quinn, & Barkin, 2005; Mendez, 2011), full-service, community school (e.g., Dryfoos & McGuire 2002; Valli, Stefanski & Jacobson, 2014), community learning center (e.g., Langevin & Lamarre, Chap. 7, this book; Parsons, 1999), all-day school (Fisher & Klieme, 2013; Mangold & Messerli, 2005), and university-assisted community school (Harkavy et al., 2013; Lawson, 2010). There are yet other names.

Beyond the manifest differences in names, operational definitions also vary. Five examples are instructive because each emphasizes special priorities that are important to leaders in particular places. Look for commonalties and similarities in these definitions, but also contemplate the implementation challenges.

### ***A School-Related Definition***

Blank, Melaville, & Shaw (2003) describe the five core features of community schools. In no particular order: (1) The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students. (2) Students are motivated and engaged in learning—both in school and in community settings, during and after school. (3) The basic physical, mental, and emotional needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed. (4) There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families and school staff. (5) Community engagement, together with school efforts, promote a school climate that is safe, supportive and respectful and that connects students to a broader learning community.

Clearly, this definition presents a community school as a different way to structure and deliver schooling in particular places. These places are alike in that their leaders recognize needs for a more comprehensive approach than the one provided by conventional, stand-alone schools.

### **The Children's Aid Society Definition**

Leaders for New York City's Children's Aid Society (Mendez, Quinn et al. Chap. 9, in this book) define community schools *as a strategy* for organizing school and community resources to help students succeed and thrive. Viewed in this way,

a Children's Aid community school is characterized by four main features. These features are extended services, extended hours, expanded relationships, and a coherent strategy for having these three features come together in support of children's academic learning and overall school success.

This definition calls attention to several factors: the centrality of school-community partnerships; the intentionality of the partners in organizing their human and financial resources; and a clear orientation toward a shared set of results. In this vision, partners are an important resource in promoting school and student success, and all partners are united by core values.

### ***A Community Learning Center Definition***

Langevin and Lamarre (Chap. 7, this book) present a community learning center (CLC) as both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and the larger community. More than a conventional school, a CLC brings new mandates to schools. CLCs are structured to achieve a broad range of goals, including youth development, lifelong learning, community engagement, and family support. More concretely, their specially-designed CLCs are structured to foster improved school performance in young people; promote the language, culture and vitality of the Anglophone community in the French-dominant culture of Montreal, Canada; encourage a reciprocal relation between the schools and their communities; and renew and broaden the role of the school to become centers of lifelong learning. Clearly, CLCs encompass schools, but their overall design transforms what a stand-alone conventional school is structured to prioritize and able to accomplish.

### ***A Definition Featuring Design Principles***

Potapchuk (2013, p. 5) provides an alternative definition, which features the core principles for this new school design. Although community schools always are somewhat unique at any given point in time because they are tailor-made for particular places, Potapchuk (2013) derived five core principles from the urban community schools he studied. These principles are: (1) Develop a shared vision with accountability for results; (2) Hold high expectations for everyone; (3) Respect diversity; (4) Marshall assets of the entire community; and (5) Prioritize local decision-making.

## ***The Community School Strategy***

Writing on the behalf of the American national coalition for community schools, Melaville, Jacobson, and Blank (2011) provide six core principles for community school design and development: (1) Shared vision and accountability for results; (2) Strong partnerships; (3) High expectations for everyone; (4) Building on community strengths; (5) Respect for diversity; and (6) Local decision-making in response to special place-based and circumstantial needs and priorities (p. 3). Together these principles serve as the foundation for an expansive, compelling vision and conceptualization based on citizen participation in collective action mobilizations on the behalf of children. The overall premise is that “every child and every school is capable of excellence given the right conditions for learning” (Melaville et al., p. 5).

In addition to health and social service agencies and youth development priorities, the Melaville et al. (2011) strategy includes housing, employment, transportation, public safety and municipal services. Community schools thus are place-based hubs for multiple partnerships that connect schools with families, community leaders, and relevant community organizations. They are special kinds of schools, characterized by several moving parts, which enable them to provide “an integrated focus on academics, youth development, family support, health and social services, and community development” (p. 9). What is more, a community school curriculum “emphasizes real-world learning through community problem-solving and service,” a contribution made possible by an expansive school calendar and by explicit goals for contributions to the local community (p. 9).

## **Beyond the Names and Definitions to a Shared Rationale**

Mindful of the above-emphasized differences in names, definitions, and school-related strategies and priorities we begin with a generalizable rationale. We believe that this rationale is as important as any exemplar’s present features. After all, nearly every new model for schooling is an adaptive, social experiment, alternatively called “a work in progress.” All such new models earn this status because their leaders are striving to meet urgent needs, solve pressing social problems, and capitalize on timely opportunities. Their shared rationale illuminates them and helps to explain the logic of their leaders’ respective efforts.

The rationale for these new school designs also is rooted in two pragmatic realities. One is the persistent inability of conventional, stand-alone schools to achieve desirable outcomes with identifiable sub-populations in particular places. In other words, leaders launch these new designs because of practical necessities. Their concern for children, youth, families and communities compels them to design alternative versions of “school.”

The other reality pertains to what schools, community agencies, and other partner entities must do in order to succeed with identifiable sub-populations in particular places. The importance of place—the social geography of schooling and education (Kerr et al., 2014; Tate, 2012)—is a special priority. So, for example, it matters if this new design targets an isolated rural community. Such a rural design will be tailored to the particularities of this special context, albeit with some of the same design features manifest in selected inner ring suburbs and poverty-challenged urban communities.

How, then, can leaders and planners come to grips with the tension between place-based tailoring and important commonalities in this new school-related design? The rationale for community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools and multi-service schools is an important, solid place to begin.

### *Growing International Convergence*

The rationale for this new school-related design frames it as an alternative model for meeting emergent needs, addressing problems, building on strengths, and capitalizing on opportunities to achieve better outcomes. “Better outcomes” and “improved outcomes” are a priority because sub-optimal student outcomes have become an inescapable reality in many nations. School dropouts, also called early school leavers, are a special priority because the failure to succeed in and complete school is linked to a range of undesirable outcomes (Cuervo, Barakat, & Turnbull, 2015; Dupéré, Leventhal, Dion, Crosnoe, Archambault, & Janosz, 2015; Freeman & Simonsen, 2015; Lawson 2009). Examples include long-term unemployment, depression, substance abuse, crime and delinquency, and homelessness.

Overall, the stubborn gap between desirable outcomes and actual results has compelled governmental officials, policy leaders, researchers, and education professionals to ask probing questions. Increasingly, these questions penetrate to the defining features of the inherited school designs. For example, what may have gone wrong? How have fast-changing societal circumstances rendered conventional schools less effective? What needs to be done differently and better? What kinds of social innovation are needed, and who will take charge of them? Why should civic leaders from all walks of life become concerned and perhaps alarmed? Is this solely “a school problem?” Or, do we need a more expansive conceptualization of the problem, one that extends to community economic and social development?

## ***Blaming Educators Instead of Examining Schooling and Place-Based Challenges***

These questions and others they implicate are being asked and addressed in some form world-wide. Some such interrogations extend to the responsibilities and accountabilities of professional educators. Unfortunately, educators in some places are being blamed for the gap between desirable child and school outcomes and actual results.

One policy response follows suit. It is to tighten the accountability grip on educators and their schools. The core assumption for this response is that conventional stand-alone schools, most of which are twentieth century inheritances, are not the problem. The main problem resides in educators' inability or refusal to adhere to school policy mandates and recommendations such as adopting and emphasizing recommended curricula and implemented scripted pedagogical protocols. These perceived problems, needs, and limitations may extend to university-based, preservice education programs, including tough questions about education professors' preparation, orientations and goals, competencies, and manifest needs for faculty development, curricular guidance, and performance evaluations.

Granting needs for improvement in all such educator preparation and performance, when the focus is limited to school district leaders, principals, teachers, and student support professionals, this approach amounts to blaming the victim. It deflects attention from the limitations of an inherited school design for stand-alone schools as narrowly focused academic institutions. It bypasses an important contextual feature—namely, this traditional design was developed for a different time with societal conditions that are disappearing. When the conditions needed for these inherited schools to be effective have vanished, there is little to be gained and much to be lost with punitive educational policies and practices that do not and cannot alter the conditions that undermine conventional schooling.

When conditions have changed permanently, while schools remain the same, the result is what Henry (1963) called a cultural lag. Absent good reasons to believe that new societal circumstances will somehow vanish and “the good old days” will magically return, the obvious strategy is to start with this gap, examine these changing conditions, and use the findings in the redesign of schools.

Although these changing conditions have unique local features, increasingly they are international phenomena. Individually and together they comprise a shared rationale for the new school-related design featured in this book. The importance of this rationale cannot be over-emphasized because it helps to explain the new school-related design. Put differently, the new school-related design-as-solution cannot be fully appreciated without the a companion understanding of the new conditions—and particularly the needs and problems—that have caused leaders to abandon the stand-alone school and progressively design community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools.

## **Eight Commonalties in the Rationale for New School Designs**

Mindful of nation-specific differences, eight international commonalties provide the shared rationale for this new school-related design. These components are: Diverse people on the move; concentrated disadvantage; a terrible trilogy of poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation; the fierce competition for young people's attention, time, and engagement; social responsibility founded on a moral imperative; the limitations of conventional school improvement planning; a three part planning framework for new designs; and the opportunities and challenges accompanying diverse, fast-changing policy environments. While each component is important, readers are reminded that the whole they comprise is greater than the sum of its parts.

### ***Diverse People on the Move***

Unprecedented, massive migrations of racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse people pose a formidable challenge. The rationale for new school-related designs is being developed in response. Three migration patterns are especially salient. All are signature features of the multi-faceted process of globalization (Lawson, 2011).

Arguably the obvious one is the unprecedented movement of people from one nation to another; and with special interest in the impacts on the cities that serve as transportation hubs. The other is intra-nation movement from rural areas to cities. A third varies by nation, province and state; it involves an influx of new residents in rural areas.

Over time, these three migration patterns have convergent effects. Together they have joint impacts on the world's cities, the suburbs that ring them, and rural areas. Rural areas have dual challenges: Many continue to lose valuable people, especially employable parents and their children, while newcomer families often are culturally diverse and vulnerable.

These migrations have profound impacts on schools. In fact, the topic merits special books. Suffice it to say that school systems charged with the social integration of diverse students, perhaps extending to grand plans for wholesale cultural assimilation that results in citizenship, are stopped short when a steady influx of new students from diverse parts of the world, with their respective language systems and cultural practices, transforms these schools into miniature versions of the United Nations. For example, Amsterdam (The Netherlands) is home to people representing 180 nationalities, which poses special challenges and presents opportunities for innovation for schools and public sector services overall.

The challenges mount when family systems are divided, i.e., one parent and some children remain in the host or sender nation while the other parent with accompanying children arrive at the schoolhouse doors. For example, conventional parent involvement was not designed for these circumstances (Alameda-Lawson,



Lawson, & Lawson, 2013; Lawson, Alameda-Lawson, Lawson, Briar-Lawson, & Wilcox, 2014).

Significantly, strategies for school-parent relationships have been founded on the assumption that families either are, or aspire to be, socially integrated in the school and also in the surrounding community. In contrast, some of today's immigrant adults, especially parents with diverse religious beliefs, may actively resist social integration, cultural assimilation, and local civic engagement. In fact, some persons, perhaps many people in particular places, have a decidedly non-local orientation called long-distance nationalism and absentee patriotism (Lawson, 2011). Their identities, affinities, and loyalties are to their respective host (sender) nations, and they remain connected using twenty-first century communications technologies.

Two immediate consequences are noteworthy, and they are part of the growing rationale for alternative school-related designs. One is an apparent paradox. Some diverse newcomers take advantage of schools and other public services at the same time they eschew and resist efforts directed at social integration, cultural assimilation, civic engagement, and citizenship. Reflecting this orientation, they opt for work permits and short-term visas in lieu of formal citizenship applications.

The other consequence stems from the first. It is the manifest threat posed to the democracies when entire family systems reject the twin ideas of civic engagement and social integration. This resistance threatens schools' essential roles in preparing students for democratic citizenship founded on local civic engagement and a willingness to join friends and neighbors in local collective action initiatives. Terrorism, manifested in violent acts, is the epitome of this threat. The French sociologist, Alain Touraine (2000) anticipated these developments and the possible adverse consequences when he posed a central question. *Can we live together?*

Schools surely are not the only answer to this question, but they are essential to any effective solution. Unfortunately, educators have not been prepared for this nexus of novel circumstances or for the manifold challenges of increasing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

For example, when diverse people migrate to the same places, over time they intermingle. One result is inter-cultural marriages, resulting in succeeding generations of children who come to the schoolhouse doors with new kinds of hybrid cultures. Called "polyculturalism" in some circles and "creolization" in others (Lawson, 2011) these new cultural hybrids pose challenges to conventional pedagogies known variously as culturally-sensitive, culturally-responsive, and culturally competent.

Unfortunately, many of these pedagogies, like service delivery strategies implemented by community health and social service professionals, are based on the idea of culture as a unitary concept. Familiar descriptors such as culturally-sensitive, culturally-congruent, culturally-responsive, and culturally-competent usually are grounded in just one racial-ethnic identity and tradition. Already it is apparent that educators need help because many have not been prepared for the challenges accompanying culturally-competent, differentiated instruction (Gay, 2010).

At the same time, it is apparent that conventional schools-as-organizations have not been designed to address twenty-first century diversity in all of its forms.

In other words, stand-alone schools in which educators work alone inside the walls and focus primarily on the school day are not designed to respond to the challenges and capitalize on the timely opportunities accompanying this growing ethnic and cultural diversity. This problem is exacerbated when the education and social-health services workforces are not representative of the culturally diverse student and family populations needing to be served (Grissom, Kern, & Rodriguez, 2015).

The rationale for new the school-related design featured in this book is being developed accordingly. New professional, organizational and institutional designs are needed in response to and in anticipation of diverse people on the move in unprecedented numbers, especially the most vulnerable ones. What is more, dense concentrations of vulnerable people present formidable challenges, all of which can be reframed as needs, incentives and opportunities for school-related innovation.

### ***Addressing Concentrated Disadvantage with Strengths-Based Language***

To take a rough-cut view, the above-mentioned migrations involve two groups of people. Highly educated and employable people constitute one group. They often bring discretionary money and other attendant privileges, and they tend to settle and work in places where other residents also enjoy privileges. Conventional schools tend to be effective.

The other group arrives without a lot of money, and its members do not have extensive educational backgrounds and formal credentials. In comparison to the first group, they bring different employment histories, and their job opportunities tend to be limited to low-skill, low income positions, including some known as “3-D”—dangerous, dirty, and demeaning. Granting these people’s strengths and aspirations, they are vulnerable when they arrive, and they confront more vulnerability in their immediate future.

Migrating people’s individual and collective challenges are compounded when they congregate and settle in particular urban places—called “arrival cities” by some researchers (Alameda-Lawson et al., 2013; Saunders, 2010). When new immigrants’ possible reluctance and resistance toward social integration, cultural assimilation, civic engagement, and citizenship is added to place-based challenges, one result is a set of changing circumstances that are not conducive to conventional schools and other, traditionally-structured child and family-serving institutions. Just as gardens contaminated by pollutants and fouled by bad weather are not conducive to healthy plant growth, these residential areas are not conducive to family support and healthy child development because individuals and families do not join forces to care for each other (Sampson, 2012; Tate, 2012).

In fact, stressed, vulnerable, isolated, and divided families are associated with child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health problems, and pervasive employment challenges. These several challenges track into others, especially homeless youth and families (Chamberlain & Mackenzie, 1998).

But there is more to this part of the rationale. It is noteworthy that, prior to this recent period of mass migration, many of the world's cities, inner ring suburbs, and rural communities already were home to vulnerable populations, and they were congregated in particular places. In the main, these populations were native-born citizens. A growing number of them had migrated from rural areas to the cities, later they moved again to urbanized, inner ring suburbs.

Especially in the so-called advanced, industrial democracies, these people and their respective locales have been hit hard by rapid deindustrialization. When industries have closed shop and moved to other nations with lower labor costs and fewer regulations, local communities have had to confront declining employment opportunities and diminishing monetary resources. Predictably, employable adults, especially parents with children, have responded to these changes. Many have left deindustrialized urban neighborhoods. They have moved to places offering employment.

As large numbers of parents have moved their entire families and enrolled their children in faraway schools, the schools that were left behind have experienced adverse impacts. These impacts are especially likely when the percentage of students deemed "vulnerable" increases at the same time that funding based on the total number of students is reduced.

When these circumstances prevail, appropriate language is needed. Person-blame and deficit-oriented attributions need to be avoided and prevented. The same can be said of unflattering stigmas and inaccurate stereotypes (Opatow, 1990).

The rationale and recommended language for new school-related designs are being developed and disseminated accordingly. For example, every school and its surrounding place offer distinctive assets, and every population segment has distinctive strengths, ambitions, and aspirations. In all such cases, it is important to avoid pathological thinking, together with deficit-based language and intervention strategies (Valencia, 1997).

To claim that people and places have unmet, urgent needs is timely and important. However, there is little to be gained and much to be lost by claiming that particular places are inherently deficient, or that the people who reside there, like broken furniture, need to be fixed (Dyson & Kerr, 2012).

People are *vulnerable* when the conditions needed for individual and family well-being and community vitality are absent. Absent these conditions, and in contrast to populations characterized as privileged, vulnerable people live and work under conditions of comparative disadvantage.

For example, children living under stressful, challenging circumstance are vulnerable to a wide variety of adverse childhood experiences such as abuse and neglect, domestic violence, violent crimes, homelessness, and both housing and food insecurities. Problematic to every aspect of child development in the here-and-now, adverse childhood experiences are instrumental in school-related needs and problems such as dropping out (Dupéré et al., 2015). More than a school problem, these experiences impact neighborhoods and community agencies (Blodgett, 2015), and they also have widespread and long-lasting effects (e.g., Brookings Center for Children and Families, 2015; Cuervo et al., 2015; Tomer, 2014). In fact, adults who

continue to experience the traumatic effects of adverse childhood experiences may transmit the same problems and behaviors to their own children.

Thus, alongside vulnerable, “disadvantage” is the second recommended descriptor for challenging places. The growing concentration of vulnerable people—both new immigrants and native born citizens—in particular places, which are challenged by multiple, interrelated hardships, is disadvantageous. Although the American author James Garbarino over-stated the problem, glossed over family strengths and assets, and underestimated the sense of belonging that young people develop to the most challenging places (Cuervo et al., 2015), the headliner title for his book is compelling. There are indeed special challenges associated with “raising children in socially toxic environments” (Garbarino, 1995), and these challenges multiple when educators, parents and other family system members, and social and health service providers work alone and without adequate services, social supports, economic resources, and ways to join forces.

So, people have strengths and important aspirations, even though they have needs that render them vulnerable. They are vulnerable in part because they live and work in disadvantaged places with their respective assets and opportunities.

In this view, schools are among the most important community assets, and the work that lies ahead entails capitalizing on their potential so that they serve vulnerable people residing in disadvantaged places. On the other hand, when place-based disadvantage penetrates schools, rendering them vulnerable and less effective, a significant community asset is eroded, and significant questions arise regarding school-related equity and distributive justice (Raffo, 2014).

This developing language system and accompanying analytical framework are central to the rationale for the new school-related design featured in this book because the growing concentration of vulnerable people in places challenged by disadvantage is an international phenomenon. One useful framework for understanding and addressing this problem was developed by the American sociologist, William Julius Wilson (1996). He coined the terms “concentrated disadvantage” to refer to considerable numbers of vulnerable people clustered in challenging places.

Wilson added that concentrated disadvantage gives rise to predictable, harmful “concentration effects”—identifiable social problems such as early school leaving, under-achieving students and overall school ineffectiveness, unemployment, teen pregnancy, child abuse and neglect, housing shortages, homelessness, food insecurities, crime and delinquency. Wilson emphasized that these several problems tend to co-occur. More profoundly, these problems often nest in each other, so much so that efforts to address one problem must include address one or more others.

This unprecedented complexity is new to educators world-wide. In the same vein, conventional school improvement models have not been developed to address co-occurring and interlocking problems, many of which are caused by external forces, factors, and actors. The implication is that educators and their schools cannot and will not succeed until such time as strategies and interventions are available for addressing such co-occurring and interlocking needs, whether in schools, external settings, or their connections (Lawson 1996a, 1996b; Van Veen 2006a, 2006b).

The same needs are manifest in several other child- and family-serving sectors. Social and health service providers, juvenile justice specialists, and others are no less “walled-in” and bounded by their respective policy and practice jurisdictions. They need help, social supports and resources from educators and their schools, just as educators need help from them.

The new school design draws on this ever-present reality. It is predicated on the idea that now-separate professionals and their host organizations need to join forces so they can mount a multi-lateral effort with two or more interventions in order to meet child, family and community needs and, at the same time, improve their own individual and collective efficacy, gaining confidence that they are able to make a positive difference. More than a sterile, emotionally-distanced strategy, this new school design is structured to provide young people with a sense of belonging (Cuervo et al., 2015) in safe, secure, and nurturing schools, community agencies, and neighborhood organizations. The best community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools are configured in this way. They assist young people in the development of positive identities and help them to set sail on satisfying life course development trajectories that promise meaning, significance, prosperity and well-being (Mills & McGregor, 2014).

### ***A Terrible Trilogy of Poverty, Social Exclusion, and Social Isolation***

When considerable numbers of vulnerable people are clustered in particular places, and they confront daily the challenges of concentrated disadvantage, it is tempting to employ the familiar coverall descriptor: Poverty. The stereotypical solution set follows suit. Governmental leaders, policy makers, practitioners, and researchers emphasize needs for anti-poverty strategies. Although these tendencies arguably are more prevalent in the United States, what can be called “the poverty school of thought” is a world-wide phenomenon.

Granting the merits of the poverty lens, while celebrating the students who escape poverty thanks to effective schools operated by caring, competent educators, it limits new school-related designs and their rationale. Although poverty surely is multi-faceted, too many different forces and factors typically are covered by the poverty umbrella. Under these circumstances, policy development and systems intervention strategies are complicated. When precise, useful conceptualizations are missing, both policy development and systems intervention designs are constrained because each policy alternative, like every intervention, must be tailor-made for specific needs, problems, and opportunities. One size does not fit all.

It has been encouraging to note that policy makers and educators have recognized the limitations of the poverty focus. These limitations have been instrumental in leaders’ decisions in several nations to avoid it. Many of them have substituted a relatively new idea: *Social exclusion*. This descriptor has several advantages, not least of which is its emphasis on social processes and mechanisms (Bongers, Kloppogge, Van Veen, & Walraven, 2000).

Social exclusion connotes being left out and ruled out, including lack of access to important opportunity structures. Significantly, social exclusion is done to you, whether by design or unintentionally; whether through outright discrimination and marginalization (Opatow, 1990); or through more subtle mechanisms such as inequitable access to beneficial socialization opportunities (Raffo, 2014). Since people's perceptions are their lived realities, perceived social exclusion by individuals and groups is as important as widespread evidence of same. Either way, socially excluded people, especially young people, feel left out. They perceive that opportunity structures which other people are able to access are not available to them because of the color of their skin, their sexual orientation, their religious preferences, their social class affiliation, their language preferences, or the place where their family resides and they go to school. Although many such persons may not be labeled officially as "minority populations," their lived experience is akin to persons aware that they live on the margins of one or more dominant, majority populations. The places where they reside reinforce this stigma.

Furthermore, social exclusion signals that "the problem" involves more than money and economic development—arguably the dominant meaning of poverty. For example, students who perceive social exclusion and who attend schools in which a significant number of other students also share this perception are less likely to identify with school, accept and pursue school-related goals, and engage in classroom learning. "Dis-identification" and "dis-engagement" are two of the predictable orientations associated with all such socially excluded students, and these two problems track into school-related cognitive, behavioral, and emotional challenges and ultimately, early school leaving, i.e., school dropout (Dupéré et al., 2015; Freeman & Simonsen, 2015; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Messing, Kuijvenhoven, & Van Veen, 2006).

This emphasis on social exclusion does not rule out poverty. Job development, income maintenance, and economic development priorities matter, so something important is lost when social exclusion replaces poverty. In brief, there is much to be gained, particularly for new school-related designs and their rationales, when these two important concepts, poverty and social exclusion, are linked.

When a third concept is added, the terrible trilogy is complete. *Social isolation* is the third concept, and it prevails in arrival city neighborhoods, other urban communities challenged by concentrated disadvantage, selected inner ring suburbs, and rural communities covering hundreds of kilometers and miles (Prince et al., 2015; Schutz, 2006). Different in their respective geographic features, these three community configurations share a keynote feature. In too many of them, vulnerable strangers live and interact with other vulnerable strangers, a pattern that oftentimes spills over into schools with high workforce turnover and high student turnover. Absent minor miracles that enable productive interactions that produce mutually beneficial friendships and resource exchanges, social isolation is a predictable result.

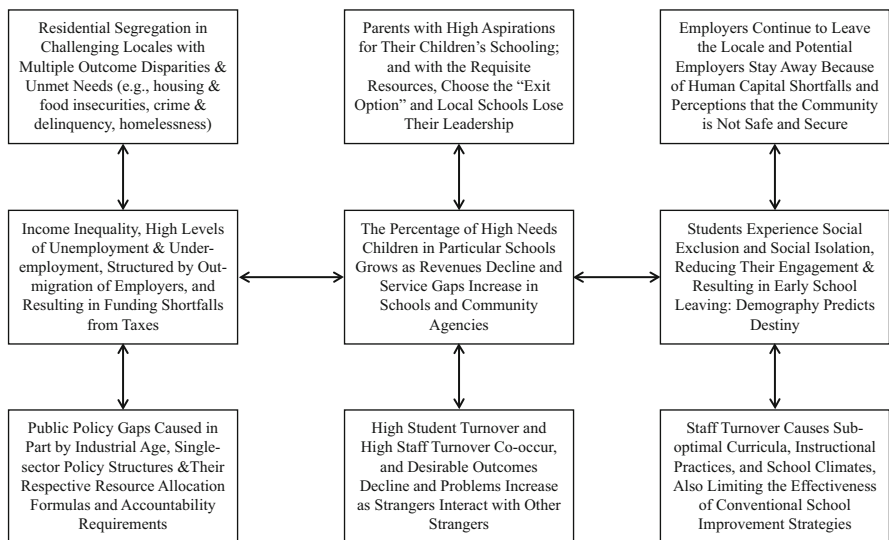
When social isolation prevails, much-needed social support systems oftentimes are missing, in part because they are not valued. Whatever the reasons the result is the same: Individual development, family stability, and neighborhood vitality are impaired. Children in particular suffer when they are isolated, and so do family

systems (Briar-Lawson et al., 2001; Schutz, 2006). In fact, social isolation’s adverse effects extend to neighborhoods and rural community settings. For example, social isolation erodes residents’ collective efficacy and civic capacity to address needs, solve problems, and care for each other. The reduced commitments and capacity to monitor, assist and support local children (Kimbrough-Melton & Melton, 2015), called neighborhood collective efficacy for children (Sampson, 2012), is a special loss because it creates conditions conducive to school success.

When these three elements are combined a powerful, negative synergy develops. Poverty (viewed as economic hardship and disadvantage), social exclusion (viewed as perceived and actual, negative discrimination, marginalization, and a lack of equitable opportunity structures), and social isolation (viewed as a lack of interpersonal social supports) constitute a powerful combination (Lawson, 2009). This terrible trilogy takes root and thrives in places where vulnerable people cluster and concentrated disadvantage is evident. In fact, this trilogy is terrible because it exacerbates disadvantage. It adds to the harms experienced by vulnerable people, and creates local conditions that serve to render conventional schools ineffective.

But there is more to this picture and the rationale it provides for new school-related designs. Wicked, complex problems, ones ripe with dilemmas, are created when vulnerable people are on the move; when urban, inner ring suburban and rural places are characterized by concentrated disadvantage with co-occurring concentration effects; and when these people and places are challenged threatened by the terrible trilogy of poverty, social exclusion and social isolation (Lawson, 2009; Quane & Wilson, 2012).

Figure 2.1, derived from research in the United States, presents one such depiction of the wicked, complex problem set. It provides one way to frame and appreciate the



**Fig. 2.1** Examining concentrated disadvantage: an example from the United States

fast-evolving rationale for the new school-related design showcased in this book, including the mismatch between conventional school improvement and these challenging, complex conditions.

Unfortunately, a single figure diagram does not tell the entire story. Continuing with the fast-changing situation in the United States, for example, the percentage of children challenged by poverty continues to increase dramatically, and more than half of these children attend schools in which the majority of children face the same challenges (EdBuild, 2015). What's more, the students attending these schools are victims of a national teacher quality gap (Goldhaber, Lavery, & Theobald, 2015), a problem exacerbated by high workforce turnover (Holme & Rangel, 2012). Conventional school improvement models and strategies offer few solutions to these complex problems and the challenges they pose for the monumental undertaking of educating children, contributing to their healthy development, and providing opportunity structures that lead to engaged citizenship, meaningful employment, and social integration.

### *A Fierce Competition for Young People's Time*

Especially when the terrible trilogy is in evidence, and it is exacerbated by place-based concentrated disadvantage, parents, educators, social and health service professionals, youth development leaders, and governmental officials are engaged in a silent, but fierce competition for young people's attention, time, and engagement. This competition's importance is apparent when two firm reminders are provided.

On balance, young people spend only 9–13 % of their waking hours in school; and about half of this time typically qualifies as academically-engaged learning time (Berliner, 2009). Moreover, when the school is a stand-alone organization, out-of-school time needs, problems, and opportunities are someone else's responsibility.

Consider the implications for educators and schools. Student learning and academic achievement depend fundamentally on sufficient academically-engaged learning time facilitated by competent teachers and augmented by computer-assisted instructional technologies. When teachers and students do not enjoy enough time together, and especially when students out-of-school time priorities do not include or perhaps contradict academic learning priorities, desirable outcomes will not be achieved at scale.

Even worse, teachers are likely to be blamed for student learning outcomes, some of which are beyond the school's influence and control. This is not a formula for student, teacher, and school success. To the contrary, it is a formula for a host of undesirable outcomes (e.g., depression, early school leaving). It compels educators and others to take seriously the question of what students prioritize and do when school is out, including where they go, what they do, and whether they are alone or in the company of others.



Changing family systems and parenting dynamics add to the challenges. Divided family systems, single parent families, two working parent families, and the absence of accessible, affordable child care are instrumental in a predictable, undesirable outcome. Too many children and youth are home alone when school is out, and they lack adult and prosocial peer direction, guidance and supports.

When social exclusion and social isolation are added to the mix, the results are even more undesirable. Too many young people fall prey to the lures of the streets, mind-numbing video games, and a host of unhealthy behaviors such as substance abuse, sedentary lifestyles, and bad nutritional practices. Lacking meaningful educational and career plans, together with a potentially powerful combination of adult guidance, mentoring, and coaching in schools, community agencies, neighborhood organizations and strong families, too many young people embark on problematic life course developmental pathways toward delinquency and crime, long term under-employment and unemployment, and perhaps recruitment into cults and terrorist organizations.

Community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools are configured to address and prevent these problems. Many involve out-of-school time partnerships with museums, libraries, special enrichment camps, and community youth development agencies (e.g., youth sports, boys and girls clubs). Out-of-school learning time is a special priority, especially for learners who entered schools behind their peers—with special measures to connect teachers and other school professionals to extra-school professionals and other significant adult mentors and coaches. Conventional schools rarely have formal structural and operational mechanisms for such a comprehensive, coordinated approach to competing for young people's time, attention, and engagement.

### ***A Social Responsibility Founded on a Moral Imperative***

When schooling shifted from a privilege limited to particular social classes to a right guaranteed for the masses, governmental leaders and policy makers in every nation accepted an important social responsibility. This responsibility was founded on a moral obligation to each nation's most vulnerable citizens: Its children. Educators' core values are framed accordingly.

The governmental promise to children and their family systems is that demography will not be destiny (Rothstein, 2004). In other words, the circumstances surrounding children's births, including their family of origin, where they reside, their gender, religious preferences, sexual orientation, and especially where they attend school, will not determine their life chances. In this view, high quality schools are vital to human development, adult well-being, a vibrant democracy, and a strong economy.

In short, when conventional, stand-alone schools are ineffective, indeed when they are identified as part of the problem, social responsibility, moral imperative, and educators' core values again become important priorities. These priorities

implicate a new “the politics of generativity”, i.e., what the current generation of adults owes to future generations, also contributing to “the good society” (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1991).

### ***The Limitations of an Inherited School Improvement Model***

In a growing number of nations, provinces, states, cities, and towns, the progressive redesign of schools targets an inherited, twentieth century model with international prominence. In this model, the school is a stand-alone institution. In the main, it is operated and controlled by professional educators whose work with students, typically grouped together in age-graded classrooms, is bounded by the school’s walls and bracketed by the school timetable. Improvement planning proceeds accordingly.

Although many educators espouse priorities for whole child development, this inherited model increasingly prioritizes students’ academic learning and achievement, especially in nations with formal performance monitoring and accountability systems (Dyson & Kerr, 2012). Expert teachers who are assumed to know what students need to know are expected to implement approved curricula and provide instruction that yield desired outcomes. Governmental learning assessment regimes and achievement testing programs facilitate and reinforce this progressive narrowing of school missions, goals, core functions, and accountability mechanisms.

Sector-specific (“categorical”) public policy for schools provides salient incentives, rewards, mandates, accountability structures, and resources for this inherited model. Called “educational policy,” in fact, it is “school policy.” Part of the work that lies ahead for new school designs is to separate educational policy from school policy and with a focus on education and learning, not just schooling. Community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools offer this potential.

When the local context is characterized by diverse people on the move and the terrible trilogy of poverty, social exclusion and social isolation, the limitations of stand-alone schools in which educators work alone inside the walls and focus only on the school day are inescapable. The inherited model for school was predicated on entirely different conditions, so it is not surprising that, as circumstances have changed, conventional schools increasingly have been unable to achieve desired outcomes.

Another limitation follows suit. In the conventional school improvement model, educators working alone typically prioritize and are able to accomplish at most three or four goals every year. Worldwide they frequently rely on linear, one-at-a-time strategies to achieve these goals. Unfortunately, this overall approach, which is structured to achieve a few goals and proceeds with a restricted number of one-at-a-time improvement strategies, is destined to come up short when immigrant families

are on the move, disadvantage is concentrated, and a terrible trilogy exacerbates child and family vulnerability.

Thus, a new and better rationale is needed for the new school-related design featured in this book. This new design must take stock of and exert influence over the school's and families' social ecologies, especially the characteristics of the places where families reside and schools are located (Kerr et al., 2014; Lawson & Lawson, 2013).

With the school as an important centerpiece, a dual strategy is needed (Green, 2015; Kerr et al., 2014; Tate, 2012). The strategy must be both inside-out and outside-in. The inside-out strategy depends on active outreach and strategic bridge-building from the school (or clusters of local schools) to families and communities, encompassing school-owned and -operated services, supports and resources that have the potential to support and strengthen both families and communities.

The outside-in strategy also involves strategic bridge-building. Here the aim is enable educators and schools to benefit from family and community resources for student learning, healthy development, and school success. In these innovative configurations, area-based initiatives (Kerr et al., 2014), also known as local community development initiatives (Baum, 2003; Crowson, 2001), are connected to school redesign and improvement initiatives.

Furthermore, this dual strategy (outside-in, inside out) is founded on the practical necessity to solve complex, co-occurring and interlocking problems. While some such problem solving is desirably specialized, technical, sequential/linear, a key-note characteristic of this new school-related design is the increasing ability to problem-solve across several fronts in real time.

New structural arrangements enable these newly-developed capacities to address complexity, especially the ability to simultaneously address two or more co-occurring and interlocking problems. Two arrangements are especially noteworthy, and they are described in greater detail through this book. They are organizational partnerships involving schools, community agencies, neighborhood organizations businesses, governments, and higher education and collaborative teams consisting of educators and other helping professionals and sometimes representative parents and youths.

Founded in part on the idea that isolation is the enemy of improvement (Elmore, 2004), these and other "joined-up configurations" are directed toward common purposes (Van Veen, 2006b). More specifically, these new collaborative working relationships are cemented when diverse participants develop a special kind of awareness. They realize that they and their respective organizations fundamentally depend on each other, so much so that no one can achieve desirable outcomes absent the contributions provided by one or more others (Lawson, 2003, 2004). These collaborative relationships, founded on interdependent relationships, are fortified when participants share certain core values and proceed with shared planning priorities.

## ***Developing New School Designs in Different Policy Environments***

The rationale for the new school-related design featured in this book extends to two important planning priorities. These new school-related designs are tailor-made for particular people, schools, communities and places. They also manifest the influences of national, provincial, and state policy.

These two commonalities are not inherently harmonious. In fact, the frictions between them are responsible for tensions, conflicts and contradictions (see also Dyson & Kerr, 2012). All such tensions, conflicts and contradictions serve to constrain the development and operation of new school-related designs, and some of the chapters in this book provide important examples.

On the other hand, some policies also are incubators for remarkable creativity and profound innovations, especially so when standardized (“cookie cutter”) school models and the conventional policies that drive them fail to achieve desired outcomes at scale. The fast-growing requirement for data-driven planning overall and data-driven instruction in particular represent a reasonable policy balance between rigid specification and tailor-made innovations for demonstrated local needs, problems, and opportunities.

This new school-related design’s commonalities, similarities and differences derive from another policy source. On top of this planning and evaluation triad are shifting policy environments and a growing number of bold policy experiments. For example, many alternative models for schools derive from a radical combination of private sector logic (a business-oriented approach that focuses on markets) and public sector logic (an altruistic, service-oriented approach that focuses on governmental responsibilities and constitutional rights).

This private sector logic frequently is described as part of the growing intrusion of “the neo-liberal” approach to public policy overall and especially to school policy (e.g., Raffo, 2014). This planning logic serves as a driver for the development of a variety of alternatives for the institution of school. Examples of these models include magnet schools, charter schools, performing arts academies, and career academies. These examples and others provide students and families, who are viewed consumers and customers, with a market-driven choice.

This same policy logic may extend to the special kind of school-related design featured in this book. In all such cases, one of the policy aims is to provide students and families with choices. Whereas in the past these persons would have compelled to attend a school with the same standardized design, usually one located near their residence, today they are able to choose the kind of school that best suits them.

How can these several alternatives be inspected and evaluated, starting with the particular school-related design featured in this book? Clearly, a more nuanced and developmental approach to their appreciation, evaluation and possible adoption and implementation is in order.

### *A Planning Triad with Three Evaluative Criteria*

To facilitate all such complex, data-driven designs, an important planning triad has been progressively developed. Several of the chapters in this book provide examples.

One of the three components is *demography*—characteristics of the population and with special interest in identifiable sub-populations of children and family systems. The second is *organizational ecology*—starting with schools, encompassing other child and family-service organizations, and perhaps including businesses and governmental entities. The third is *social geography*. Social geography is a complex concept that refers to socially constructed and constituted place-based characteristics, encompassing identities, economic development histories and trajectories, and the ever-changing determination of the boundaries for schools and communities (Kerr et al., 2014; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Sampson, 2012; Tate, 2012).

Because this planning triad emphasizes uniqueness with important reminders about difference, it facilitates the development of tailor-made alternatives for the new school-related design featured in this book. Indeed, this same planning triad helps to illuminate and explain the commonalities, similarities, and differences among the alternative models presented in each chapter. All have been tailored in some manner to fit the characteristics of the populations being served, the local school and organizational ecology, and the special features of the surrounding places—social geography (Belay et al., 2014; Lawson, 2013).

So, for example, the configuration for an urban neighborhood will differ somewhat from one for a relatively isolated agriculture-centered, rural community. In the same vein, the design for an inner ring suburb that serves as home for significant numbers of new immigrants whose first language is not the dominant one will have its own special features.

None of this work is easy, and all of it involves an experimentalist posture with provisions for adaptive learning and continuous improvement (White & Wehlage, 1995). Driven by assessment and outcome data, sensitive to context, involving both bottom-up and top-down policy learning and with the ever-present reminder that the work is not likely to be completed in the near term, it nevertheless is important to have a rationale that recognizes progress and enables the celebration of accomplishments.

A three-component evaluative framework provides one such possibility: Fit for purpose, in this context, and at this time (Lawson, 2013). This framework emphasizes local needs, aspirations and goals as well as somewhat unique place-based ecologies (fit for purpose and in this particular context). The criterion “at this time” reminds various audiences that these alternatives are ongoing social experiments with yet more innovations possibly looming in the years ahead.

The alternatives presented throughout this book can be viewed and evaluated accordingly. The same evaluative framework helps to frame and facilitate the new designs featured in the next two chapters.

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# Chapter 3

## A Framework for Planning and Evaluating the New Design

Hal A. Lawson and Dolf van Veen

**Abstract** Community schools, community learning centers, extended service schools and multi-service schools are complex designs characterized by multiple, core components. In advanced exemplars, five defining components usually are evident. In no particular order, these components are health services, social services, extended or out-of-school time learning, positive youth development, and parent and family interventions. These five components are not isolated or stand-alone initiatives. They are developed with an eye toward their interactions and mutually supportive relationships. The main idea is noteworthy: Co-occurring and interacting child, family, school and community needs and problems necessitate such a complex, multi-faceted intervention strategy. One way to facilitate understanding of this complex design and showcase the relationships and interactions that lead to better results is to provide a special depiction called a theory of change diagram. Figure 3.1 is designed and presented accordingly, and it lends coherence to planning, analysis, and evaluation-driven learning, knowledge generation and continuous quality improvement. This figure also provides a framework for identifying selectivity in many local school-related designs. For example, worldwide this new design tends to be premised on the inherited, dominant idea that “professionals know best” what vulnerable children, families and communities need and require. This predictable selectivity sets the stage for the next set of innovations for this new school-related design.

**Keywords** Logic model • Theory of change • Complex change • Partnership working • Interprofessional collaboration • Cross-boundary leadership • Intervention planning • Community school • At-risk youths

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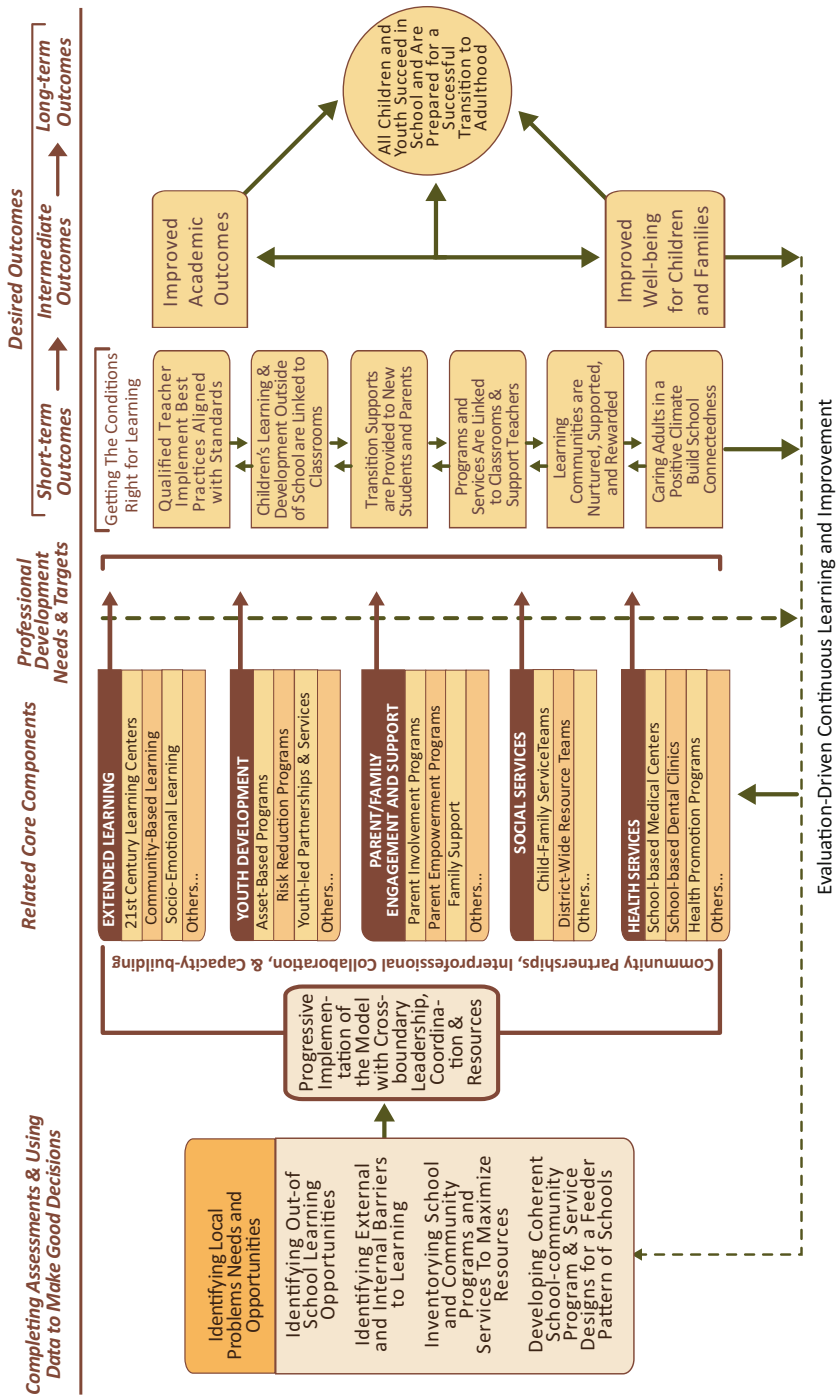


Fig. 3.1 A school-centered logic model for a community school

We provided in Chap. 2 an introduction to this new school-related design. Aiming for a useful and justifiable definition, we started with the foundation. A multi-component rationale for this new design provides this foundation, and it serves as an important commonality for nearly every multi-service school, extended-service school, community school, and community learning center. Although few of these schools have reached the stage where they address each and every part of the rationale, many are progressing incrementally toward more comprehensive designs.

It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of this shared rationale. Absent an understanding of the rationale, particularly urgent presenting problems, unmet needs, and emergent opportunities, the new school related design featured in this book is like an answer to a question that no one has asked. Put another way, if the new school-related design is one solution, it is important that leaders understand the problems it is structured to solve.

As in Chap. 2, we have constructed this second chapter with two primary audiences in mind. Newcomers to this design are one audience, especially university students, veteran educators in search of alternatives, health and social service leaders, university faculty, professional evaluators, and public policy makers. The other audience consists of colleagues involved in replication, scale-up, and international, scale-out initiatives. Oftentimes they have been thrust into implementation before they have been prepared to fully understand the new design and consider future possibilities.

The chapter title announces two main purposes. The first purpose is to facilitate planning. All planning frameworks have a practical dimension and an analytical dimension. Analysis proceeds with “what questions” and “why questions,” while “how questions” lead to exemplary practices and operational demands.

Both school and community leaders typically are challenged by this new design’s novelty and unprecedented complexity. Complexity is unavoidable these new schools change long-standing boundaries involving schools, community agencies, neighborhood organizations, businesses, and families. Moreover this new design emphasizes relations between academic learning and five core components: health services, social services, parent and family engagement strategies, positive youth development, and out-of-school time learning. Although these five core components are tailor-made for the rationale presented in the previous chapter, the work of aligning and coordinating them is inherently complex, and it is ripe with novelty and uncertainty.

For example, parent and family engagement strategies are needed in response to the needs of vulnerable families on the move, especially divided family systems. The terrible trilogy of poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation challenges families, incubates adverse childhood experiences and necessitates social services and health services in support of healthy child/youth development and school readiness.

In the same vein, place-based disadvantage typically is accompanied by undesirable temptations and potentially dangerous lures for young people’s attention and engagement during out-of-school time, necessitating out-of-school time programs and services that provide safe, supportive environments for learning and healthy

development. Positive youth development principles, priorities, and strategies, once implemented in schools, community agencies, and neighborhood organizations, provide a powerful, unifying framework for attracting, engaging, and retaining young people, increasing their sense of belonging, enhancing their school readiness and contributing to their character development.

Such is the need to ensure a good fit between new school designs and the co-occurring and interlocking needs and problems that necessitate them. Easy to describe in writing, the new model featured in this book presents implementation and evaluation challenges because relatively few professionals, especially school and district leaders and teachers, have received formal preparation for it. Consequently, they often are left to their own devices when they confront important questions such as figuring out how each component interacts with and strengthens the others, ultimately producing a mutually beneficial synergy that results in desirable child, family, and school outcomes. Both school and community leaders thus need and welcome guidance, starting with a big picture “blueprint” or “road map” that charts pathways to success.

The progression is as follows. We start with such a big picture depiction so that readers have a sense of the whole model in its present form before they explore each of the five specialized components. We emphasize two developmental pathways toward complete implementation—and with two reminders. One is that it often takes years, even a decade or more, to achieve complete implementation. The other is that some promising exemplars, including ones featured in this book, stop short of complete implementation because they are able to achieve desirable outcomes without the complete model—at least in the short term.

Then we turn to an introductory description of important parts of this new design that are not featured in the big picture depiction. This description sets the stage for the more detailed description in Chap. 4 of the five core components (health services, social services, out-of-school time learning, positive youth development, and parent and family engagement).

First a caution: Newcomers to this new school-related design risk being overwhelmed by too many new ideas and the unavoidable complexity accompanying community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools. To avoid information over-load, readers are advised to “chunk it out.” Take several days to review the materials presented next.

## **A Multi-component Model with Unavoidable and Manageable Complexity**

This new school design is a planned social experiment. It is entirely adaptable, and it continues to evolve. This new design also is inherently complex, and this complexity needs to be made manageable.

Under these circumstances, a social science tool called an ideal-type is useful (Hearn, 1975). Such a model is typical because it is derived from direct observations

of the new school-related design in real world settings. At the same time, two of this model's other properties make it an ideal type. The model is logically ordered, a rare property in the real world. It also showcases all of the components, emphasizes their causal relationships, and identifies short-term progress indicators and long-term outcomes—if all goes as planned.

Ideal-types have three other names: (1) A logic model (e.g., Millar, Simeone, & Carnevale, 2001); (2) A theory of action (e.g., McDonald, & the Cities and Schools Research Group, 2014); and (3) A theory of change (e.g., Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011; Kerr, Dyson, & Raffo, 2014; Weiss, 1995). Never mind for the time being nuanced differences among these four descriptors (ideal-type, logic model, theory of action, and theory of change). The main idea is what matters it unites this various conceptions.

All such depictions provide people from all walks of life, particularly leaders from schools and community organizations, with the equivalent of a map and a compass for a journey into what otherwise would be uncharted territory (Collins, 2005). Models and theories of action (change) that depict relationships among the five core components and their relations with the school's academic programs thus enhance the probability of doing good work, while minimizing the probability of flaws, errors, inadvertent harms, and wasted resources.

Figure 3.1 provides a logic model for a community school design. Adapted from a model developed by Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Iachini, Flashpohler, and Zullig (2010), this depiction also can be adapted to fit multi-service schools, community learning centers, and extended service schools.

Significantly, it is a school-centered design. The main idea is that a community school, community learning center, extended service school, or multi-service school is an expansive, multi-component strategy to improve student and school outcomes in tandem with selected child and family outcomes.

Figure 3.1 is predicated on several consequential assumptions. The first assumption has two parts. The inherited twentieth century idea of "school" remains in good currency, and so community schools, extended-service schools, community learning centers, and multi-service schools are developed as expansive school improvement models.

A second assumption follows from the first. Academic learning and achievement remain prized outcomes, i.e., they are not by-passed or under-emphasized even though they are not showcased in this figure. Viewed in this way, Fig. 3.1 can be viewed as an answer to an important question (Adelman & Taylor, 2005), one currently being asked and addressed world-wide. What's missing in conventional school improvement models?

Five other assumptions are especially important. (1) Children's schooling-related needs, problems, and aspirations influence and are influenced by their counterparts in other realms of their lives. (2) Improvements in children's school engagement, academic learning and overall school performance will transfer to improvements in other aspects of their lives (e.g., improved mental health). (3) Reciprocally, improvements in, for example, a child's mental health via mental health interventions will transfer to schools, ultimately resulting in improved attendance, on-time arrival,

engagement, academic learning, and overall school performance; (4) In addition to the transferability of outcomes from a single intervention (e.g., mental health) to these school-related outcomes, multiple interventions can and must be implemented simultaneously, harmoniously and synergistically when children's needs and problems co-occur and nest in each other such that addressing one entails addressing one or more of the others. (5) Educators, community social and health service providers, parents/caregivers, and community leaders can learn how to work together efficiently and effectively so that community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-services schools achieve their full potential and yield better outcomes for children, families, educators and community service providers, and policy leaders.

Figure 3.1 is not cast in stone. Consistent with the uses of an ideal-type, readers-as-designers are invited to substitute a local priority for one or more of the others listed in the figure diagram. Local needs assessment data are the drivers for all such decisions. So, for example, health services may not be prioritized in a local school design because existing service arrangements are adequate, while community engagement is a priority. Leaders-as-designers need to be prepared to use their assessment data to make all such adjustments.

Alternatively, readers and planners can start with desired outcomes, especially those documented by research. Subsequently, they can develop backward designs that specify how best to achieve these prized results. A recent review of school-community partnerships in the United States provides a good place to start. Valli, Stefanski, and Jacobson (2014) located studies that documented myriad benefits to schools, which derive from solid partnerships. Examples included student outcomes (e.g., improved student attendance, higher student achievement, higher graduation rates, improved job satisfaction for teachers); parents and family system outcomes (e.g., increases in parental engagement and leadership, increased parent satisfaction with schools); and neighborhood outcomes (e.g., greater family and neighborhood stability). Other benefits-as-outcomes are detailed in the several chapters in Part II of this book, and Blank, Jacobson and Melaville (2012) summarize other benefits.

Granting all such potential benefits, the fact remains that they are not automatic achievements. Figure 3.1, like other logic models or theory of change depictions, are valuable because they formalize planning and decision-making. They make presumed causal relationships among a community school's components explicit, actionable, and testable, setting the stage on evaluation-driven, continuous quality improvement, knowledge generation, and policy learning. Viewed in this way, analysis on the drawing board paves the way to strategic action in the diverse worlds of practice.

Finally: This school-centered rationale and configuration is not the only alternative, nor is it automatically the final destination for some leaders' developmental journeys. Some leaders, including chapter authors in this book, have embarked on a journey toward new institutional designs, ones that start with schools but also progressively transform inherited models.

Meanwhile, today's school-centered approaches are a justifiable and wholly understandable response to educational policy mandates and incentives in several

nations. In some nations policies continue to emphasize increasingly rigorous accountability requirements for academic performance—as the only outcome. In these policy circumstances, leaders must comply with reporting requirements. The main issue is whether they stop with such a narrow, restrictive perspective. Arguably such a limited framework undermines all that this new school-related design is structured to provide and accomplish.

## **Introducing the Defining Features of This New School-Related Design**

Risking over-simplification, ten other defining features serve as key commonalities in nearly every version of this new design. They are not rank-ordered, and the whole they constitute is greater than the sum of the parts.

### ***Academic Learning/Achievement as the Most Important Outcome***

Diverse, nation-specific educational policies that provide incentives and resources for school-related alternatives converge when it comes to academic learning and achievement. Although the new school-related design benefits from this standardized expectation and performance measure, and everyone endorses improvements in students' learning, academic achievement, and overall educational success, this standardized educational policy also can be viewed as a significant risk factor for this new school-related design.

The risk stems from a predictable developmental journey. Because community schools, multi-service schools, extended service schools and community learning centers are new, everyone involved in their design and implementation confronts a steep learning curve as the several components (health services, social services, out-of-school time programs) are implemented and connected. For example, educators, social and health services professionals, parents, and others need new competencies. Schools, community agencies, and neighborhood organizations need new capacities—for example, the new assessment and data systems and new resource allocation systems.

More fundamentally, increases in students' academic learning and achievement hinge on improvements in students' classroom (academic) engagement in tandem with better pedagogies implemented by caring, competent teachers (Freiberg, 1996, 2013; Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997; Lawson & Lawson, 2013). Although this new school-related design ultimately offers these important contributions (see Fig. 3.1), the actual work of connecting this model's several components to classrooms takes several years, in part because teachers, school and district leaders, youth



development professionals, and health and social service providers need to craft salient strategies and develop locally-useful tools. There are no shortcuts because these new systems must be designed, and they are new to everyone.

It follows that immediate increases in academic learning and achievement may be unrealistic and unachievable at scale. So, when evaluations focus nearly exclusively on this important outcome, the risk is that this new design will be deemed a failure. Evaluators call this risk factor “a false negative” (Lawson, 1999). It occurs when they conclude that an innovation does not make positive contributions when, in fact, it does. Evaluators miss these contributions when they search for unachievable outcomes in the wrong places, especially when they use methods that are not sensitive to important short-term progress indicators.

Examples of measurable, justifiable progress indicators are featured in Fig. 3.1. They include new workforce competencies; new organizational capacities; and new roles and relationships associated with a re-modeled workforce.

Other progress indicators-as-important achievements include providing children with access to medical, dental, and vision services and supporting vulnerable families in their quest to help their children succeed. These latter progress indicators signal needs for evaluations of important learning readiness and school success indicators such as regular attendance, on-time arrivals, reductions in behavior problems caused by barriers to students’ healthy development, and student suspensions that result in lost opportunities for student learning and academic engagement.

Viewed in this way, the first phase for improvements in students’ academic learning and achievement is to optimize the conditions for it by addressing student, family, school, and community barriers. The new school-related design, suitably implemented, can achieve this important outcome. Toward this end, the Children’s Aid Society, arguably one of the foremost international leaders for this new school-related design, has provided an evidence-based planning and evaluation framework that emphasizes the development of important conditions for learning, together with the desired results and the progress indicators for these results (Mendez, 2011, p. 19).

Phase two hinges fundamentally on improvements in the school’s core technology, also known as the instructional core (Elmore, 2004). The instructional core refers to what and how teachers teach and what and how students learn.

*A community school, multi-service school, extended service school, or community learning center that does not have an explicit, justifiable strategy (theory of action) for improvements in the instructional core is not likely to yield dramatically improved academic learning and achievement outcomes at scale.* More concretely, if teachers and their work in classrooms are not center-stage in these new school designs at the same time that policy makers are making continuation decisions based primarily on academic learning and achievement outcomes, community schools, extended service schools, multi-service schools, and community learning centers risk being deemed failures. To prevent this problem, these schools will maximize the probability that their academic outcomes will improve if they craft innovative strategies for integrating social and health services interventions with classroom pedagogies (Lawson, 1996a, 1996b; Mooney, Kline, & Davoren, 1999).

Return to Fig. 3.1 with this rationale in mind. It implicates a progression from data-driven innovations aimed at optimizing students' learning readiness and healthy development toward a different kind of school, one that provides an organizational context for healthy child/youth development in tandem with better academic outcomes. Where academic outcomes are concerned, the "game-changer" in this new school design is a clear, coherent, and aligned strategy for bringing the several core components (health services, social services, etc.) to bear on the instructional core, engaging and benefiting teachers who too frequently work alone and risk being blamed when academic outcomes do not improve.

### ***Developing Connections, Building Bridges, and Managing Complexity***

When community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools are designed and developed, an important difference immediately is evident. The school no longer is a stand-alone organization in which educators work alone with little or no assistance, social supports and resources from outside constituencies. In fact, this new design is characterized by formal relationships with what once were outsiders. Three kinds of relationships and their respective configurations are noteworthy.

**Collaborative Relationships** To begin with, this new design emphasizes educators' relationships with other people, particularly community-based professionals charged with responsibilities for positive youth development; family support; mental health; medical and dental services; juvenile justice; child and family social services, broadly defined; and increasingly, workforce development. These new connections are developed among the people who are or need to be involved in children's (and families') lives because all have the potential to exert desirable influences on child and family developmental trajectories. Significantly, all have the potential to assist educators in their daily work with children, especially when they agree to communicate, consult each other, coordinate their respective efforts and genuinely collaborate (e.g., Claiborne & Lawson, 2005; Edwards, Lunt, & Stamou, 2010; Forbes & Watson, 2012; Gardner, 1999; Lawson, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2009b; Sarason & Lorentz, 1998; Van Veen, 2006b, 2012; Van Veen & Doorduyn, 2002).

Although these connections initially may not be predicated on perceived interdependence among these newly-connected participants, they later become aware that mutually beneficial outcomes will derive from their newly-forged arrangement. For example, all parties benefit when children succeed in school, and every constituency is challenged when they do not.

Such is the centrality of schools in children's lives, well-being, and developmental trajectories. It helps to explain why external constituencies are prepared to develop new connections with educators. More pragmatically, many external

constituencies want and need access to children in order to fulfill their duties, and the school provides it, perhaps with much-needed space for community providers' programs and services.

**Organizational Partnerships** Newly-developed partnerships between schools and external organizations are the second feature. Here, inter-organizational bridge-building is a priority (e.g., Acar, Guo, & Yang, 2012; Bardach, 1998; Cheadle, Senter, Solomon, Beery, & Schwartz, 2005; Nowell, 2009; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Sowa, 2008). Formal contracts and memoranda of understanding regarding practical matters cement these partnerships. For example, these legal agreements specify which organization is responsible for what kinds of offerings and outcomes; how, when and where these new offerings will be delivered as well as who pays for them; and how data will be collected, stored, retrieved, shared, and used. These are not trivial matters, so there is much to be gained when inter-organizational bridges are built with formal contractual agreements.

Bridge building in the formative stages of this new school design has the potential to reconfigure organizational boundaries, necessitating cross-boundary communications systems (Daniels, 2011) and expanding the idea of what a school is and does. The most important example, for introductory purposes, occurs when a community organization such as a boys and girls club or a youth sports club no longer has sufficient revenue to operate and maintain a building or special facility. Facilitated by their partnership with a particular school, they make a consequential decision. With the approval of school leaders, community organization leaders relocate their administrative offices at the school and offer many of their programs and services at the school site. These additional programs and services provided by partner, community organizations that have relocated to school are signature features of multi-service schools and community schools.

To summarize: This new school-related design is characterized by two new relationships. One involves connections between educators and outside constituencies, and the other involves bridges between schools and external organizations. Two units for planning and analysis are salient here: People and organizations. It is possible to have one without the other.

To be maximally effective, this new school-related design must have both kinds of structural and operational arrangements. Because both are new, this core requirement adds to uncertainty and complexity of advancing this new school-related design. Manifest challenges in just one school multiply when every local school in a given district is slated for a multi-service school or community school design.

**Leadership and Governance Councils** A third feature derives from these needs-as-challenges. School-community leadership councils bearing several names are formed (Adelman & Taylor, 2005; Belay, Mader, & Miller, 2014). Considerable variation is evident worldwide in how these councils are structured and the purposes they develop and pursue. In North America, these councils consist of top-level school district leaders such as superintendents and their designated representatives, executive directors (by whatever name) for community agency partners, various

kinds of local authorities, and formally-appointed, governmental officials. These councils' functions include management, governance, resource acquisition and allocation, evaluation, future planning, and trouble-shooting.

The school-related design featured in this book can be termed “advanced” when such a management council or governance structure has been formed and is operating efficiently, effectively and in a sustainable manner. In contrast, when just one such multi-service or community school has been developed in an area challenged by people on the move, the terrible trilogy, concentrated disadvantage and concentration effects, and when there is no hint of a cross-boundary leadership structure of governance council, the initiative is in its formative phase.

### ***Boundary Crossing Leaders and Coordinators***

Formidable challenges arise and remain when people develop new connections, and they increase when the work extends to bridge-building between organizations. Boundaries begin to blur, and some may need to be reinforced or redrawn. At the same time, these new people connections and inter-organizational bridges require boundaries to be crossed, albeit selectively and strategically. Nearly all of this work is new, and it requires specialized people. Ideally, this boundary work also facilitates powerful learning and improvement (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Daniels, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Miller, 2007, 2008; Van Veen, 2001; Williams, 2012).

Whether in schools, community agencies, neighborhood organizations, or universities that are engaged in the development of this new school-related design, two kinds of specialists are needed: (1) Top level leaders who provide cross-boundary leadership (Blank, Berg, & Melaville, 2006; Green, 2015; Ishimaru, 2013); and (2) Intermediaries called school-family-community coordinators, child study team coordinators, or resource coordinators (Adams, 2013; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Schorr, Farrow, & Lee, 2010; Van Veen, 2006a, 2006b; Williams, 2012). These two kinds of specialists are among the defining features of this new-related design.

A closely related, defining feature is illuminated when the focus and the language shift from people to functions, priorities, and accountability structures. This linguistic turn has practical implications (Daniels, 2011). It entails the two-part shift: (1) From *leaders* to cross-boundary *leadership*; and (2) From *coordinators* to cross-boundary *coordination* of school and community resources. This shift presents the opportunity for a more nuanced systems design that may distribute responsibilities and accountabilities for both leadership and coordination. For example, it provides the opportunity to consider alternatives to a dominant feature of today's designs—namely, leadership and coordination provided exclusively by credentialed professionals.

## ***An Important Combination of School-Based and School-Linked Programs and Services***

Newly-formed collaborative relationships with external constituencies in tandem with partnerships with community organizations are especially strong and enduring when they have the two main features. They are founded on local capacity assessments, driven by data; and they proceed with a build-from-strengths approach, while taking advantage of each partner agency's essential mission (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010; Belay et al., 2014). An immediate benefit is resource maximization (Adelman & Taylor, 2005; Belay et al., 2014; McLaughlin & London, 2013; Van Veen, 2006b) along with the beginning of the end of wasteful duplication of programs and services, particularly ones that are not matched to data-identified needs.

Toward this end, a thorough inventory of school-owned and operated resources (e.g., student support services; afterschool programs) and community-owned and operated services, programs, and resources usually is undertaken (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010). It prevents wasteful duplication and facilitates whatever adjustments are needed in order to meet data-identified student, family, and community needs. Program and service gaps are a special priority—and with aims for combining now-separate programs and integrating services and programs whenever possible (Radema, Van Veen, Verhey, & Wouters, 2005).

The national center for school mental health in the USA has developed two sets of exemplary technical assistance materials for this important work. A resource mapping framework and a set of program and service assessment surveys provide practical guidance (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resourcemapping/resource-mappingandmanagement.pdf> <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf>). Special resources for social and health services planning also are recommended (Dartington Social Research Unit, 2001; Melamid & Brodhar, 2003).

When the full range of student, family, school, and community needs is inventoried, a design problem-as-opportunity emerges. The problem is that the majority of schools do not have the capacity to offer the full range of programs and services. Such is the opportunity to configure a specially-tailored school-community service system that is fit for purpose, in special contexts, and at a particular time.

Such a data-driven, comprehensive planning approach both necessitates and yields an important part of this new school-related design's infrastructure: A new role and responsibility system. In everyday language, participants figure out their respective responsibilities and accountabilities with particular sub-populations of students and families, in order to achieve desirable results. In other words, this new system identifies who will do what, with whom, how, when, where, and for how long. Because these programs and services cost money, the method(s) of payment also is specified.

Another recommended strategy serves as a defining feature of the new school-related design. Some programs and services are offered at school, while others are

made available in community agencies and neighborhood organizations. The ones offered at school are called *school-based programs and services*, while the ones offered in external settings are called *school-linked*.

Inside these easy-to-understand categories are important, complex issues. For example, when services are offered in community settings how will information be shared, and who will be accountable for making this happen systematically? Who will ensure timely, accurate communication across organizational and professional boundaries as well as requisite data and resource sharing? How will students be transported to community agencies?

Another example: How does program/service location influence four important priorities? The priorities are program and service access; program and service quality; and program and service use with particular interest in how location, staffing, and program configurations influence access and quality; and program and service outcomes. Leaders everywhere wrestle with the attendant questions. They often proceed with an experimental attitude and a tailor-made evaluation plan that enables them to gain knowledge, learn and improve.

Ultimately, leaders for the new school-related design featured in this book must make sometimes difficult decisions about which offerings are school-based and which ones are school-linked. Despite proclamations about so-called “full service schools” and granting the importance of step-by-step guides for developing them (e.g., Calfee, Wittwer, & Meredith, 1998), the main idea—namely, that one school can and should offer the full range of needed programs and services—is suspect. Leaders of schools and social/health services worldwide continue to wrestle with the problem of how best to design, configure, and deliver services so that educators and schools benefit, together with community agencies and, of course, families.

More fundamentally, when leaders poll targeted service and program users, they typically learn that school is not always the best place for a particular offering. They also learn that a wide range of programs and services is needed when diverse, vulnerable people are on the move, reside in places characterized by concentrated disadvantage and concentration effects, and are challenged by the terrible trilogy of poverty, social exclusion and social isolation. When these conditions prevail, and when parents, other adults, and entire family systems are targeted, no school is able to offer the full range of needed programs and services.

### ***A School-Centered Approach to Addressing Student Barriers***

When vulnerable families, especially the most transient and isolated ones, reside in disadvantaged places, every member confronts adversity, and some experience harm. Granting family strengths and resilience as well as parents’ noble efforts to safeguard their children, enormous stress and daily hassles inevitably take their toll on children, parents, and the family system. The new school-related design has been developed accordingly.

Early on in the development of this new school-related design, there tends to be a singular focus on multiple barriers caused by external forces, factors, and actors.

The familiar phrase introduces the need as well as the approach for addressing it. *Children do not come to school ready and able to learn.* In fact, some may not attend regularly, and even those who do may not arrive on time.

All in all, a priority need is apparent. No one can succeed—children, educators, and schools overall—until such time as these barriers are removed and prevented. Such is the logic for school-based and school-linked programs and services, alternatively named “comprehensive systems of learning supports” (Adelman & Taylor, 2005; Farrington et al., 2012; Moore, 2014). This latter name (comprehensive system of learning supports) announces the centrality of the school in this new school-related design.

The school’s influence also is manifest in the language system. For example, the focus is on “students” in lieu of children or youths, and services are for them in lieu of ones structured for entire family systems (Ascend at the Aspen Institute, 2012; Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997; Ross, 2015).

Public policy, especially school policy, promotes and reinforces the same emphasis, together with the well-known priority outcome. This outcome is increases in student academic learning and achievement, improvements made possible by the progressive elimination of external barriers.

Here, two underlying assumptions are operative, albeit implicitly. Conventional schools are not the main problem, and they will be more effective as these barrier-oriented programs and services are added.

To be clear: This overall approach is essential. In fact, it is a defining feature of the new school-related design, and it is especially apparent in early phases of this new design’s development and implementation. However, this approach is selective and limited. Comparatively advanced exemplars for this new school-related design, including those featured in this book, highlight some of its limitations.

Two limitations merit mention here, albeit in an introductory manner. One is that it deflects attention from sub-optimal school structures, routines, classroom practices, and especially workforce characteristics and competencies. Here, the school-serving problem set is revealing. In colloquial terms: “School is okay; the problem’s with students’ external barriers and their causes.”

When this view prevails, three tendencies follow. To begin with, deficit-oriented views of students typically are manifest. They are reinforced by language that is not strengths-based and solution-focused. At the same time, services are more or less tacked on to existing school structures and operations, and teachers tend to view services and the students in a particular way. Services are viewed, configured, and used in a familiar sequence sometimes called “fix, then teach” (Honig, Kahne, & McLaughlin, 2001). In other words, teachers recognize that pedagogy depends on services that address students learning barriers, but beyond this recognition and the service protocols it recommends, classroom teaching and learning are divorced from services (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997).

The second limitation can be introduced with a reminder. The schools located in the most challenging places confront their own challenges. The challenges start with the composition, quality, competence, and stability of their workforces, and they extend to resource shortfalls, the quality of school facilities, issues of student

safety and needs for schools to serve as safe havens (Quiroz, Milam-Brooks, & Adams-Romena, 2013), and organizational capacities for data-related work and evaluation-driven, organizational learning and improvement (e.g., Holme & Rangel, 2012; Kerr et al., 2014). These unfortunate, undesirable factors erode the quality of teaching, learning, and the overall school experience for everyone, particularly children. Significantly, they also expand the problem set.

In this expanded problem set, the problem no longer resides exclusively in children's external barriers. The problem extends to and encompasses educators and the school. Put another way, the problem is not merely one of all children coming to school ready and able to learn. The new school design provides the opportunity to prepare educators and configure schools so that they are ready for the learning, healthy development, academic achievement, and overall success of all children.

Thus, the new design for schools featured in this book is predicated on two inseparable priorities. *Children come to school ready and able to learn, while educators and their schools get ready for the learning, healthy development, and academic achievement of all children.* This two-part challenge-as-opportunity is a design priority and also a game-changer. When it is in evidence, an advanced exemplar has been developed.

Path-breaking, advanced exemplars add a third priority. Inventive leaders realize that the education workforce and the social/health services workforces also have needs for assistance, support and resources. These needs are especially apparent in schools riddled by high workforce turnover and low morale. Designs, for example, for teacher-responsive and –supportive services, supports, and resources are cutting edge innovations in these new school designs.

### ***Innovative Strategies for Engaging Parents and Providing Family Support***

The school-centered perspective extends to strategies for involving parents. The conventional parent involvement (PI) strategy, which depends on parent volunteers (especially mothers), remains center-stage. The conventional question for PI is how can parents be persuaded to become involved in school and support their teachers? However, PI no longer is the only strategy, and the school changes the one-way relationship PI emphasizes—namely, parents serve educators and the school, not vice versa (Currie, 2015; Lawson, Alameda-Lawson, Lawson, Briar-Lawson, & Wilcox, 2014; Ishimaru, 2014b; Ishimaru & Lott, 2014; Mapp & Kuttner, 2014).

This new school-related design's parent and family innovations are structured in respond to two other questions. What can educators and the schools do to both engage and assist parents, helping their goals and meet their needs? And, what can educators and schools do to support, strengthen, and stabilize families, particularly the most vulnerable, ethnically diverse ones challenged by social exclusion and social isolation? Both questions extend to educators' working relationships



with community agency professionals and neighborhood leaders. Both may facilitate the development of organizational partnerships between schools and community agencies.

Significantly, both questions are instrumental in school-based and school-linked programs and services for parents and entire family systems. Some are offered in community settings with clear linkages to schools. Others are offered at schools with firm connections to community agencies. Still others are a combination of school-linked and school-based.

In fact, some such programs and services are designed and operated in a special way. Representative parents, broadly defined, are prepared to organize and mobilize others for collective action in the behalf of the school. In the United States, this innovation increasingly is known as collective parent engagement (Alameda-Lawson, Lawson, & Lawson, 2013; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012).

School-linked, family support programs and services are the other significant innovation (Briar-Lawson, Lawson, Hennon, & Jones, 2001; Lawson et al., 2014). Relatively new to educators and schools because of their student-centered emphasis, family support initiatives offer several benefits for educators, particular schools and entire school districts. For example, attendance and tardiness issues require family support interventions. High student turnover, also known as student transience, is rooted in family stress and instability, extending to housing, food and employment insecurities. So, family support innovations, both school-based and school-linked, become school improvement supports and resources because they address some of the root cause of students' barriers to learning, engagement, and school success.

Parent involvement, collective parent engagement, and family support can be viewed as a symbiotic intervention triad (Lawson et al., 2014). When they are viewed and operationalized in this way, conventional PI can be enhanced, albeit in a unique way.

In this new school-related design, PI is a proximal outcome, not the starting point. In other words, collective parent engagement and family support are innovative strategies for improving and strengthening conventional parent involvement. This parent and family triad is an emergent feature of the new school-related design featured in this book. "Emergent" indicates that many leaders have this triad on their respective drawing boards; implementation has not commenced at this time.

### ***Positive Youth Development***

As indicated in the previous chapter, educators, parents and community professionals world-wide are engaged in a fierce, silent competition. They are competing for children's time, attention and engagement, identities, aspirations, and life goals. Children challenged by social exclusion and social isolation are a special priority. They must become convinced that attending, engaging, succeeding, and staying in school will make a positive difference in their lives. Although educators may be

influential in this work, other people offering alternatives serve as competitors. For example, the shadow economy of the streets, including a life of crime and delinquency, can be a strong competitor when youths feel socially excluded, do not view schools as viable opportunity structures, and lack a sense of belonging to the school and its community partners (Cuervo, Barakat, & Turnbull, 2015).

Educators gain a collaborative advantage when they work with other adults (e.g., parents, community-based professionals, business leaders, university students and faculty) to form a kind of child-centered and school-focused chorus. Working together, and playing their respective parts, adults from all walks of life provide children with harmonious, compelling, and synergistic messages about how best to plan and shape their respective futures. More than a vocational counselling endeavor, the work involves identity development (Oyersman, Johnson, & James, 2011), and it extends to a strong sense of belonging. This sense of belonging starts with a sense of attachment to significant adults such as teachers, coaches, and advisers for student clubs. A sense of belonging extends to a sense of connection to school as well as to particular places associated with a cultural heritage and group membership (Cuervo et al., 2015).

This strategy, which combats social exclusion and social isolation, also entails building opportunity pathways toward adulthood. Increasingly in many parts of the world, it involves the progressive development of cradle-to-career education systems. These new systems unite birth to age three programs, early childhood education elementary, middle and secondary schools, and postsecondary education, including adult career and technical education (Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014; Lawson, 2013; Tough, 2008). These educational opportunity pathways' connections with social integration, economic participation, and civic engagement are special priorities.

The overall approach is known as positive youth development (e.g., Cuervo et al., 2015; Shinn & Yoshikawa, 2008). Priorities for it unite schools and community agencies, and a growing number collect relevant data regarding young people's developmental assets, protective factors, and risk factors. In some places, young people assume shared leadership responsibilities for this important work (Mitra, 2007; Mitra, Lewis, & Sanders, 2013; Lawson, Claiborne, Hardiman, Austin, & Surko, 2007).

The fierce competition for young people's priorities, involvements, identities and goals extends to the relationship between in-school time and out-of-school time. Where school time is concerned, young people spend on average just 9–13 % of their waking hours in school, and in the best case scenarios about half of this time is academically-engaged learning time.

Consider the immediate implication because it is a core feature of the new school-related design. Educators have limited influence over just 5–6 % percent of children's time; yet, they tend to be held accountable and may be sanctioned when test scores and overall academic achievement do not improve. This is not a formula for success. In fact, it represents a set of undesirable conditions in which educators are destined to receive blame.

Leaders of the new school-related design featured in this book have taken stock of this need-as-opportunity. They have prioritized learning during out-of-school time, starting with conventional homework assistance and supports, but extending to multiple kinds of learning. As with health and social services configurations, these out-of-school time learning structures and opportunities are of two kinds. One is school-based (e.g., extended day and afterschool programs). The other is community- and neighborhood-based, but with solid connections to the school. Schools that serve as vibrant hubs for both kinds may be called community learning centers, and a growing number of them also offer digital learning technologies and opportunities.

### ***Comprehensive, Revealing, and Intervention-Useful Data Systems***

Another defining feature of this new school-related design can be introduced quickly. Like the other features described above and below, it is a developmental marker. Comparatively more advanced initiatives have developed considerable sophistication in this important area. Once-separate data systems have been connected and, where and if possible, integrated (Belay et al., 2014; Dartington Social Research Unit, 2001; McLaughlin & London, 2013; Melamid & Brodhar, 2003). Educators benefit from family and community data, and community professionals benefit from school data.

The net result is that children, families, schools, and their residential areas can be viewed together; and with particular reference to the social ecologies for children's attendance, engagement, learning, behavioral challenges, healthy development, and overall well-being.

Thus, all data users gain the collaborative advantage when they jointly develop a data-committed inter-organizational culture (McGrath, Donovan, Schaier-Peleg, & VanBuskirk, 2005).

Of course, data alone are meaningless until such time as leaders determine that they merit the status of evidence. Once this determination has been made, the next step is to find a research-supported program, service, or intervention that is tailor-made for the evidence-based need or problem. Implementation with special interest in fidelity (integrity) follows.

The logic is familiar and straightforward. Intervention efficacy and effectiveness hinge on the match between specialized interventions and the need or problem that must be addressed. This match is difficult to achieve when the data are insufficient, inaccurate, or unavailable. So, when these new designs feature more comprehensive, valid and reliable, and integrated data systems, ones that are "intervention-friendly," an important defining feature for the new school-related design is in evidence.

### ***Universities as Partners, Facilitators, Constraints, and Impediments***

The new school-related design featured in this book is a systems change intervention. As with all manner of systems change frameworks, modifications in one part ultimately influence and are influenced by the one or more of the others. Because of the dominant focus on schools, an important part of the schooling and education system risks being omitted. The reminder here is that higher education and professional development institutions influence and stand to be influenced by this new design (Harkavy, Hartley, Hodges, & Weeks, 2013; Lawson, 2002, 2010, [in press](#)). In service of clarity, this important design feature will be discussed in relation to the university model, setting the stage for the special chapter in this book which is devoted to university-assisted and connected community schools.

The main idea doubles as a core design feature for this new school-related design. Universities and these new kinds of schools need to improve and renew together. Indeed a growing number already are. The late John Goodlad (1994) provided the rationale. Change schools without changing preservice education and professional development programs, and one result is that every new school professional needs additional training. Conversely, change professional education programs without changing schools, and one result is that school experience probably will “wash out” the effects of preservice education and innovative professional development programs.

Formal university-school-community agency partnerships for simultaneous renewal and improvement are in order. Schools, colleges, and departments of education are special priorities for school-related partnerships, including companion needs for partnership specialists (Lawson, [in press](#)). Some such university-school partnership may be developed as part of a university’s community outreach and engagement agenda, ideally extending to state/provincial/national education ministries (Lawson, 2013).

A related core feature follows suit. This new school-related design fundamentally depends on once-separate and sometimes competing professionals joining forces and working together. Ideally, they will achieve interdependent working relationships as they form teams and communities of practice (Lawson, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Van Veen, 2012). However, they need to be prepared together if they are to work together and collaborate. They need interprofessional education and training programs, both preservice and in-service (Corrigan, 1994, Corrigan & Bishop, 1997; Lawson 1996a, 1996b; Øvretveit, Mathias, & Thompson, 1997).

When universities have formed simultaneous renewal partnerships with the kinds of schools featured in this book, and when interprofessional education and training programs facilitate collaborative practice, cross-boundary leadership, and school-family-community coordination, this new school-related design is facilitated and advanced. Arguably, these are defining features of a mature initiative. Absent them, these same priorities will become constraints and even impediments. In the same vein, when university faculty members are unprepared for this agenda, including the

accompanying research opportunities, the challenges multiply. Faculty members in education and the several disciplines known as the human services are special priorities for faculty development in concert with this new school design.

## **From a Core Technology to Core Technologies**

In conventional schools, the core technology is teaching and learning, i.e. what and how teachers teach and what and how students learn. Mirroring this view of the conventional school, the idea of school's core technology has become known singularly as "the instructional core" (e.g., Elmore, 2004). In this conventional frame, learning and instruction are conflated, and both tend to be viewed as falling within the purview of "school," perhaps exclusively so. The time has arrived to separate schooling-as-instruction and learning-as-education.

Two related developments pose challenges to this inherited view of schools' core technology. Both have import for the new school-related design presented in this book.

To begin with, a growing number of alternative designs for schools are stimulated and facilitated by digital teaching and learning technologies. For example, the popular idea of "anytime, anywhere, anyone learning" challenges the traditional idea that school is the nearly exclusive place where serious, meaningful academic learning occurs. In fact, City, Elmore, and Lynch (2012) claim that the future of learning is not the same as the future of schooling, and they raise important questions about the purposes and functions of schools as learning increasingly is separated from schooling.

In the same vein, digital teaching and learning technologies in concert with special educational enrichment opportunities such as summer science camps, on-line courses, and community-based, project-based learning are yielding three consequential, paradoxical outcomes. In certain specialized knowledge and skill domains, a growing number of students have more expertise than their teachers. At the same time, a young person's age no longer predicts and restricts their learning and content mastery, a development that challenges to the idea of age-graded curriculum and instruction. Third, borderless teaching and learning facilitated by technology-enabled, cross-national learning networks provide international interactions and resource exchanges that facilitate powerful learning that transcends particular places. Together these three developments rattle the foundation of schools' social organization, raising questions about conventional school reform strategies (Mehta, Schwartz, & Hess, 2012) and stimulating new school designs such as the one featured in this book.

When these several developments are brought to bear on the new school-related design featured in this book, important questions arise. Do the several defining features of this new school-related design include and emphasize new strategies that influence and enhance the traditional idea of the instructional core? Put differently,

to what extent does this new design prioritize and result in new structures, operational routines and practices that penetrate to classrooms, enhancing teaching and learning and improving the quality of teachers' work with students? If so, how does this occur, who makes it happen, and what are the results? If not, what is the rationale for excluding teachers, instruction and classrooms in the overall design?

But there is a more profound issue, one that pertains to the singular idea of the instructional core, i.e., teaching and learning as the only core technology. The preceding analysis of this new school-related design's rationale and defining features indicates that it is structured to achieve outcomes other than those associated with teaching and learning. In fact, these outcomes are as important as narrowly academic ones, and evaluations of these new designs may miss some of their most important contributions (as outcomes) when they are restricted to conventional academic learning and achievement metrics, especially those that require a long time and better strategies to improve.

In brief, the preceding discussion has laid the groundwork for a more expansive view of these new schools' core technology. *With this new design, family support strategies combined with positive child and youth development structures and strategies are added to teaching and academic learning technologies—and with their proviso that each depends on the other.*

Will such an expansive, enhanced conceptualization of these schools' core technology become one of their defining features? This question is consequential for the work that lies ahead. One answer is understandable and predictable. A community school or a multi-service school is an alternative design for "school." The other answer is path-breaking: A community school, community learning center, multi-service school, or extended-service school is a new social institution.

## **Connecting the Components: A Holistic Design with Manageable Complexity**

Return to Fig. 3.1 and evaluate the big picture view it provides. The left hand side emphasizes start-up priorities and strategies, especially the importance of data-informed planning decisions regarding what is needed in each, somewhat unique context. In this perspective, Fig. 3.1 provides a basic map and a directional compass, but it does not rule out local uniqueness and innovative designs. These basic features place local leaders squarely in control, helping to make the complexity manageable.

Moving to the center of Fig. 3.1, the preceding discussion has provided salient details about the five core components. Insofar as these five priorities are new, Fig. 3.1's emphasis on professional development needs is justifiable. The preceding discussion also has emphasized a related, but separate priority: Organizational capacity, starting with schools and their system offices and extending to community partner agencies.

Figure 3.1 then shifts attention to particular short-term outcomes-as-benefits. Note that all are school-oriented. While this orientation is appropriate and important, it risks losing a special contribution of community schools, extended service schools, community learning centers, and multi-service schools. Community agencies and neighborhood organizations also derive benefits when solid partnerships are developed with schools, especially when educators genuinely collaborate with professionals in these agencies and organizations.

In fact, these partnerships earn the name “collaborative” when leaders and front-line practitioners in schools and external organizations recognize that they depend on each other such that no one can achieve the results they want and need absent the contribution of one or more others (Claiborne & Lawson, 2005, Lawson, 2003a, 2003b, 2004). In other words, agencies and their professionals serve and benefit schools at the same time that educators and schools serve and benefit agencies. Such is one measure of the grand promise for the new school, family, and community design.

To achieve its full potential, this new school-related design needs to be viewed and operated holistically. Especially in the early years of this new design’s implementation, nearly everyone involved is challenged in their respective and collective attempts to achieve such a holistic, integrated view. One reason is that this work amounts to an untold story. Few authors and policy makers have provided practical details about how to make this happen, including who makes it happen, when, where, how fast, and with what kinds of resources.

Finally, three grand questions accompany the development of community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools, and multi-service schools worldwide.

- Are these schools another iteration in the search for improvement strategies for conventional schools, or are they harbingers of new social institutions?
- Are local children and youths, parents, and community leaders dependent clients and services recipients who need to be rescued via services, or are they co-designers and change agents with expertise?
- Who decides; and who decides, who decides?

Together these questions implicate what can be called the politics of this new school design, raising core issues regarding their aims, missions and goals and especially whose interests are served. A small, but important literature raises these questions and others that extend to the how this new school design relates to community development initiatives and participatory democracy (Keith, 1996, 1999; Perkins, 2015).

Fortunately, the leader/authors of the chapters in Part II have addressed these questions and are learning how to do this work. They offer tried and tested solutions as well as lessons learned for others.

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## Chapter 4

# A Planning Framework for the Five Core Components

Hal A. Lawson and Dolf van Veen

**Abstract** This chapter is like a bookend for Chap. 3 because it provides details about the five core components—health services, social services, extended learning, positive youth development, and parent and family innovations. Each is analyzed in greater detail, and examples of relevant program offerings, possible innovations, and relevant research are provided. Significantly, alternative strategies for everyday practice are identified, described and explained—and with a special priority for newcomers who need to learn the language, appreciate the possibilities, and make informed choices. Because these several details risk overwhelming readers, it is important to emphasize that there is no expectation that every new or advanced community school, community learning center, multi-service school or extended service school will offer every possible innovation. Nor is it expected that every leader will adopt all of the strategies that are presented. To the contrary, the aim is to encourage newcomers and veterans to assess local needs, problems, strengths, and opportunities, while taking stock of public policy imperatives such as preparing all young people for work and citizenship in advanced, global societies. The overall planning priority can be expressed in three keywords: Fit for purpose, in our special context, and at this particular time. Viewed in this way, this chapter sets the stage for the advanced exemplars presented in Part II, while also inspiring confidence in readers’ ability to embark on important developmental journey in service of vulnerable children, families, schools, and communities and the educators and service providers charged with their care.

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**Keywords** School-based health services • School-linked social services • Positive youth development • Parent and family engagement • Out-of-school time learning • Twenty-first century skills • School-family-community coordination • Community school • At-risk youths

Fully developed designs for community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools typically have five core components. They are social services, health services, positive youth development, out-of-school time learning, and parent and family engagement initiatives. All were showcased in Fig. 3.1.

Even so, local substitutions for one or more of them are commonplace because local needs and capacity assessments provide data indicating the need for other core priorities. Examples of these other priorities include youth employment, community engagement, neighborhood renewal, and economic development.

This chapter is structured to provide a selective description of and explanation for the aforementioned five components. We proceed with a dual perspective. We combine social analysis with social action. Social analysis provides valuable insight into the rationale for each component. The social action perspective provides examples of what leaders prioritize and do to achieve desirable outcomes. Appendix A provides additional resources for this social action perspective, including “how to do it” technical assistance guides.

We begin with the most popular and complex components—health services, social services, and their relationships. These twin components are the dominant features of multi-service schools and extended services schools—as their names signal. The analysis then turns to positive youth development, out-of-school time learning, and innovative parent and family engagement strategies. Newcomers to this work are advised to proceed slowly, allowing for several readings and perhaps distributing their reading over several days.

## **From Student Support Services to School-Linked Health Services and Social Services**

Figure 3.1 showcased social services and health services as two core components of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools. We begin with social and mental health services designs, also known loosely as community services and also as student (pupil) support services. We do so for three reasons.

These innovative service configurations often launch the new school-related design featured in this book, and they arguably are its most complex component. Most of all, some initiatives stop with services, as indicated by several of the chapters in the Part II.

We start with a familiar configuration. Tradition-bound schools in several nations have long been characterized by specialist professionals who are employed to assist students and teachers. School-based social workers, counselors, psychologists, and nurses top the list. In North America, they are called pupil support professionals and student support professionals. In some European nations, they are called student and teacher support professionals who offer student and teacher support programs (Van Veen, 2006a, 2012).

It is important to note that this “pupil” and “student” language is school-centered and implies a singular focus on academic learning and achievement. It has the potential to contradict plans for and language about whole child development and positive youth development. This student/pupil language signals a school improvement focus and attendant strategies.

Working alone and in teams, student (pupil) support professionals assess student needs, oftentimes in response to teachers’ referrals. Pupils known as “special needs students” and “special education students” are an important priority. To serve these students, school-based professionals draw on two kinds of student assessment data: (1) information provided by the school system and (2) the data they collect. Information from parents/caregivers also is helpful.

Guided by these data, these professionals implement specialized interventions to achieve school-centered outcomes. Outcomes typically include student attendance and on-time arrival, appropriate behavior, classroom engagement, and academic learning and achievement. Data-driven instruction is a special priority. Another priority is social-emotional learning interventions for students whose emotional needs are inseparable from their behavioral problems (e.g., Blank et al., 2009; Downey & Williams, 2010; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Ofsted, 2014; Walsh et al., 2014).

Increasingly the work of these student support professionals is structured by one or two frameworks for intervention planning, implementation, and evaluation (e.g., Sailor, 2009). One is called response-to-intervention (RTI). It lends structure and provides guidance to the direct practices of student support professionals and teachers, whether working alone or together. Under ideal circumstances, RTI facilitates close working relationships between teachers and student support professionals. When such a collaborative arrangement develops, it benefits these adults as well as the students whose needs stimulated these professionals’ interactions.

The other one is Positive Behavior Intervention Systems ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org); Sailor, 2009). It is an over-arching framework for school-wide improvement planning. PBIS, as it is known in shorthand, is rooted in a public health planning framework, and in many schools it provides a superstructure for RTI. PBIS emphasizes three tiers of student support. They are universal promotion and prevention; indicated or selective, early intervention; and crisis-oriented response for children and youth with multiple needs. The same three tiers structure public health planning and interventions, a correspondence that ultimately may facilitate better connections between schools and public health agencies.

Where schools are concerned, the design logic is straightforward and justifiable. Drawing on school data, especially the RTI-driven behavioral and academic assessments completed by teachers and student support professionals, these three tiers are

used to classify groups of students. When intervention language is used, these groups are known as student sub-populations.

Once student sub-populations are identified and classified, two benefits follow. Intervention planning is facilitated, and important school resource development and allocation decisions can be made more efficiently and effectively. For example, data-based, prudent decisions can be made about which students need early intervention services, which ones need expensive, complicated crisis-responsive services, and what kinds of universal prevention services are needed to benefit all students.

The aforementioned, summary description of pupil support services lays the foundation for an important claim. *Conventional student support services designs are fit for purpose, and they are effective when inherited, stand-alone schools are able to achieve desirable outcomes.* In other words, when conventional schools are effective, so are their student support services configurations; and vice versa.

This strong claim directs attention to inter-school and inter-place contrasts, especially contrasts that proceed with a social-ecological framework (e.g., Kerr, Dyson, & Raffo, 2014; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Tate, 2012). Simply stated, when conventional student support services are sufficient and effective in successful schools, it is because these services are fit for purpose, in these special contexts, and at this time.

Put differently, these pupil support services are sufficient and effective in relation to the characteristics of the population being served (demography), the school's organizational ecology (for example, its size and its relations with community agencies), and its social geography (local, place-related characteristics). Here, extra-school child, family and community conditions have a direct influence on the effectiveness of schools' student service systems. For example, these schools and their student support systems are effective and sufficient when families are strong, stable, and beneficially networked; when parents are employed and provide housing and food securities for children; when the community is ripe with programs and services for positive child and youth development; and when residents of all ages are oriented toward social integration, some measure of cultural assimilation, and civic engagement.

In contrast, stand-alone schools and their respective student support systems cannot and do not succeed entirely when educators confront too many challenges, especially ones they cannot address alone in stand-alone schools. Three such challenges were presented in Chap. 2. For example, when growing numbers of vulnerable, diverse people are on the move, including parents and students who initially resist social integration, cultural assimilation and civic engagement; when local communities are challenged by concentrated disadvantage and co-occurring concentration effects; and when the terrible trilogy of poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation creates needs and problems that cause harm to children, parents, family systems, and other local residents, educators working alone in stand-alone schools are unable to achieve desirable outcomes. One reason is that these schools' respective student support services, while necessary and essential, are insufficient to solve these presenting problems and meet co-occurring needs (Adler & Gardner, 1992; Crowson & Boyd, 1993; 1996a; 1996b).



So, when these challenging circumstances prevail, something more is needed to complement and strengthen all such student support initiatives. One solution is local school-linked, health service and social services. When these innovations achieve their potential, a comprehensive, place-based system of services, supports, and resources is in place, and it stands to benefit schools, families, and agencies alike.

In some parts of the world, these comprehensive service system designs are described as “systems of care,” and this language of “care” announces helping professionals’ concern for children, adults, and families in need. The Netherlands provides a visible, important example. School-based and community-based professionals form “youth care teams” and work together to improve both children’s and the school’s outcomes (Van Veen, 2006a; 2012).

### ***Starting with Comprehensive, Community-Based Systems of Care***

Child and family services provided by community health organizations and social service agencies, neighborhood organizations, non-governmental agencies, and governmental entities often develop apart from schools. The developmental progression for what ultimately becomes a new school-linked design is instructive.

Agency leaders embarking on new designs for comprehensive systems of care typically begin with a community-based strategy. They strive to create a formal system that connects community health services and social service agencies and unites them with a common purpose. This design is reflected in a popular name: Comprehensive, community-based systems of care.

These systems of care frameworks are structured to facilitate two kinds of relationships: (1) Organizational partnerships among once-separate health and social service agencies; and (2) Interprofessional communication, consultation, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration involving each agency’s professional staff members. The main planning assumption is noteworthy. At baseline, it is assumed that separate and even competing agencies whose professional staff members rarely communicate or work with each other comprise an important systems problem. This systems problem interferes with the service delivery designs needed to meet child, family, and community needs.

This service delivery system gap is especially apparent and important when children, parents and other adults, and family systems have co-occurring, interlocking needs (as indicated in Chap. 2). Under these conditions, it is not safe to assume that each person or family needing service can travel to each specialized health and social service agency. Nor is it safe to accept two other assumptions: (1) Every specialized agency-based professional charged with delivering services has access to and relies on valid and reliable needs assessment data; and (2) Specialized professionals housed in different agencies share data and intervention information (McLaughlin & London, 2013).

These two assumptions, together with the service needs and gaps they implicate, have been instrumental in the design and implementation of comprehensive, community-based systems of care. Two common features announce and emphasize this new design's inventiveness, intentionality, and causality. These same features illuminate the contrasting features of alternatives.

**Co-location** The first feature is service provider co-location in the same building. This new configuration often is marketed and promoted as “one stop shopping,” and it is based on two main assumptions. First, service access and use will improve because services are located in the same place. For example, when services are co-located in the same facility, service users' time challenges, transportation burdens, and daily hassles will be reduced.

**Integrated Services** The other assumption is that once-separated, specialized professionals who are serving the same individual or family system will share information and, all in all, work together to provide “joined up services” and “integrated services” (Briar-Lawson & Drews, 1998; Edwards, Lunt, & Stamou, 2010; Forbes & Watson, 2012; Gardner, 1992; Hooper-Briar & Lawson, 1994; Lawson & Sailor, 2001; Van Veen, Day, & Walraven, 1998). Alternatively, the new arrangement is called “interprofessional collaboration to achieve services integration” (Hooper-Briar & Lawson, 1994).

To prepare providers and achieve this new service system design, specialized preservice education programs and professional development initiatives called interprofessional education and training are structured and delivered (e.g., Interprofessional Education Collaborative Expert Panel, 2011; Knapp & Associates, 1998; Lawson, 1996a; 1996b, 2014; Øvretveit, Mathias, & Thompson, 1997). The best programs emphasize the all-important connection between professionals' collaboration and the desired health services and social services configurations for individuals and families. Oftentimes called integrated services, these new configurations are facilitated by school-community agency partnerships.

### ***From Systems of Care to School-Based Services and Full-Service Schools***

During the 1990s in the United States, comprehensive community-based systems of care, characterized by relocated and co-located community service providers who collaborate to improve service access and integrate services, expanded to include schools. The design logic had immediate appeal. Children and youth arguably were the most important priorities for many service systems, especially those agencies whose delivery strategies were child-centered, i.e., focused on one child or groups of like children. Children with severe social-emotional challenges oftentimes were a special priority (e.g., Sailor, 2009).

After all, schools provided the organizational homes for the greatest number of children. What better way to gain access to them and increase the probability that they receive services? At the same time, some such schools were struggling to achieve desired results because growing numbers of their students arrived at the schoolhouse door with barriers to healthy development, attendance, engagement, classroom learning, and academic achievement.

Two school-community designs followed from this rationale. The first design started with the invitation to school leaders and student support professionals to join initiatives known as comprehensive, community-based systems of care. This design involved two related strategies, and both were introduced in Chap. 2.

In this scheme, school-based programs and services, especially student support services, would be complemented and augmented by school-linked, community-based programs and services. Toward this end, linkage protocols, communications mechanisms, new practice tools, and shared data systems were progressively developed, especially as community professionals and student support professionals developed the readiness, commitments, and competencies needed to communicate, consult each other, coordinate and ultimately collaborate. The same pattern has been in evidence in other nations (e.g., Edwards et al., 2010; Forbes & Watson, 2012; Van Veen, 1998, 2001).

The other design derived from a timely opportunity that had a high priority on a public policy wish list. First the opportunity: Some of these schools also offered facilities for co-located service providers. Schools lacking these facilities could rent or lease portable trailers or construct new, flexible building structures.

The public policy wish list was instrumental in this second design, and it remains relevant today. A top priority was to reduce program and service costs associated with identifiable children and entire families. Here, governmental economic audits of selected child and family histories yielded a stunning finding. There were million dollar children and multi-million Euro families! These people were so named because the costs of meeting their needs spanned several years, involved multiple service systems, and too frequently were caused by fragmented services delivered too late and even then in piecemeal fashion.

The recommended public policy solution set offered surface appeal. Launch prevention and early intervention initiatives with a special focus on children. Detect their needs earlier and intervene more comprehensively, including parents and families as needed; and do so in a timely, integrated manner. Configure services and connect service providers in such a way that they complement and strengthen each other. Assist educators and facilitate school reform by addressing child and family developmental barriers.

The ultimate prize justified the policy investments. Everybody was a winner—service providers and their agencies, educators and schools, children and families, and public policy leaders who wanted to curtail costs without compromising service quality and outcomes.

The initial designs for the so-called “full service school” derived from this design-oriented rationale. It was popularized by Joy Dryfoos (1994) who observed the pioneering work of the Children’s Aid Society in New York City (see also

Calfee, Wittmer, & Meredith, 1998). Dryfoos hailed this new design as a revolution in health and social services, but she stopped short of claiming that it also was a path-breaking way to redesign schools as social institutions.

Fueled by growing doubt and even skepticism about the extent to which any school provide the full range of services required to meet child, parent, family and community needs, let alone house all of the community service providers needed for such a comprehensive, school-based service design, today the descriptors are more tempered. For example, “multi-service school” and “extended service school” are in vogue in many European nations to describe relocated services with co-located service providers expected to communicate, consult each other, coordinate and collaborate—new operational routines and structural arrangements that extend to student support professionals and perhaps teachers (Van Veen, 2006b; Van Veen et al., 1998).

### ***Varying Combinations of School-Based and School-Linked Services***

There is no universal, magic formula for determining which programs and services are offered at school and which ones are linked to schools, but offered in community agencies. Three planning frameworks are helpful.

Figure 3.1 depicted the first one framework. Use local assessment data to determine which services are needed and where they are best located Anderson-Butcher, et al., 2010; McLaughlin & London, 2013). Then figure out how best to configure partnerships and facilitate interprofessional collaboration in those instances where cross-boundary service provision is needed. All the while, build school and community agency capacity for these expansive service designs.

The second framework is related to the first one. It is to evaluate the extent to which a particular program or service is central to a school or a school district’s central missions and core instructional technology. The greater the correspondence between the program or service and the school’s academic mission or a particular network of schools’ new directions, the more desirable it may be to locate the service and the service provider at the school (Adelman & Taylor, 2005).

The third framework has four parts. In no particular order, they are: (1) Determine which location provides the highest service quality. (2) Ask targeted service and program users about their preferences for service location, remaining ever mindful of the difference between providers’ convenience and service users’ preferences. (3) Anticipate that children and families with co-occurring and interlocking needs will benefit if several services (and their providers) are co-located, i.e., their offices are in the same facility. (4) Whenever possible, give children, and parents, other adults viable choices regarding locations, remaining mindful that schools need not be the only location or the best one (Bosdriesz & Van Veen, 1999; Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997).

This last planning priority often rules out schools, especially those with ancient facilities and incessant competition for limited spaces. On the other hand, when these circumstances prevail, but the school remains the favored location, one alternative is to rent trailers and portable offices and place them on adjacent sites. Another alternative is to construct new buildings. Another choice is to use mini-vans and buses to create mobile health services or social services.

At the time of this writing, new choices are available and required, in part because of fast-changing national policy contexts. In nations such as England and The Netherlands, for example, the public policies that once defined the welfare state are being redefined, and the implications for all manner of social and health services are profound. Especially as funding is reduced in these nations with once-generous services configurations and provisions, opportunities and requirements for innovation are plentiful (Van Veen, 2006b: 2012).

### *Alternative Service Delivery Strategies*

A school-centered design is arguably the dominant one world-wide—as featured in Fig. 3.1. Predictably, it features “student outcomes,” sometimes exclusively. There is no question that the school should be a centerpiece. Nor is there any quarrel with this design’s importance. The question is whether it is the only design; and also whether an exclusive focus on the academic student (as contrasted with whole child development and indicators of child well-being) will yield other desirable outcomes.

To address this two-part question, it is instructive to examine two related choice points. One is the choice of service delivery strategies. The other one, related to the first, is service delivery configurations and outcome domains.

Figure 4.1 provides an inventory or menu of four important alternatives for service delivery strategies. Arguably, the first two are the dominant ones today, especially in school-linked services configurations.

However, it is worth pondering what is lost when the other two strategies are excluded; and also what can be gained when they are part of a comprehensive, coherent program and service planning framework. A companion framework for service delivery configurations with their respective outcome domains enriches understanding of what can be gained with family-focused and family-centered service strategies.

In fact, some innovative leaders add a fifth strategy. They emphasize neighborhood-based or community-based service delivery strategies in service of better place-based outcomes. Examples of these outcomes in urban communities include neighborhood collective efficacy for children, reductions in family transience, reduced crime and delinquency, and improved home ownership (Kimbrough-Melton & Melton, 2015; Patterson & Silverman, 2014; Sampson, 2012).

Examples of Programs/Services for Improved Child and Youth Well-being

Medical Services, including vision screening  
 Dental Services  
 Mental Health Services  
 Juvenile Justice Services, including gang prevention  
 Child Welfare Services, including special services for foster care children  
 Child Care Services, especially for working mothers  
 Positive Child & Youth Development Programs and Services  
 Substance Abuse Intervention and Prevention Services  
 Pregnancy Prevention and Response Services  
 Youth-focused Homeless Services

Examples of Programs/Services for the Academically-oriented Student

Special Education Services  
 Supplementary Educational Services, including tutoring, mentoring, and coaching  
 Social and Emotional Learning Services  
 Positive Behavior Support Services  
 Counseling Services, especially for careers and educational requirements for them  
 Psychological Services, especially personality assessments  
 School Social Work Services, especially those directed at poverty-related barriers  
 Parent Education Services  
 Crisis-responsive Services, including services directed at student trauma  
 Comprehensive Services for English Language Learners  
 Truancy Services  
 Dropout Prevention and Early Intervention Services

Examples of Programs/Services for a Positive School Climate

Diversity Preparedness & Cultural Competence Programs/Services  
 Anti-bullying Programs and Services  
 Response-to-Intervention Protocols & Positive Behavior Intervention Systems  
 Burnout and Dropout Prevention Programs for Adults  
 Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs  
 Secondary Traumatic Stress Prevention and Intervention Programs

Examples of Parent Empowerment and Family Support Programs/Services

Food/Nutrition Programs and Services  
 Housing Programs and Services  
 Employment Counseling and Services  
 Domestic Violence Programs and Services  
 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Programs and Services  
 Parent-to-Parent and Family-to-Family, Parent-led Services  
 Family-centered Homeless Services

**Fig. 4.1** Four domains for school-linked health and social services

## ***Alternative Service Delivery Configurations and Outcome Domains***

The school's student support services, which primarily are structured to help and support pupils, provide one service delivery configuration. Vital to all designs, when this one is all that is offered to vulnerable people living in challenging places, huge gaps exist and multiple needs are not addressed. Indeed these needs may not be identified correctly because educators working in stand-alone schools lack needed competencies, and they typically do not have access to community data. The result is that some children will not be ready to attend school regularly, engage, learn, and succeed in school.

Three other designs have been developed in response to this need. One focuses on child well-being and positive youth development. This particular design starts with schools, but also extends to family and community environments. It is framed by a social-ecological understanding of child well-being and positive youth development—and with special interest in how actions and transactions in one ecological setting (e.g., the family or a community agency) transfer and perhaps benefit those in another ecological setting such as the child's classroom (Lawson & Lawson, 2013). Framed in this way, services planning, implementation and delivery proceed with detailed examinations of long-standing boundaries, and they prioritize boundary-crossing and boundary blurring interventions (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Edwards et al., 2010; Halley, 1997; Valli, Stefanski, & Jacobson, 2014; Williams, 2012).

The second design also is founded on social ecological frameworks. However, this one shifts the focus from individual children to parent and family well-being—where parent is broadly defined to include “caregivers” and “family” refers to family system. So-called “two-generation helping strategies” have been developed accordingly (Ascend & the Aspen Institute, 2012; Ross, 2015). Grounded in promising research findings, these strategies are premised on the idea that one of the best ways to help children is by supporting their parents and strengthening their families. Reciprocally, parents/caregivers are more receptive to services when their children also are involved and stand to benefit.

A third design moves from people-related outcomes to an important organizational outcome—improved school climate. The main idea, which is depicted in Fig. 3.1, is noteworthy. Just as the best organic garden facilitates the development of healthy plants, a positive school climate provides an ideal setting for the development of healthy, happy, and productive people—adults and children alike. School climate programs and services are developed and implemented accordingly (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013; Valli et al., 2014). Individually and together these programs and services address four important relationships: (1) Educator-to-educator; (2) Educator-to-student; (3) Educator-to-parent and other community adult leaders; and (4) Student-to-student.

Like the other three designs, school climate programs and services are school-based, school-linked or both. Figure 4.2 provides examples of all four designs. There are others—and with the reminder that “home-grown designs” not listed in this figure diagram are the norm, not the exception.

Student-centered Services:

Services are school-centered. They are focused on the academically-oriented pupil in the context of the school and with particular interest in appropriate behavior, social skills development, and classroom engagement.

Child-and Youth-centered Services:

Services are structured to maintain and improve healthy child and youth development. While they include school-related needs, problems, opportunities, and aspirations, these services are not limited to them. Services are structured to align school, community agency, family, and neighborhood ecologies, providing youngsters with clear, comprehensive, coherent and consistent services and accompanying communications.

Family-focused Services:

Services are directed to children and youths, but they are planned and delivered in the context of their family systems. In comparison to child- and youth-centered services, family-focused services are more comprehensive, taking into account parent-child attachments and interaction patterns and salient family dynamics that influence child well-being and school performance.

Family-centered Services:

Services are planned for entire family systems in their various forms—and with a key innovation. Family members, particularly parents/caregivers are joint designers of service designs, implementation protocols, evaluation systems, and next steps planning.

**Fig. 4.2** A simple inventory of four service delivery strategies

### ***The Special Importance and Untapped Potential of School-Community Health Services***

In nations lacking universal, accessible health care, school-based and school-linked health centers are essential components of community schools, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools. In nations with comprehensive, universal health care, community-based systems must be connected to schools, and inter-sectoral policy innovations are required (Van Veen, 2001; 2006b). None of this design and implementation work is easy, and a combination of national uniqueness and local school-community differences complicate it.

As in the case of social services, leaders confront a major decision about health service and health center designs. Are children and youth, sometimes narrowly viewed as students, the primary targets and beneficiaries? Alternatively, are school-based and school-linked health clinics and services configured so that they become medical homes for entire family systems, complete with family-centered interventions (O’Leary et al., 2014)?

Typically school-based health clinics and centers provide a full range of medical, dental, and vision (eye) services. Additionally, mental health professionals in these



centers complete assessments and implement interventions. In secondary schools, substance abuse screening and interventions may be joined with mental health services. Students' reproductive health, including safer sex education programs, also may be on the menu of services (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2012).

The best school-based models combine health education and promotion programs—as academic curriculum mainstays—with health clinics. When this combination is in evidence, the idea of comprehensive school-community health programs is in the process of being realized. Ideally, students are treated to life-enhancing and –saving health education and promotion programs as part of their curriculum, and their medical and mental health needs are met in a timely fashion by qualified medical, dental, and mental health professionals (Adelman & Taylor, 2014).

These school/academic and medical/treatment configurations are founded on research indicating that “health is academic” and also that academic problems create health problems. More concretely, healthier students are better learners (Basch, 2010). Health professionals benefit because school-related problems, especially early school leaving (Downes, 2011; Dupéré et al., 2015; Freeman & Simonsen, 2015) track into myriad health problems in young and older adults alike.

In an ideal configuration, health education teachers, sport and physical education teachers, nutritionists, and health clinic professionals, especially physicians and nurses, collaborate in the design and delivery of a comprehensive, coherent educational and service system. The achievement of this ideal depends in large part better preparation programs for educators and health professionals, particularly interprofessional education and training programs in which educators and health professionals learn together so they are able to work together. Community schools, multi-service schools, and extended services schools will advance to the extent that suitably designed preservice education programs and professional development programs are provided.

Because school-based health centers and school-linked health services are relatively new phenomena, and nations with generous universal health care systems may not need them, the evidence in support of their effectiveness and overall impacts is limited, and much of it comes from The United States. Although it may be tempting to assume that “if you’ve seen one school-based health center, you’ve seen them all,” the evidence suggests otherwise. Considerable variability appears to be the norm, which recommends against wholesale assumptions about what all centers prioritize and accomplish.

For example, school-based and school-linked health clinics for adolescents might be expected to routinely complete substance abuse assessments and interventions. Unfortunately, a recent survey in New York State suggests otherwise (Harris, Shaw, Lawson, & Sherman, *in press a*; *in press b*). Studies like these raise important questions about health service providers' readiness and competencies for the full range of health services vulnerable children, youth, and families need. These questions stand as developmental milestones for future development, and all such future work can be informed by some promising findings.

Predictably, the young people who benefit the most are ones whose families have limited incomes and lack private health insurance. So when youngsters and their

families gain access to health care, their quality of life is enhanced (Wade, Mansour, Line, Huentleman, & Keller, 2008). Young people who use these health services report that service use is facilitated by an important combination of confidentiality, convenience and youth-friendly staff, and they also report that these centers are important providers of family planning services and counselling services (Soleimanpour, Geierstanger, Kaller, McCarter, & Brindis, 2009).

Do school-based health clinics and school-linked health services improve academic outcomes? Although the relationship among improved access to health care, health services utilization, better health outcomes, and improved school-related outcomes has immediate appeal, research and evaluation studies have not documented this complex connection (Geierstanger, Amaral, Mansour, & Walters, 2004; Mason-Jones et al., 2012).

Given manifest variability among fledgling school-based and school-linked health centers, generalizable findings regarding whole school populations' academic achievement improvements may be evasive. Arguably one pathway to planning and evaluating school-based and school-linked health services is to focus specifically on identifiable sub-populations where the differences will be profound. Homeless youths are one example, and children in foster care (looked after children) are another.

Another pathway is consistent with the idea of a community school, community learning center, multi-service school, and extended-service school as a new institutional design. In this perspective, child well-being is the prized outcome—with academic learning and achievement as a critically important component. When child well-being, extending to the well-being of entire family systems, is the prized outcomes, the contributions of health centers and services are self-evident.

### *Co-requisites for All School-Linked Services Designs*

School-based and -linked health services as well as social services have immediate appeal on the drawing board. Implementing them, especially in the early years of their development, has been a painstaking enterprise. Three reasons help to account for the difficulties.

Typically leaders and advocates have assumed too much prior knowledge on the part of the service providers expected to implement these school-linked services. Leaders also have given short shrift to organizational readiness and capacity, perhaps forgetting that it takes capacity to build capacity (Hatch, 2009). Third, leaders have under-estimated the challenges of cross-boundary work, starting with inter-professional collaboration (e.g., Edwards et al., 2010; Forbes & Watson, 2012; Lawson, 2014; Øvretveit et al., 1997; Van Veen, 2006a) and extending to cross-boundary

leadership structures, strategies, and learning mechanisms (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Blank, Berg, & Melaville, 2006; Halley, 1997; Miller, 2007, 2008; Van Veen, 2001, 2006b; Williams, 2012).

Fortunately, over the past 10 years researchers, evaluators, and new school designers have addressed this gap between implementation reality and aspiration-possibility. The chapters in section 2 of this book provide evidence in support of this claim.

For now, it is important to emphasize that the progressive move toward a comprehensive, school-linked health services and social services system depends fundamentally on identifiable co-requisites. The main idea cannot be over-emphasized. If you lack the co-requisites, the service system you need and progressively implement will not achieve its potential.

Figure 4.3 has been developed accordingly. It provides examples of the most important co-requisites for the health services and social services component of the new school design. It also enables the introduction of an important distinction and an equally important relationship.

As introduced in Chap. 2, two units of planning and analysis—organizations and people—are important priorities. To realize the potential of school-linked health and social services, schools and district offices *as organizations*—in tandem with their community agency partners—must have the requisite organizational capacity (Hatch, 2009). Examples of organizational capacity start with accessible, reliable, and valid data systems, computer technologies, and facilities for service provision and team meetings, and they extend to cross-boundary, inter-organizational data systems and shared facilities. Oftentimes, the work starts with developing these capacities or alternatively prioritizing them in tandem with school-specific capacities.

In addition to organizational capacities, people—educators, service providers, and other adults working in the new system—need new competencies. For example, they need to possess collaborative competence for working together (Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Lawson, 2003, 2004; 2009a; 2009b; 2014). They especially need assistance for the development and use of new, cross-boundary practice tools (Edwards et al., 2010) and linkage protocols (Anderson-Butcher, Iachini, & Wade-Mdivanian, 2007).

All new health and social designs hinge on both organizational capacity (and inter-organizational capacity) and people's new competencies. Figure 3.1 was configured accordingly, emphasizing organizational capacities and professional development for new competencies. Unfortunately, one or both often are over-looked, and unfounded assumptions typically are made about how fast they can be developed. When these conditions prevail, the grand potential for school-linked, health and social services designs is not realized, and child, family, school, and community needs are not addressed.

- Appoint, train, support, and reward a school-family-community coordinator (also called a services coordinator and a resource coordinator), specifying this person's roles, relationships with other professionals at the school and in the community, and central accountabilities, especially the priority for boundary-crossing, intermediary leadership that results in an efficient and effective alignment of school-owned and -operated student support services and community-based health and social services linked to school.
- In close collaboration with the principal and representative community agency leaders, develop a collaborative, cross-boundary leadership structure for each school, one in which the school-family-community coordinator serves as a go-between and relieves both school and community leaders of responsibilities that cause them to experience role overload and role conflict.
- Form an executive-level leadership, management, governance, and resource development-allocation council consisting of superintendents or their designated officials, top level agency leaders, governmental officials, and community development specialists and planners.
- Use the executive leadership council to formalize partnerships among schools, community organizations, governmental agencies, universities and other service providing organizations by means of memoranda of understanding and formal contractual arrangements that specify each entity's responsibilities and accountabilities with details about how resources will be generated, allocated, and evaluated.
- Develop a formal system with explicit communications mechanisms, assessment tools, data collection and use protocols, service delivery protocols, and record-keeping mechanisms.
- Develop decision-making criteria and role/responsibility protocols for determining when service providers work alone and when they are expected to work together.
- Poll targeted service users, particularly parents and secondary school students, using their information gained to make consequential decisions about service location and access, especially which programs and services are offered at the school, in a community organization, or both.
- In school systems where there are no student support professionals and pupil support services at baseline, consult teachers, principals, and representative student leaders when making decisions about which programs and services need to be offered at school sites.
- Consult special education teachers in all decisions regarding which services will be located at school and which ones will be located in an external organization, finding out how to make these teachers' work with children and their parents easier and better.
- Consult and work closely with each school's building leadership team, particularly teacher leaders when developing school-linked services configurations, ensuring that these new configurations are connected to existing program and service frameworks such as RTI and PBIS.
- Ensure that the services located at the school respond to teachers' and students' perceived and assessed needs for comprehensive, responsive, and effective learning supports and resources, particularly services that improve attendance and on-time arrival, classroom engagement, behavior, student safety, and academic learning.
- Strive to develop comprehensive, integrated school-community data systems, which yield accurate, reliable and useful data for sub-population identification and intervention planning.
- Assess professional development priorities and organizational capacity-building needs, allocating resources and implementing adult learning programs in tandem with organizational monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

**Fig. 4.3** Key examples of co-requisites for a comprehensive school-linked health and social service system

## **A Third Core Component in the New Design: Positive Youth Development**

Positive youth development (PYD) provides a new discourse for a school's visions, missions, goals, and functions. PYD discourse and priorities are especially salient to middle schools and secondary schools serving preadolescent and early adolescent students, while in elementary schools the favorite description is whole child development.

Whether the focus is educating the whole child or facilitating positive youth development in service of child well-being, this new discourse is holistic. It announces the limits of an exclusive focus on the pupils' (students') academic engagement, learning and achievement. This student and pupil language mirrors the professional categories in other systems—for example, the patient in medicine, the client in social services, and the customer or consumer in business. In all such cases, professionals' proceed with a narrow, technical-procedural view of people, and they often claim to know and deliver all that their clients, patients, students, and customers want and need. These perspective extends to their host organizations—schools, community health and social service agencies, medical clinics and hospitals.

Where schools are concerned, whole child development and PYD discourses and child well-being priorities expand this view of the student-as-client who attends the narrowly academically-oriented school. All such PYD priorities and strategies are founded on a research-supported reality—namely, that schools, alongside families, provide one of the most important developmental contexts for young people (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

This expanded priority for healthy development and overall child and youth well-being is founded on a growing reality. Due to changing family dynamics and owing to the new school-related design featured in this book, considerable numbers of children and youth may spend more time in schools than they enjoy in their homes.

The two main imperatives for PYD derive from this reality. Design and operate schools in accordance with the expansive research on PYD—and with the assumption that as PYD becomes an organizing theme, improvements in attendance, on-time arrival, engagement, learning and school completion will follow. At the same time, coordinate PYD initiatives in schools with their counterparts in community agencies, neighborhood organizations, and family systems, perhaps linking these efforts with positive behavior intervention systems.

Framed in this way, PYD planning in this new school design targets at least nine important priorities. They are listed and described briefly in Fig. 4.4. All enjoy research support (e.g., Allan & Catts, 2012; Cuervo, Barakat, & Turnbull, 2015; Forbes & Watson, 2012; Mills & McGregor, 2014; Mitra, Lewis, & Sanders, 2013; Shinn & Yoshikawa, 2008). Together they enable a proactive planning checklist as well as an important assessment inventory for all manner of schools.

#### A Sense of Connection to School

Here, the operative planning construct typically is school engagement, and it facilitated and reinforced by involvement in school-sponsored activities, especially those offered by multi-service, extended-service, and community schools. It paves the way for regular attendance, on-time arrival, and classroom engagement.

#### A Sense of Attachment to a Least One Caring Adult at School, Ideally a Teacher

Note the difference between this priority and the previous one. School is a place where connections need to be made and identities are developed. Attachment to an adult is a social-emotional relationship. Ideally, schools offer both, and each reinforces the other.

#### Social-emotional Learning and Competency Development

Social-emotional learning involves the knowledge, skills, abilities, and sensitivities needed to get along with others; resolve conflicts without resorting to violence; appreciate and welcome cultural diversity, communicate effectively; refuse invitations and opportunities for unhealthy behaviors; and navigate the pathways toward school and life success and healthy development.

#### Voice and Choice

As the saying goes, kids “vote with their feet” and one of the ways to get them to show up and participate is to enfranchise them with choices. In fact, youths’ leadership in school improvement is an important, but still under-developed, resource, one that doubles as an engagement strategy.

#### Personalization with a Priority for Possible Selves

Each young person is valued as a unique personality and feels “special” in a positive, self-concept building way. This sense of being known, valued, and accepted extends to the young person’s family, place of residence, gender, ethnicity-cultural background, and sexual preference. It includes a school climate with inclusive (non-discriminatory) and enabling (non-oppressive) features.

#### Membership in One or More Peer Groups with Pro-social Orientations.

Although educators cannot determine peer group memberships and affiliations, they have the ability to influence them. For example, small learning communities in classrooms offer this possibility for influence, and so do school activities in which students are engaged in groups and teams.

#### Social Capital Networks

Young people have access to networks of adults and other youths, and these networks provide social supports as well as economic, educational, and healthy development resources.

#### Harmonious and Synergistic Home, Community, and School Environments

Absent harmonious, mutually-reinforcing environments, parents, community leaders, and educators likely will contradict each other and work at cross-purposes. To prevent this common problem and to improve outcomes, the main idea is to develop common purposes founded on shared norms, expectations, and rules. This approach benefits adults as well as young people.

**Fig. 4.4** Nine examples of positive youth development priorities for new school designs

### Viable Opportunity Pathways with Identity Development Supports and Resources

Young people challenged by inter-generational poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation need to believe that their investments in learning and educational success will enable them to achieve their aspirations, especially when post-secondary education with advanced competence is a practical necessity for civic engagement and employment readiness. They need help envisioning and planning “possible selves” as they evaluate “avoidant selves.”

**Fig. 4.4** (continued)

This latter claim is especially important. This PYD emphasis is a recommended best practice for every kind of school, but especially so for the new school-related design featured in this book.

The last priority listed in this figure is an emergent priority in nations and locales involved in so-called “Cradle-to-Career Systems Building” (Lawson, 2013), albeit with alternative names. The main idea is to connect now-separate schools and levels of schooling (e.g., preschools and early childhood education, K-12 schools, and postsecondary education, including adult career and technical education). Firm transition mechanisms from one school to another and one level to another are mainstays, and together they provide opportunity pathways to higher educational attainment and the avenues to success it opens.

Figure 3.1 emphasizes such system-wide program and services planning—driven by local assessment data (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010; McLaughlin & London, 2013). Health services and social services, by themselves, are essential, but insufficient to this system-building enterprise.

Opportunity pathways are merely possibilities unless young people are convinced that they are able to capitalize on them. Children and youths also must believe that, if they stay the course and strive to succeed in school, they ultimately will gain access to meaningful, rewarding employment and accompanying lifestyles. This PYD work involves more than conventional health services and social services.

Oyersman and her colleagues (2011) have demonstrated that this aspect of the PYD agenda is identity-work. This identity work with young people compels a collective effort involving educators, service providers, youth advocates and entire family systems, and it has a dual character. *Possible selves*—founded on aspirations and visions for all a young person wants to become and can accomplish—are evaluated against *avoidant selves*—images and explicit models of problem behaviors and attendant harms to self and others. PYD efforts directed at the academically-oriented “student” need to be expanded accordingly to prioritize identity development—possible selves and avoidant selves. These efforts will be more potent if they are dovetailed with the strategies implemented by school-linked health and social service providers.

## **A Fourth Core Component: Out-of-School Time Learning**

Twenty-first century digital technologies—computers, mobile phones, MP3 players, smart boards, and other devices—are tangible indicators of the fantastic idea of “anytime, anywhere, anyone learning.” Multi-service schools, extended service schools, community learning centers, and community schools are special beneficiaries and providers. Both in this new school design and in conventional schools, this idea anytime, anywhere, anyone learning is associated with three consequential shifts.

### ***From Training/Direct Instruction to Learning***

One shift is from systems of training and instruction to learning systems, especially self-directed learning systems in places where access to qualified teachers poses a never-ending challenge (Mitra, Lewis, & Sanders, 2013; City, et al., 2012). Figure 4.5 provides an exemplary contrast between training systems and learning systems, albeit with an important reminder. These two systems are not mutually-exclusive. In fact, manifold benefits will be reaped when they are combined coherently.

### ***From the School as the Sole Seat for Learning to Out-of-School Time Learning***

The second shift begins with a twentieth century, industrial age baseline, one that positions and views the school as the sole organization for children’s learning and instruction. This shift involves three related moves: (1) A new focus learning and pedagogy during out-of-school time (OST), including places other than schools where this learning can occur, together with people other than certified teachers who orchestrate learning; and (2) Structures and strategies for connecting OST learning and instruction to school-based and –delivered learning and instruction. (3) The appointment and deployment of specialist people who are charged with cross-boundary learning and instruction so that OST learning benefits teachers and schools at the same time that school-based learning and instruction benefit OST programs and services.

Mirroring health and social services designs, OST initiatives in multi-service schools, extended service schools, community learning centers, and community schools are both school-based and school-linked. However, a special need arises with regard to OST programs and services.

Language (terminology) for programs matters. An extended day program (with extended learning strategies) means more school after school. Afterschool programs and OST programs usually are synonyms, especially when educators, parents and



<b>Primary Target(s)</b>	Individual students in the context of groups (classes)	Individuals, groups,
<b>Locus of Expertise</b>	The instructor, teacher, trainer	Participants and teachers
<b>The Curriculum</b>	Pre-packaged curricula with a clear beginning and end; and with predetermined, usually measurable outcomes	Learning opportunities indexed against 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills & provided/offered to individuals, groups, and teams in a variety of settings
<b>Primary Materials</b>	Lectures, written modules, textbooks, & manuals	Structured problem-solving tools and protocols; web resources; e-resources
<b>Curriculum Design Challenge</b>	Make the curriculum “teacher- and trainer proof”	Ensure authentic assessments & best learning practices to achieve desired outcomes
<b>Key Problem(s)</b>	Student/trainee resistance & lack of engagement; lack of differentiated instruction; transfer of training problems; learning retention challenges	Preparing expert learning facilitators; creating & connecting supportive settings; engaging, empowering, & retaining reluctant learners
<b>Temporal Orientation</b>	Bracketed by the hours/time schedules of schooling	Anytime, anywhere
<b>Power Relations</b>	Asymmetrical: Professional knows best	Power sharing: The limits of expert knowledge as learners progress & develop mastery
<b>Trainer’s/Teacher’s Orientation</b>	Develop specific subject competencies in each individual by disseminating knowledge and skills	Develop proficiency/mastery in 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities; accelerating & extending learning whenever possible
<b>View of the Student/Learner</b>	Dependent client who needs to listen, comply, behave, and learn	Collaborative member of a community of practice who jointly constructs learning; “no learner left behind”
<b>View of Teacher’s Needs and Priorities</b>	Classroom management; development of pedagogical content knowledge via training & embedded professional development	New learning theories, models, strategies, protocols, and tools for extended, expanded, accelerated, connected learning
<b>Support Structures for Professional Practice</b>	Expert teachers enjoy autonomy and practice privately; individuals are targeted for professional development	Professional learning communities among teachers and learning communities involving learners and teachers
<b>View of students/learners</b>	Dependent client	A learning partner who may be able to provide embedded professional development for the instructor
<b>Organization of students/learners</b>	Place-bound, age-graded classrooms structured by standards-based, lock-step curricula	Voluntary, cross-age, and mixed mastery learning communities that interact and learn together during in-school and out-of-school time

Fig. 4.5 Selective contrasts between learning systems and instruction-as-training systems

<b>Incentive/Reward System</b>	Grading systems that sort, classify, place, and label individuals	Proficiency/competency systems such as portfolios that incorporate extra-school learning, competency development, & certificates
<b>Implicit Image of Schooling, Learning, and Instruction</b>	One best system	Multiple pathways to success
<b>Orientation to Place and Local Contexts</b>	Place- and context-insensitive: The norms of generalizability & transferability emphasize replication & standardization	Place- and context-dependent, including priorities for various kinds of place-based learning and pedagogies
<b>Accountability Structures</b>	Involuntary and external: Rule-based and procedures-oriented	Voluntary and improvement-oriented: Results- and performance-based
<b>Role of Local Community Leaders</b>	Indirect: Provide resources, assistance, and supports that enable professional educators to do their jobs so that schools achieve their goals	Direct, active facilitation of multiple kinds of learning, via structures and processes for extended, expanded, accelerated, and connected learning for people of all ages

Fig. 4.5 (continued)

community leaders have come to grips with the limitations of offering only school-based, OST programs and services. So, for example, both afterschool and OST programs may be offered in community agencies, neighborhood organizations, and homes (Jacobson & Blank, 2015).

### ***Alternative Learning Strategies and Programs***

Language also matters with regard to the kinds of learning prioritized during OST, especially those that enable adults and children alike to capitalize on discretionary time and the learning-related resources offered by adults other than school teachers who work with kids in places other than schools. So, for example, learning can be *accelerated* in OST programs, benefiting students who are ready to advance their learning and development, including new directions for their learning; and especially in ways that schools that outstrip the capacities of conventional schools. At the same time learning can be *expanded* beyond the opportunities that are feasible during the school day, especially with the inherent restrictions of classrooms and formal curricula. Place-based, critical pedagogy, which enables young people to learn from their respective locales and also improve them (Gruenewald, 2003), is a special kind of expansive pedagogical strategy, one that also promotes identity development and a sense of belonging (Cuervo et al., 2015).

Educators, schools, and kids-as-students benefit the most when OST programs provide *connected* learning, i.e., formal mechanisms and designated people link

OST learning with classroom learning, benefiting teachers and students alike (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, & Wade-Mdivanian, 2009; Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997; Van Veen, 2001; 2006b).

Connected learning is especially powerful and consequential when OST leaders discover innovative learning strategies for youngsters who need alternatives other than the pedagogies teachers are able to implement in classrooms. The reminder here is that teachers unavoidably are constrained by classroom and curriculum demands. These constraints are especially apparent when teachers must meet the needs of several classes consisting of heterogeneous students—and even more so when many of their students are first language learners and come to class with identifiable learning barriers.

Under these conditions, teachers have few opportunities to experiment and find out what works with particular students and groups of students. OST programs provide this opportunity. For example, OST leaders and their programs in the Netherlands proved to be successful with chronically-absent students in ways that conventional schools could not attempt (Van Veen & Berdowski, 2000). So, when OST leaders and program providers find out what works, it is important that teachers also benefit. The idea of connected learning provides this benefit.

Figure 4.6 provides an exemplary inventory of OST learning strategies. They are not always exclusive of current school-based learning and teaching strategies. For example, conventional elementary, middle, and secondary schools routinely provide generic and subject-specific service learning opportunities. These generic service learning opportunities typically involve student volunteers who learn about civic engagement by lending a helping hand to others.

The subject-specific service learning opportunities enable students to apply their knowledge and deepen their expertise as they use it to serve others. Both service learning options are predicated on twin ideas. Students learn as they serve and they serve as they learn, whether in OST programs, “regular school,” or both.

The progressive shift toward out-of-school time learning—extended, accelerated, personalized, and connected—corresponds to and is facilitated by three others: (1) The shift from teacher-directed and controlled pedagogy to self-directed learning systems, especially ones enabled by digital technologies; (2) The shift from pedagogies for individuals, grounded in psychological science, to learning strategies and systems for groups, teams, and communities of practice, grounded in social learning theories; (3) The shift from school-based, student grading systems to personalized, digital portfolios that encompass and record all relevant learning and developmental experiences, achievements, and credentials.

Together these shifts provide two important reminders; (1) education and learning systems transcend schooling, which means that future of learning and the future of schooling are not automatically the same (City, et al., 2012); and (2) Community schools, community learning centers, extended service schools, and multi-service school provide timely, important opportunities to augment the strengths of conventional pedagogy while providing the organizational structures, programs and services, and family/community leader relationships that better serve vulnerable people living in challenging places (Jacobson & Blank, 2015; Fisher & Klieme, 2013).

### More Academic Learning in Extended Day Programs at School

- ❑ **Explicit academic learning** is essentially more school during non-school hours. Whether offered in schools, homes or community agencies, this learning typically replicates and extends school instruction. It proceeds via coaching, tutoring, direct instruction, subject matter enrichment, and academic remediation. Examples include tutoring, homework assistance, and differentiated instruction.

### Expanded, Accelerated, and Connected Learning During Out-of-School Time

- ❑ **Embedded academic learning** in which youngsters' favorite activities are harnessed for their instructional power. For example, a basketball player learns geometry by applying it to her/his performance. An aspiring musician increases his/her literacy and language skills by reading about music theory and marketing.
- ❑ **Community-based, project-centered learning** whereby young people apply, test, and utilize academic subject matter to frame and solve important problems and capitalize on timely opportunities. For example, youths apply science content as they solve a pollution problem, and they apply writing and analytical skills when they write newsletters and newspaper articles about pollution and their work to prevent it.
- ❑ **Community-based service learning** in which young people volunteer and gain preparation for civic engagement and democratic citizenship. They serve while learning and learn while serving in community organizations, business and corporations, and neighborhood agencies. Duly engaged young people often gain new career awareness while increasing their curiosity and motivation to learn academic subject matter and succeed in school.
- ❑ **Technology-driven and –assisted learning** (“e-learning”) in which young people rely on information age technologies such as computers, cell phones, MP3 players, and the digital mass media (e.g., global television). This learning can be self-directed; peer-assisted and –governed; team-based, and social network-facilitated (local, regional, national, and global networks consisting of diverse learners of all ages).
- ❑ **Socio-emotional learning** in which children and youths develop personal-social responsibility, emotional control, social competence for problem solving and positive interactions with others, and conflict resolution skills and strategies. This kind of learning can be offered in special social emotional learning programs or it can be embedded in other kinds of programs (e.g., sport programs, arts programs, music programs, drug prevention programs, non-violence programs, anti-bullying programs).
- ❑ **Place-based, ecologically-focused learning** that harnesses the student engagement potential and the instructional power of local ecologies—land, rivers and creeks, lakes and oceans. Typically the focus is on sustainable development priorities in local environments; and with special interest in the interplay between “the local and the global.” This kind of learning

**Fig. 4.6** A simple inventory of out-of-school time learning strategies

becomes a critical pedagogy of place when it focuses on explicit threats to human well-being and environmental harms, especially those that risk permanent damage (e.g., nuclear waste seepage into a local streambed). In some instances, young people learn how to organize and mobilize for collective action to advance environmental protection and clean-up campaigns.

- ❑ **Blended learning** in which young people are treated to powerful combinations of e-learning, group-team learning, personalized learning, place-based learning, and conventional instruction. Blended learning takes advantage of youths' interest in internet technologies, including their ability to "research problems" on the net.
- ❑ **Job-embedded and –connected learning** in which young people's work experiences, whether paid or via an internship, is the centerpiece for extended, accelerated, and connected learning, particularly linked learning that combines soft skills, technical work skills, literacy and communication skills, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics knowledge.
- ❑ **Arts-based Learning** in which young people explore themselves, learn, and gain career readiness as they pursue enrichment opportunities in the creative and performing arts.
- ❑ **Others?**

**Fig. 4.6** (continued)

### ***Twenty-First Century Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities***

The third consequential shift focuses on a new set of outcomes known in many parts of the world as "Twenty-first Century Skills" (Partnership for Twenty-first Century Skills, 2015). Once these outcomes are made explicit, it becomes apparent that learning and instructional processes also must change. Together, OST programs and school curricula and instructional practices are being progressively redesigned to focus on Twenty-first Century skills and learning technologies. Figure 4.7 provides a representative summary.

The representative Twenty-first Century Skills listed in this figure are ones prioritized by employers, and they also are ones needed for active, productive citizenship in global democratic societies. Perhaps above all, they signal the shift from what can be viewed darkly as "student warehousing" and "people processing" in industrial age schools (Lipsky, 1980) to student learning and healthy development in twenty-first century community schools and multi-service schools.

Four noteworthy contrasts indicate the significance of this shift.

- Industrial age school systems emphasized efficiency in processing and instructing groups of students. In contrast, today's schools emphasize effectiveness as demonstrated in value-added outcomes for all students.
- Industrial age systems gave immediate credibility and legitimacy to credentials, diplomas, and certificates. Today's systems also demand demonstrated competence and advanced mastery without which degrees and credentials are hollow achievements.

- ❖ Mastery of Core Academic Subjects
  - English, reading, and language arts
  - Foreign languages
  - Government; economics; history; and geography.
  - Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—The STEM Disciplines
- ❖ 21<sup>st</sup> Century Content
  - Global awareness
  - Financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy
  - Civic literacy
  - Health and wellness awareness and literacy
- ❖ Learning and Thinking Skills
  - Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
  - Communication skills
  - Creativity and innovation skills, extending to the creative & performing arts
  - Contextual learning skills
  - Information and media literacy skills
- ❖ Information and Computer Technology Literacy
  - Know how to use technology to learn core content and skills
  - Know how to use technology to learn how to learn, think critically, solve problems, use information, communicate, innovate, and collaborate
- ❖ Life Skills
  - Leadership
  - Ethics
  - Accountability
  - Adaptability
  - Personal responsibility
  - People skills
  - Self-direction
  - Social responsibility
- ❖ Initiative
  - Students are able to start, complete, and demonstrate the results of projects they select and undertake
  - Students are able to do projects and solve problems with minimal, compliance-oriented supervision
- ❖ Group and Team Work
  - Students are able to work in teams to solve problems and complete projects
  - Students know how to resolve differences and mediate conflicts with other group and team members
  - Students value and know how to benefit from diverse pathways to solving the same problems
- ❖ Preparation for Future Learning
  - Students learn assessment skills for self-directed learning and decision-making.
  - Students learn “meta-cognitive skills”—how to self-monitor and modify how they think and learn—together with ways to reframe problems, change thinking and language, and gain new knowledge and understanding

**Fig. 4.7** A representative summary of twenty-first century knowledge, skills, and abilities

- Industrial systems prepared students to fill jobs. Today's systems also prepare learners to create new jobs, careers, businesses, and public sector organizations.
- Industrial age systems emphasized training-as-direct instruction during the school day and inside the school's walls. Today's systems also emphasize learning systems, especially anytime, anywhere, self-directed learning technologies and abilities, especially out-of-school time learning that is ideally connected to classrooms to support both teachers and students.

These four contrasts signal new institutional designs, and already examples are available in multi-service, extended service, and community schools.

## **The Fifth Core Component: Parent and Family Interventions**

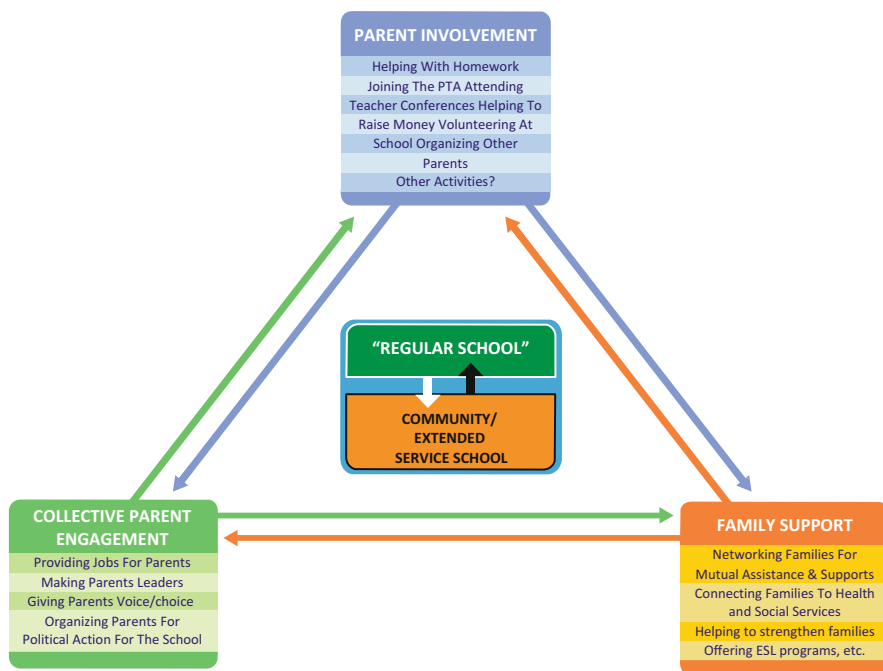
World-wide family systems are changing rapidly and dramatically (Briar-Lawson, Lawson, Hennon, & Jones, 2001; Ishimaru, 2014a; 2014b; Ishimaru & Lott, 2014; Lawson, Alameda-Lawson, Lawson, Briar-Lawson & Wilcox, 2014; Mapp & Kuttner, 2014). Four examples support this claim.

The substitution of “family system” concept for “family”—with its assumed meaning of a two parent, biological family—provides a case in point. A second example is the substitution of “carer” and “caregiver” for “parent,” a shift necessitated by the increasing number of grandparents raising their children's children and foster parents who have custody of “looked after children,” i.e., young people who have been removed from their biological homes by governmental child protection workers.

A third example is the inter-generational family system. It refers to several generations of the same family—grandparents, parents, children, great grandchildren, aunts and uncles, cousins and yet others residing in the same household and constituting an important family unit. A fourth example is the divided family system, one characterized by a parent and perhaps some children residing in one place (e.g., an urban neighborhood), while other members reside somewhere else (e.g., a rural community, a different state or province, another nation).

The dominant model for school-parent relationships and family-related interchanges was not developed for these new circumstances. World-wide this model is known as parent involvement (PI), albeit with several aliases such as parent engagement and family-school partnerships (Epstein, 2011). The upshot is what matters. When all manner of schools rely exclusively on PI, especially schools serving vulnerable people who reside in challenging places, desirable results will not be achieved systematically.

Alternative, parent and family interventions are needed (Epstein, 2011; Mapp & Kuttner, 2014). Two merit special consideration for multi-service, extended service, and community school designs. One is a collective parent engagement model, and the other is a family support model.



**Fig. 4.8** Complementary relationships involving three parent and family interventions

These two innovations are not PI competitors or replacements, as Fig. 4.8 indicates. These other two parent and family interventions are structured to complement conventional PI. In fact, collective parent engagement (CPE) and family support (FS) innovations may strengthen PI, albeit in a special developmental progression. Instead of starting with PI, leaders in multi-service, extended service and community schools begin with CPE and FS innovations—and with the aim of improving PI. In other words, PI is an immediate or proximal outcome from CPE and FS interventions.

Every new parent and family intervention depends on certain co-requisite conditions. One such condition is an important feature of community schools, extended service schools, community learning centers, and multi-service schools. In contrast to conventional schools that are designed and configured exclusively for children and youths, these new school designs are designed explicitly for parents and entire families. Parent programs and services are mainstays, and better outcomes for parents and entire families stand as priorities alongside, and in tandem with, better outcomes for kids.

This game-changing shift depends on co-requisite conditions and new capacities (Ishimaru & Lott, 2014; Mapp & Kuttner, 2014), especially ones that announce the school as a parent-friendly and family-supportive organization. Toward this end, school and community leaders establish parent centers and family support centers.



Like OST and health and social services configurations, these new centers may be school-based or school-linked.

When vulnerable, culturally-diverse families are targeted for services, the usual professions such as social work, community nursing, public children and youth health and care professionals, and community psychology often provide to be vital, but insufficient to gain parent and family involvement improve outcomes. Specially-prepared cultural brokers (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001) are needed. Oftentimes representing the parent populations and the communities needing to be served, these cultural brokers guide family-serving professionals to different and better way to recruit, support, engage, and retain parents and families who otherwise would not be helped and supported.

Figure 4.9 depicts many of these centers' main structural features and targeted outcomes. Although they depend fundamentally on a competent parent and family coordinator, oftentimes a social worker, parent leadership is a signal feature of the ones that are sustainable. All such centers facilitate conventional parent involvement, but they also serve as organizational staging grounds for collective parent engagement and family support.

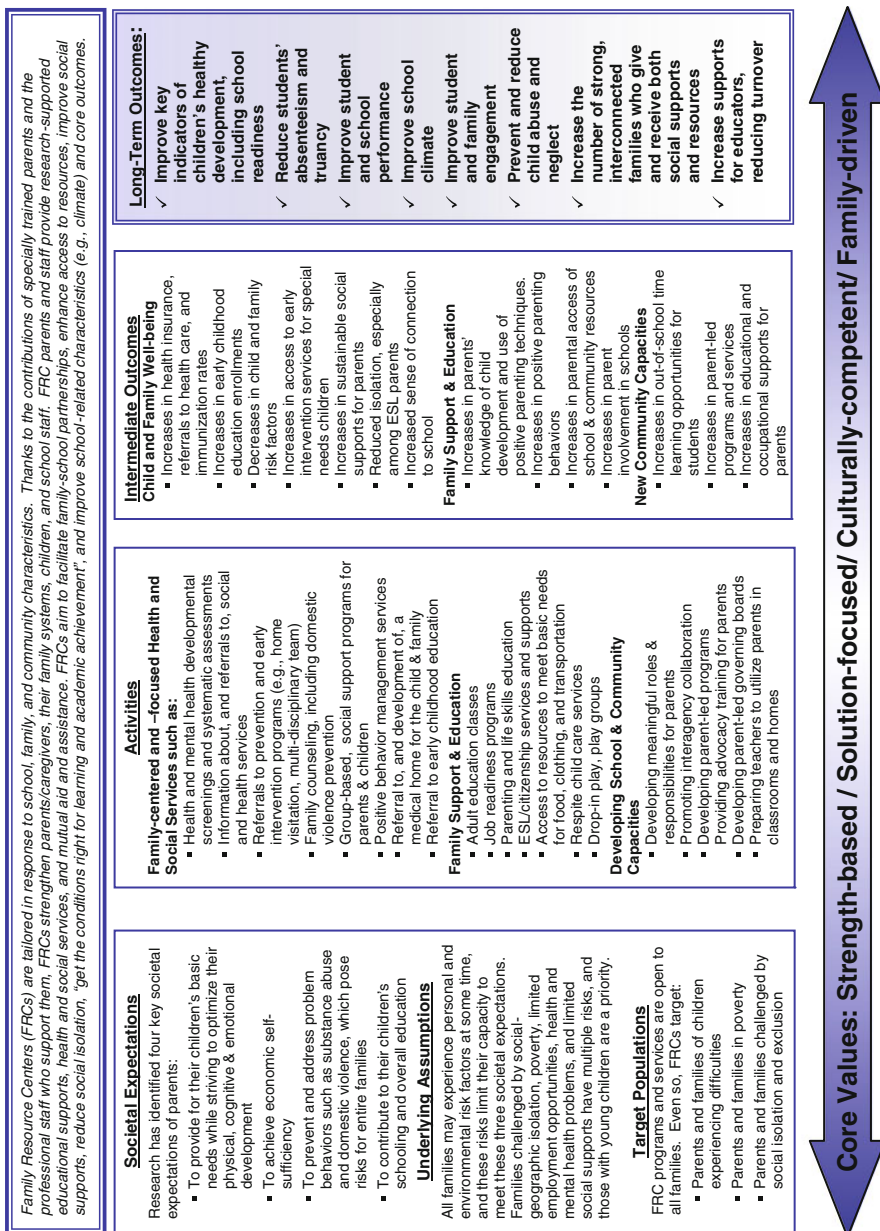
### *Analyzing Conventional Parent Involvement*

The idea of PI is rooted in the development of the industrial age school. It remains firmly institutionalized, and it dominates practice (Epstein, 2011; Ishimaru, 2014a). A substantial body of research has been developed in support of PI, and the findings are impressive. Regardless of socio-economic status, race, and ethnicity, when parents are actively and regularly involved in their children's education—supporting teachers, ensuring that homework is completed, and volunteering at school—desirable results are often achieved (e.g., Epstein, 2011; Mapp & Kuttner, 2014).

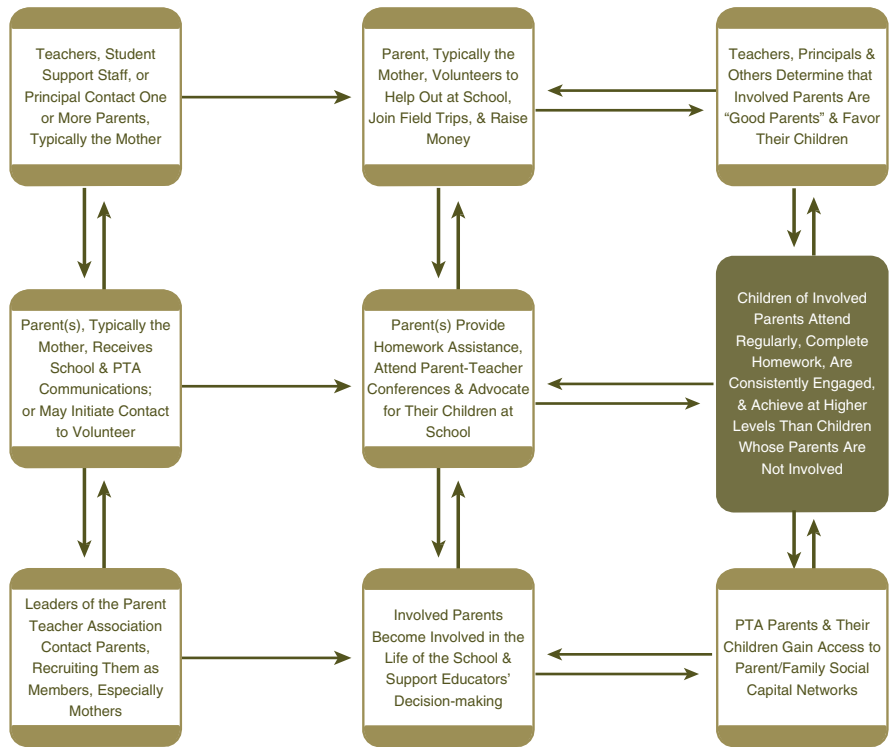
For example, when their parents are actively involved, children tend to attend school regularly, arrive on time, are ready to learn, and become engaged. When children of uninvolved parents provide the comparative standard, children of involved parents, on average, learn and achieve at higher rates. They also tend to have fewer social-emotional and behavioral challenges. All in all, PI, as a generalized intervention, facilitates teachers' work, helps children, and enhances the probability that schools will achieve their performance goals. Every school wants and needs these desirable results, and recent research confirms its importance (e.g., Valli et al., 2014).

Figure 4.10 has been developed with these benefits in mind. Drawing on a recent publication (Lawson et al., 2014), it provides a theory of action for the PI—and with the view that parent involvement is an intervention. Self-explanatory in several respects, a few details about this Figure merit special attention.

To begin, PI is founded on a one-way relationship; and understandably so because it is sponsored by a school and implemented by educators. The driving question for PI indicates its primary beneficiary. What can parents do to assist educators and



**Fig. 4.9** A logic model for school-based and -linked parent/family resource centers



**Fig. 4.10** The theory of action for conventional parent involvement

support the school? There is nothing inherently wrong with this question and the relationships it is designed to develop. Because it serves educators, they often want more of it.

Notwithstanding the importance of PI for schools and educators, a close inspection of the literature indicates that it may not fit the strengths, needs, and challenges of all schools, communities, or families, especially parents and families challenged by a terrible combination of poverty, social exclusion and social isolation (Schutz, 2006; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009). Three of PI’s core features illustrate its selectivity.

First, one or both parents, broadly defined, are expected to volunteer. In other words, PI targets individual parents who are expected to make informed, personal choices, which promise to benefit their children and schools.

Second, there is nothing in this PI intervention that challenges educators’ professional power and authority. In the same vein, this PI intervention does not promise to change the structures and operational processes of conventional schools (Ishimaru, 2014a; 2014b). Put differently, conventional PI is a mechanism for maintaining the status quo because it reproduces professional and institutional arrangements. “Professionals know best” what children need.

Conventional PI is selective in another way. It has depended on mothers' participation, albeit implicitly. Specifically, mothers have been expected to volunteer and rely on their family resources. Mothers also have been the driving force for parent-teacher organizations. In all such cases, the assumption is that "good" mothers are committed to their children's education. They will make the time to volunteer and also will be able to transport themselves to and from school.

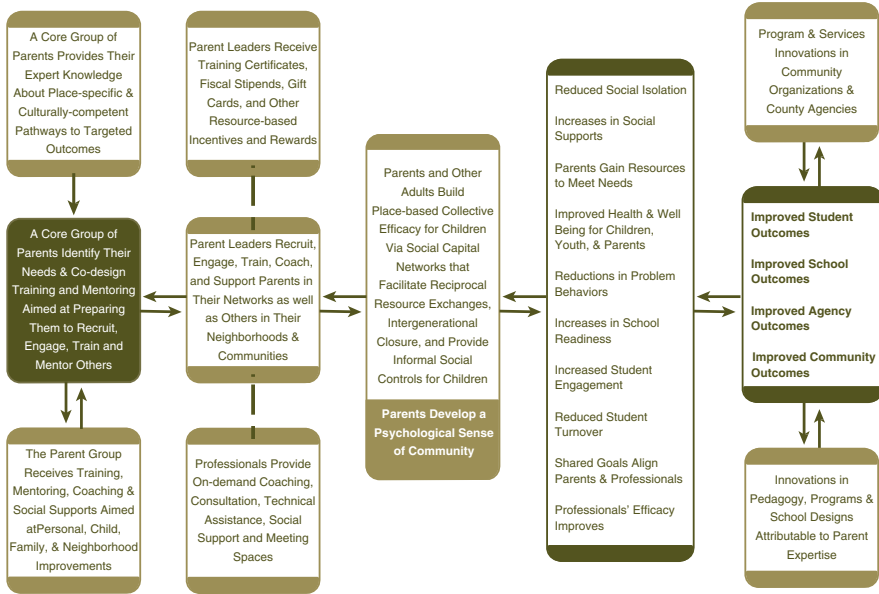
Framed in this way, the success of PI as an intervention is predicated in large measure on a core assumption regarding two parent, biological families with fathers as "bread-winners" and mothers as "stay-at-home moms." When these conditions no longer prevail, PI no longer is fit for purpose, and efforts to establish, enhance, and sustain it often will fall short of aspirations and needs. In fact, when these sub-populations of parents fail to volunteer at school and show up at parent-teacher conferences, they risk being labeled as "bad parents" who are uncommitted to their children's education (M. Lawson, 2003).

All such negative attributions amount to blaming the victim, and they deflect attention from a root cause. The conventional PI intervention is ill-fitted for particular sub-populations of parents, caregivers, families and family systems. Other parent and family interventions are needed, and they can be founded on an important research finding. Essentially parents and teachers have the same goals for the children they care for (Lawson, 2003).

### *Collective Parent Engagement*

One alternative has been developed by changing two questions. Instead of starting with the PI question of what parents can do for the school, ask what the community school can do to assist, support, resource, and strengthen parents. Instead of targeting one-at-a-time recruitment by educators, ask parents to organize and mobilize groups of parents for collective action that serves themselves and ultimately, the school. Increasingly this special intervention is known as collective parent engagement, and research has demonstrated its promise for schools and communities challenged by disadvantage (Alameda-Lawson, Lawson, & Lawson, 2013; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Warren et al., 2009), holds promise for rural school communities, albeit with suitable adaptations. Selective contrasts between this CPE intervention and the conventional PI intervention follow.

Four key features of CPE depart from PI practice. First, CPE is based on the assumption that even the most challenged parents and families have strengths. Second, and in contrast to the "professionals-know-best" assumption that often runs through PI, this CPE model is predicated on the need to tap and use parents' expertise. Third, it is assumed that vulnerable parents cannot be expected to self-organize and mobilize for collective action and assume leadership roles, especially when many are newcomers, have a different native tongue, and live in disparate places. Fourth, parental expertise has import for what educators and social/health service providers need to know, look for, and do in their work with children, parents, and entire families, especially culturally diverse ones.



**Fig. 4.11** The theory of action for collective parent engagement

Significantly, this CPE intervention has the potential to incubate timely, responsive innovations that improve pedagogical practice and enhance school climate. Working in the United States, Ishimaru (2014a), for example, emphasized the potential contributions of culturally diverse, parents who are called English language learners because their first language is not English. She described how these parents were instrumental in the development of culturally-responsive pedagogies, which teachers used to facilitate children’s learning and academic achievement. CPE is ripe with this potential for schools, and it also has the potential to stimulate innovations in health and social service organizations (e.g., Bess & Doykos, 2014).

Figure 4.11 presents a theory of action for collective parent engagement (Lawson et al., 2014). It signals how this parent intervention might complement conventional PI, especially in multi-service, extended service and community schools. For example, in comparison to educators, organized parent groups typically have more readiness and capacity to recruit and engage other parents, especially diverse ones.

### ***Family Support Interventions***

Family support interventions complete the new intervention triad (Lawson et al., 2014). Although parents clearly are important units for analysis and intervention planning, and parent interventions often result in desirable outcomes for entire family systems, the fact remains that family systems are discrete units of analysis.

This means that specialized interventions can and should be developed for them, encompassing and serving all members of the family system—children, parents, caregivers, grandparents, and others as defined by family members.

Family support (FS) interventions can be viewed in a variety of ways. The dominant view is as follows. FS interventions encompass programs and services that provide families with timely, responsive assistance, social supports, and responsive resources (Briar-Lawson et al., 2001; Van Veen, 2006a). These services are founded on twin assumptions: (1) Professional assistance is required to address presenting family needs, problems, and challenges before they worsen and multiply; and (2) This short-term support paves the way for greater family self-sufficiency. Examples of services include formal social services such as career counseling and mental health therapy, medical and dental services, and resource-based services such as housing, childcare, and food and financial assistance.

In the main, specially trained and deployed helping professionals from community agencies are needed to help craft solutions for family needs, problems, and aspirations. In brief, a school's family support interventions are connected to school-linked health and social services configurations. Each supports the other, and when this configuration is in evidence, family support interventions are able to achieve their promise. For example, schools and community agencies configured in this way have a higher probability of facilitating the social integration of culturally diverse, immigrant families (e.g., Basu, 2006).

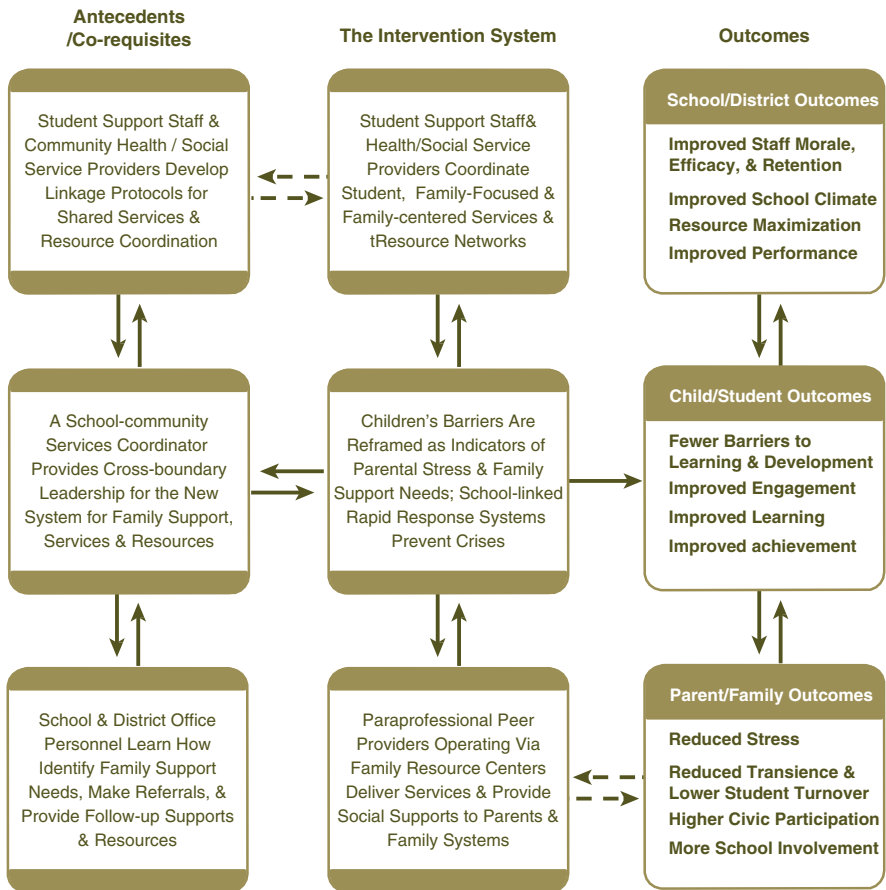
Ideally, FS interventions proceed with a family-centered philosophy with four main tenets. They are: (1) Families are the unit of analysis for all interventions; (2) Professionals focus on family-strengths; (3) Families enjoy voice and choice in all intervention decisions, which depends on a special power-sharing arrangement with helping professionals; and (4) All services are individualized, i.e., they are tailored to the unique needs of each family (Briar-Lawson et al., 2001; Epley, Summers, & Turnbull, 2010).

It is noteworthy that community-based health and social service agencies have long histories of offering FS interventions. However, comparable histories are not typical for the majority of schools and districts. Two main reasons help to explain this pattern.

First and foremost, schools are child-centered institutions acting *en loco parentis* and with a specialized main mission—students' academic learning and achievement. When industrial age institutional designs provide the overlay, parental well-being and the condition of families are not school responsibilities. They are assigned to community and county agencies.

The second reason was identified earlier. Schools' equivalent of social and health services typically is focused on particular sub-populations of students. Programs and services are named accordingly; they are called student support and pupil support services.

When an FS intervention is the priority, the main intervention question is as follows. What can schools do to better support, strengthen, and stabilize family systems? Figure 4.12 presents an overall theory of action for FS interventions



**Fig. 4.12** A theory of action for school-linked, family support interventions

(Lawson et al., 2014). Self-explanatory in several respects, family support interventions hinge on two critical changes.

The majority of educators, particularly teachers and principals, have learned to view chronic student tardiness, persistent absenteeism, untreated health and mental health needs, social and emotional behavioral disorders, limited school and classroom engagement, and manifest poverty/hardship indicators such as tattered clothing and sleep deprivation in a particular way. They are barriers to students' healthy development, engagement, learning, and academic achievement. It follows that the dominant solution is to contact the school social worker, psychologist, counselor, and the principal to initiate student (pupil) support services.

However, even whole child development and PYD emphases may miss the mark. When students arrive at the schoolhouse door with identifiable, multiple barriers, the *de facto* need also is for FS interventions because these barriers' causes are rooted in condition of families and their surrounding community circumstances

(Briar-Lawson et al., 2001). Best of all, when community school leaders prioritize and achieve family support, they develop better relationships with the most vulnerable parents and family systems, setting the stage for improvements in conventional parent involvement. Such is the potential power of the triad of FS, CPE, and PI in community schools, extended service schools, and multi-service schools.

## **In Conclusion: An Analogy for Managing Complexity**

Overall the design and implementation challenges are analogous to ones facing a music conductor charged with coordinating an orchestra and a choir. Just as the choir and the orchestra need to be harmonized and synchronized, so do the various components of a community school, community learning center, multi-service school, and extended service school.

Viewed as a stand-alone organization, the school is like an orchestra. The five core components and co-requisites are like specialized sections (string section, brass section, percussion section). The academic component of the school is a sixth section. All six orchestra sections must learn the same musical score (provided by the theory of action for the new school design), and their success in achieving this goal requires them to play harmoniously and with mutually beneficial synergy.

When family innovations, community agencies, neighborhood organizations, businesses and local higher education institutions are added to the mix, it is like adding a large chorus to the orchestra. Although the challenges grow because more musicians are involved, the conductor's charge is the same. Co-create with these musicians harmonious music that pleases others at the same time that playing is rewarding to them.

Just as the size and composition of orchestras and choruses influence how quickly and effectively their members can produce harmonious music, certain design features enable diverse school and community stakeholders to organize and mobilize for the kinds of collective action needed to optimize the development of community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools. Examples of these features include: (1) A manageable leadership group, one that balances the right size with the best mix of people, especially ones who have histories of working together successfully; (2) Intermediary leaders, sponsored in part by a neutral, backbone organization, who are able to bridge organizational, professional, and neighborhood community boundaries; (3) A clear, consensus-based vision with measurable goals and objectives that mark the way ahead, and user-friendly data systems to track progress and facilitate learning and improvement; (4) Deeply-rooted and regularly-cultivated interpersonal and interprofessional relationships that build and sustain trust; (5) Demonstrated ability to form, optimize and sustain multi-sector partnerships among organizations, extending to collaboration among specialized professionals; (6) Explicit, firm commitments with clear roles and responsibilities for students, parents, entire family systems, and community leaders; (7) Demonstrated ability to form, optimize and sustain specific



task groups and teams (e.g., for particular needs; for special populations; for resource generation; for policy innovation); (8) Demonstrated ability to figure out how to develop cross-boundary responsibility domains (shared and separate) and accountability mechanisms (shared and separate); (9) An array of resource-generation and allocation mechanisms, including operational procedures for shifting resources as priorities change; (10) Pervasive understanding that this work entails building new systems and institutions; it is not another short-term project; and (11) Designated leaders with clear strategies for facilitating responsive and supportive policy change (e.g., 2004; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Lawson, 2013; Potapchuk, 2013).

No conductor gets it right the first time. Few orchestras and choruses are able to make beautiful music together without lots of practice time, skillful leadership, and several adjustments.

So it is with the progressive development of multi-service, extended service, and community schools. The good news is that, with community schools, multi-service schools, and extended service schools no one leader-conductor works alone. Leadership is desirably distributed within each organization, and it is collaborative when boundaries need to be crossed and blurred. The authors/leaders for the chapters presented in Part II provide salient details.

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## Part II

# Introduction to Part II

The first three chapters were structured to accomplish three goals: (1) To introduce this new school-related design's rationale, emphasizing its' international relevance; (2) To describe the immediate and direct connections between this new design's five core components and the needs, problems, and opportunities identified in this rationale; and (3) To provide analytical and practical details regarding what this new design requires and entails, including the unprecedented complexity it brings.

These three chapters are unavoidably “high altitude” views. Although they provide selective insight into this new school-related design, these three chapters and the preface do not attend to three important priorities. These chapters do not provide much-needed information about the design-related choices local leaders make and the consequences of these choices. Nor do these chapters provide all-important practical and operational details about particular exemplars that have achieved an advanced stage of development. Also omitted is a critically important part of every new design experiment—namely, the research and development journey from origins to advanced status.

These three priorities were instrumental in structuring this part of the book. It features advanced exemplars sampled selectively from the United States, Canada, England, The Netherlands, and Belgium.

To facilitate readers' appreciation of the remarkable and important success stories detailed in these chapters, we start with two frames of reference. The first identifies and describes the developmental journeys of these pioneering leaders and authors—and with special interest in the choices available to readers. The second is the planning template we gave to each chapter's authors as a shared structure for their respective stories and also as a facilitator for readers' understanding and meaning-making.

## Getting Started: Two Main Pathways to the New Design

*What* the new design entails is just part of the story. *How* the new design develops and why it develops in particular ways also are instructive to veteran readers and newcomers. Readers are encouraged to attend to this important journey. Chapter authors provide details.

At baseline, the new design is launched when leaders recognize that the stand-alone school will not yield desirable outcomes at scale. They know that they something else is needed. Here, they often rely on teachers' reports, their own observations, and formal data when they have it.

This idea of "additions" is important and accurate because, in the majority of cases and places, the aim at start-up is not to transform the school-as-institution. The aim is to complement and strengthen a conventional school by adding missing priorities and implementing new strategies and organizational structures. Special interest resides in those structures and strategies that end the school's isolation and enable educators to gain access to family, community, and higher education resources, assistance, and supports. As indicated above, accountability-oriented educational policy makes academic performance outcomes a special priority, risking a narrowing of what schools offer and are able to accomplish in the name of whole child development.

Today's leaders are able to choose one of two design-and-development pathways. This choice was not available 20 years ago. It needs to be emphasized because each has special requirements and consequences.

### *Scale-Up of the Entire Design*

The now-prevalent pathway is to scale up, perhaps even try to replicate, a particular design that has traction in another locale. Here, leaders typically visit places where multi-service schools, extended service schools, community learning centers, and community schools have been implemented.

Alternatively, they study the literature on these new school designs. Or they attend special conferences that feature one or more of them. Or they take advantage of technical assistance experts who specialize in the development of this new-school related design. Some leaders opt for two or more of these alternatives, especially when innovative educational policies and new grant programs provide incentives and resources.



### ***The Only Option for Pioneers: Incremental Development***

All such wholesale scale-up and replication initiatives, together with accompanying policy innovations, have been made possible by the work of pioneering leaders who began their work in the 1980s and 1990s and have stayed the course with the progressive design and development of the new model. Viewed retrospectively and developmentally, their collective efforts and achievements mark a second pathway.

Two words describe this second pathway: Incremental and sequential. Typically, pioneering leaders did not begin with a comprehensive, compelling vision for the complete design. They proceeded instead with one-at-a-time experimentation as they tried to address particular student, family, and school needs (Bosdriesz & Van Veen, 1999; Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997).

So, for example, leaders forged new relationships with community-based health and social service providers to gain help in addressing barriers to students' attendance, on-time arrival, classroom engagement, and academic learning and achievement. When and if this design move proved to be insufficient to improve school-wide outcomes, leaders oftentimes turned to out-of-school time (OST) programs and services; and with the aim of reinforcing and complementing classroom learning and instruction. When OST programs were insufficient, leaders worked on new ways to recruit and engage parents and support families. Later, leaders prioritized positive youth development. Still later, they may have considered partnerships with local businesses.

The exact design and development progression in this second pathway varies by locale. So, for example, some leaders start with parents and families, while others start with OST programs and services. Ultimately, many end with the fully-developed design because it is the only way they are able to achieve the full range of desirable outcomes they seek. When this new design is deemed a success and marketing and promotion efforts follow—as in this book—the stage is set for the first pathway for immediate, whole model replication and scale-up.

This second pathway takes years to complete, perhaps a decade or more. At least four risks are associated with this pathway. All are preventable once they are identified.

### ***Managing and Preventing Risks Associated with Both Pathways***

The first risk is “disjointed incrementalism” (Lindblom, 1990)—a pattern of adding multiple components in a one-at-a-time fashion without sufficient attention to their coherence and potential synergy. Schools world-wide have long fallen prey to this tendency of adding grant-funded programs and services, keeping them after the grant funds have been depleted, and neglecting consequential questions of how programs and services fit together and whether they achieve desirable outcomes. For

this reason, some chapter authors have concentrated almost exclusively on school-linked health and social services and student support services.

A second risk is especially noteworthy for school-centered designs. It is manifest when none of the community school or community learning center additions (e.g., health and social services, OST programs) penetrates to the school's instructional core (Elmore, 2004; Tyack & Cuban, 1995) and directly improves teaching-learning as well as life in classrooms for teachers and students (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997). Look for this design feature in these chapters.

A third risk arises when leaders are challenged to figure out how so many components fit together, how they align with and strengthen academic priorities, and what to do when advocates for each component (e.g., OST, health and social services) compete for scarce resources. Needs for coordinators and coordination are manifest here. Look for them in these chapters.

DuFour and Fullan (2013) provide one set of remedies. All stakeholders, particularly educators, need clarity, coherence, and a shared mindset regarding their new roles, relationships, and responsibilities. Two needs are especially important: (1) How each component (e.g., OST, positive youth development) functions like an intervention to yield particular outcomes; and (2) How two or more components fit together to provide a more comprehensive intervention that yields even more desirable outcomes. Examine these chapters for the strategies leaders have devised to meet these needs.

## The Chapter Planning Template

When we invited these chapters, we knew that they were unique and special in several important respects. We wanted author-leaders to emphasize these features. However, we also were intent on eliciting commonalities and similarities so that readers would be able to appreciate how and why each chapter is an instance of the new school-related design.

What is the best way to achieve this delicate balance between uniqueness and difference, on the one hand, and commonalty and similarity, on the other? We opted for a shared organizational template for each chapter. We asked authors to use this template as a guide for the analysis of their particular design, but we also gave them considerable discretion regarding what they wanted to emphasize and how they wanted to present their work. We present it here because it also may serve as a facilitator for start-up, scale-up, and sustainability planning.

## **The Common Template for the Specific Exemplars from Diverse Parts of the World**

### ***In the Beginning***

1. Briefly describe the presenting conditions, needs, and opportunities when you began. Why did you decide to develop a new kind of school? Who made this decision? What were the main criteria and influential forces and factors?
2. How do national and state/provincial policies help readers understand what you have structured and accomplished? If you did the work in spite of policy, say so and help readers understand why.
3. Are there special features of the context that readers should understand? Here, context is an all-inclusive construct referring to place-based needs, population changes and challenges, and public policy priorities such as social integration and citizenship development, human capital development for the new economy, and community regeneration and development.

### ***Early Development***

1. How did you get started? Did you start with a formal model? If so, describe it. If not, what did you start with; and why? What did you prioritize?
2. What were the most formidable challenges at start-up? For example, did you need to develop new individual and team competencies and organizational capacities? Did you need new resources? How did you address all such needs?
3. Once underway, what did you prioritize next? Who made this decision? What criteria were used? And how did this new development lead to and relate to the next one? Do this chain of events and developments in a figure diagram—example attached (in the future)—saving text for the most important issues meriting special explanation.

### ***Current Status: Progress Markers, Achievements, and Next Phases***

1. Describe succinctly, using figure diagrams as needed and appropriate, the current organizational arrangements. Explain and justify the logic for these arrangements, i.e., discuss the theory of action or theory of change, emphasizing how it is intended to improve outcomes (specifying the outcomes).
2. What are the notable progress markers? Where do they lead, i.e., what outcomes will improve if all goes as planned? What are you doing that is new and

- better (interventions)? Explain how this will increase the likelihood that your outcomes will improve?
3. What do you count as your significant achievements so far? How did you get there, i.e., what strategies and tactics account for your success stories?
  4. How expansively or how narrowly have you defined success? For example, has children's academic improvement improved? Has their health improved? Their mental health? Their access to social services? Alternatively, have you made progress in reducing early school leaving rates (i.e., school dropouts)?
  5. Another way to deal with this set of questions about success and progress is as follows. Toward what ends or goals, i.e., multi-service schools (by whatever name) for what outcomes?
  6. What, if anything, have you done to improve student engagement in school; and in classrooms?
  7. What, if anything have you done to improve students' academic learning and achievement?
  8. What, if anything, have you done to improve students' motivation to complete school? To aspire to, and be ready for, postsecondary education?
  9. What's next on your agenda? Why? How do you plan to achieve success?
  10. What will it take beyond "business as usual" to be successful? How will you marshal resources and supports needed to do this?

### ***Roles, Responsibilities, Relationships, and Key Processes: How Does the Work Get Done?***

1. In what ways, if any, do teachers' roles, responsibilities and working relationships with others change for the better? What are the main needs, challenges, and opportunities? How have you tried to capitalize on them?
2. In what ways, if any, do principals' (Head teachers) roles, responsibilities and working relationships with others change for the better? What are the main needs, challenges, and opportunities? How have you tried to capitalize on them?
3. In what ways, if any, do school-based student support professionals (social workers, counselors, psychologists, nurses, etc.) roles, responsibilities and working relationships with others change for the better? What are the main needs, challenges, and opportunities? How have you tried to capitalize on them?
4. In what ways, if any, have community-based social and health service providers' roles, responsibilities and working relationships with others at school changed for the better? What are the main needs, challenges, and opportunities? How have you tried to capitalize on them?
5. In what ways, if any, do superintendent's (district leaders) roles, responsibilities and working relationships with others change for the better? What are the main needs, challenges, and opportunities? How have you tried to capitalize on them?

### ***Evaluation Designs and Challenges***

1. How have you framed the evaluation? Whose needs and interests have been instrumental in the evaluation design and in the reporting?
2. What are the main evaluation targets and priorities? How did you arrive at them? What did you explicitly rule out—if only for the time being—and why?
3. What are the main evaluation needs, and how have you responded to them?
4. What are the main evaluation challenges, and how have you addressed them?
5. What are the main evaluation opportunities, and how have you capitalized on them.
6. What's next for your evaluation; and for the preparation and deployment of your evaluators?

### ***Research Findings and Future Priorities***

1. Has your work been informed or guided by research completed elsewhere? Explain.
2. Has research been conducted on your school innovation? If so please, provide summary details and representative references. If not, proceed to the next question.
3. Where your school innovation is concerned, what are the main research needs? Why?

### ***Scale-Up and Sustainability Planning***

1. What plans are in place, if any, to scale-up your model to other schools and districts? Explain.
2. What special parts of your scale-up planning are noteworthy?
3. What plans are in place, if any, to sustain your multi-service school initiative? Describe what you have in mind when you think about and plan for sustainability, documenting progress and describing achievements to date.

### ***State/Provincial and, Where Applicable, National Policy Implications***

1. What are the past-present *policy facilitators* (policies that make the work easier and better)

2. What are the past-present *policy constraints* (policies that recommend some alternatives, while ruling out others)
3. What are the past-present *policy barriers* (policies responsible for changes in focus and direction because the blockages were too formidable)

### ***Lessons Learned for Colleagues***

- Think back in time to when you first began. If you knew then what you know now, what would you do differently and better? Why? What outcomes would improve?
- Alternatively: You asked to serve as a consultant for a group of colleagues embarking on the development of a multi-service school or community school. What are the 5 most important priorities on their “to-do list?”
- “What priorities or strategies would you caution against?” Please explain and justify your recommendations.

### **An Important Implication**

This chapter planning template has another potential use. It can facilitate start-up planning for other new initiatives.

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## Chapter 5

# Redesigning a Core Function of Schools: A Systemic, Evidence-Based Approach to Student Support

Mary E. Walsh, Maria D. Theodorakakis, and Sarah Backe

**Abstract** The authors of this chapter describe the development, operation, and achievements of a unique approach to student support developed in Boston, Massachusetts and called City Connects. Significantly, City Connects emerged from the lead author's prior experience with community schools. The chapter author-leaders describe how they designed a systemic intervention to deliver services and enrichment opportunities to every student in the school. Their developmental journey is instructive in several important ways, starting with the time, resources, and investments needed to tailor services for each individual student. This Connect Connects journey is also instructive due to: (1) Leaders' reliance on best practice research from start to finish; (2) Leaders' commitments to evaluation-driven learning, knowledge generation, and continuous quality improvement; (3) Leaders' attention to the unique, important characteristics of particular schools at the same time that they emphasized an overall coherent design for City Connects; and (4) The special contributions of local higher education faculty and students to this new design, together with the benefits they have reaped. Importantly, these leader-authors make it clear that, while their work has advanced to a significant stage, they are not done. Like the other exemplars featured in this book, City Connects is an important, still-evolving experiment that demonstrates all that can be done and achieved when leaders prioritize needs assessments, systematic planning, and research-supported interventions, and proceed carefully with implementation.

**Keywords** Student support services • Urban education • Engaged universities • Program evaluation • Data-driven planning • At-risk youths

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Education Reform legislation, passed into law in 2001 (United States Department of Education, 2001), resulted in the introduction of many new approaches to schooling that impacted core functions such as classroom instruction and school leadership. Most of these approaches are not only “new and different,” but, critically, are evidence-based – that is, they are grounded in rigorous research and evaluation that empirically demonstrate their effectiveness. While school leadership and classroom instruction have received the lion’s share of attention from educational reformers and policymakers, they are not the only critical functions of schools. Over the years – recognizing that learning involves more than “the mind” – all schools have generated approaches to supporting and developing the non-academic dimensions of students – their health, mental wellness, safety, peer relationships, family interactions, etc. This function of schools is generally known as “student support” but can be variously labeled by school districts using terms such as “pupil personnel services” or “school guidance counseling”. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the development and impact of a school redesign effort focused specifically on student support.

Recognizing the impact of non-academic aspects of students’ lives on achievement and eventual life chances, schools have provided some type of non-academic support to students (e.g., school health curricula, guidance and counseling services, free and reduced lunch programs, etc.) since the early twentieth century. The student support function in schools typically involves a set of specific personnel (e.g., school counselors, social workers, adjustment counselors, health and wellness staff, etc.) and a wide range of activities (e.g., individual and group counseling, academic support, college and career planning, etc.). However, these efforts have operated at the margins of schooling and in somewhat of an “ad hoc” manner. In contrast to the core functions of leadership and classroom instruction, student support has been seriously neglected in most Education Reform efforts, particularly in the No Child Left Behind legislation. The few references to student support in the field of Education Reform encourage schools to offer “wrap-around services” or to address the needs of “the whole child” – with little focus on specific strategies and evidence-based outcomes.

The absence of a comprehensive and coordinated focus on the out-of-school needs of students is particularly notable in light of the stubbornness of the academic achievement gap for low-income children. The achievement gap between students whose families are economically advantaged and children who live in poverty is wide and deep. Many researchers recognize poverty as a major contributor to the achievement gap (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). However, policymakers have considered the recognition of the impact of poverty on learning as an attempt by leaders and service providers to “make excuses” for the underachievement of students in lower socioeconomic circumstances. Now, after over a decade of intense and pervasive Education Reform efforts to close the achievement gap for low income students, it is finally agreed that schools cannot do so without a systemic approach to addressing out-of-school challenges that are known to negatively impact learning (Becket & Luthar, 2002; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Walsh & Murphy, 2003).



Despite educational policymakers' lack of attention to the importance of student support, teachers have long recognized the need for more non-academic services for students – especially for those living in poverty. The non-academic needs of students have also been evident to the local human service providers who encounter these students and families in their neighborhoods and communities. However, the recognition of out-of-school challenges leads obviously to the task of determining what to do about it.

Regardless of the best efforts of school-based student support staff, schools simply do not have the capacity to provide all of the services and enrichment opportunities for student thriving. In an attempt to address these needs and promote healthy development, schools at the local level have begun partnering with community agencies and institutions. Most schools, particularly in urban areas, now have an array of community partners who deliver a specific service or a set of services to schoolchildren (e.g., health services, mental health services, violence prevention curricula, after school programs, parent groups, etc.). However, “more” in this case is not necessarily “better.” As the number of community supports available to student have begun to increase, schools are challenged in three major ways: (1) identifying which services and supports are appropriate for individual students, (2) managing partnerships and aligning them in a meaningful way with the work of the school, and (3) measuring the impact of these supports on outcomes such as student achievement and thriving.

As in the realm of curriculum and instruction, student support must be customized to meet the needs of individual students. One size fits one, not all. In the domain of management, schools are often “over-run” with well-intended community partnerships without the structure and processes required to enable the partners to be effective. Surprisingly, there have been few attempts to develop a systemic set of processes in the school to facilitate and support these partnerships. Despite the advocacy of organizations such as the Center for Mental Health in Schools (Adelman & Taylor, 2010), schools nationwide have not engaged in a redesign of the delivery system for student support. In terms of outcomes, there have been very few attempts to measure the impact of student support. While there is considerable evidence of single interventions that focus on one need (e.g., anti-bullying programs, nutrition education, family engagement), there is sparse evidence of the effectiveness of comprehensive approaches that attempt to address the full range of a student's needs and strengths.

This chapter reports on a new and systematic design for the delivery of student support in schools. The new design has been developed over two decades by a school-community-university partnership in Boston. Known as City Connects, its goal is to have students engage and learn in school by connecting each child with the tailored set of prevention, intervention, and enrichment services he or she needs to thrive. This goal is accomplished by leveraging the resources of a city's community agencies (City Connects, 2014a). The chapter will describe the development, implementation, evaluation, and future directions of this evidence-based approach to student support.

## The Context

Characteristics of the particular context in which City Connects was designed and implemented (the city of Boston and its public schools) are important to understanding the City Connects intervention and outcome evaluation. As is the case in most urban communities, many Boston residents experience social and economic disadvantage, with schoolchildren and their families even more disadvantaged than the population as a whole. Over the many years since City Connects was launched in 2001, the problem of poverty has not lessened. For example, the most recent United States census reported that the poverty rate in Boston was 17 % overall, but 22 % for Boston residents with children under age 18 (United States Census Bureau, 2010). The most recent United States census also revealed that 15 % of Boston residents received food stamps and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, while 76 % of Boston Public Schools students qualified for free or reduced lunch with family incomes at or below 185 % of the poverty level (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Poverty is also evident in growing rates of family homelessness. The Boston Homeless Census reveals that the number of men, women, and children living in emergency shelters or transitional housing increased from 6,992 to 7,255 from 2012 to 2013, a 3.8 % increase; of these individuals, 33 % were children – a 4.3 % increase from 2012 (Boston Public Health Commission, 2013). Further, the number of homeless families in Boston increased from 1,166 to 1,234 the same year, a 5.8 % increase (Boston Public Health Commission, 2013).

Similar to other urban areas in this country, the overlap between poverty and communities of color is substantial. Based on data from the most recent United States census, about 60 % of all Boston residents were White, while 13 % of schoolchildren and families were White; 26 % of Boston residents were African American, while 37 % of the schoolchildren were African American; 16 % of Boston residents were Hispanic /Latino (of any race), compared to 40 % of the schoolchildren (United States Census Bureau, 2010). At this time, about 25 % of the city's population was foreign born and 34 % spoke a language other than English at home; further, in the Boston schools, English was not the first language for nearly 40 % of students in 2009, and 20 % of school children were classified as limited English proficiency (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

The numbers are similar – and in many cases more dire – in other large American cities. It is no secret that children living in poverty are, on average, less successful in school (Weiss, 2013). Many researchers have begun to identify some of the factors that account for the deleterious effects of poverty on academic achievement. Poverty impacts children's achievement and growth in at least three noteworthy ways: (1) poverty limits investment – a family's ability to invest money, time, and energy in fostering children's growth (e.g., less time to read and talk with their children); (2) poverty can create pervasive stress within families and their neighborhoods, sometimes undermining children's sense of well-being and safety (e.g., stress may contribute to inconsistent parenting behavior or increased exposure to community violence, ultimately impacting children's self-regulation, social-

emotional stability, and classroom behavior); (3) poverty may contribute to chaotic lifestyles and unpredictable support systems (e.g., less-reliable transportation, municipal services, and businesses) (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Evans, 2004).

The sequelae of poverty, in turn, lead to poor attendance, high mobility, social-emotional dysfunction, lack of readiness for school, and limited cultural capital to understand schools as institutions (Dearing, 2008). Many children also suffer from a lack of exposure to enrichment opportunities. Rothstein (2010) describes the impact on achievement of out-of-school factors relative to in-school factors in the following way: “Decades of social science research have demonstrated that differences in the quality of schools can explain about one-third of the variation in student achievement. But the other two-thirds is attributable to non-school factors” (p. 1). Therefore, academic success is predicated on children’s readiness to engage and thrive in school, with an overlapping impact of the various domains of development on children’s readiness to learn and thrive.

The impact of the poverty experienced by schoolchildren and their families makes it imperative to address out-of-school factors in any educational reform effort (Berliner, 2009; Rothstein, 2010; Walsh & Murphy, 2003). Supporting the whole child and addressing out-of-school needs – albeit in a limited way – is not entirely new to schools. While the proponents of education reform have a laser-like focus on teaching and learning, with only a nod to the impact of student support, schools have been involved in directly addressing the out-of-school needs of children since the late nineteenth century (Walsh & Murphy, 2003). Professions have shaped their preparation programs and intervention strategies so that they are able to contribute to schools’ efforts to address non-academic barriers to learning (City Connects, 2010). These professions include school counseling, school social work, school psychology, school nursing, and school adjustment counseling. However, the work of these student support professionals is typically marginalized in schools, particularly in recent years as educational reforms have narrowed in scope and focus.

The roles of the various student support professionals are typically defined in broad terms by their specific professional organizations. However, their respective and different practices have not been tightly codified. In many schools, the loose definitions of the work of student support professionals create a special paradox. At the same time that “the practice” of teaching has become more circumscribed, focused, and evidence-based, student support professionals’ practices continue to vary from school to school and district to district. Developing and implementing the delivery of evidence-based student support in schools is long overdue. Schools would benefit substantially from a new design for student support that reinvigorates current processes and structures, and results in a defined and evidence-based practice for student support professionals.

In the face of the stubborn achievement gap, some educational policymakers have recently begun to recognize the potential contributions of student support to narrowing achievement differences. After years of focusing on teaching and learning, they are coming to realize that student support may be another critical lever in promoting school change and student achievement, and they are beginning to examine strategies to address the out-of-school factors impacting learning. This shift in

the perceived importance of student support contributes to the positive zeitgeist for the redesign of student support in schools. In this context, the process of designing and implementing City Connects, a practice that would result in the effective delivery of student support in an effort to minimize the achievement gap, became possible; this ultimately led a number of schools to transform how they approach student support.

## Getting Started

The design of City Connects was carried out by a school-community-university partnership over a 2-year planning period. Implementation and evaluation have occurred over the past 15 years. During the design phase, representatives of the school-community-university partnership deeply engaged other university faculty, local school administrators, teachers and school staff, neighborhood citizens, family members, and community agency staff. The goal of this dialogue was to modify existing student support structures and processes within a geographic group of Boston Public Schools. Early on, it was agreed that the design should involve a systemic collaboration across schools, families, and community agencies. Neither schools nor communities nor families could be the single agent responsible for supporting children. Schools were not in a position from the perspective of their purpose or their budgets to provide all of the supports that children needed. While community agencies could deliver many services, they existed as independent entities and could not provide an integrated structure or system to deliver services to each child and family. Families were limited not only financially, but particularly by a lack of knowledge about and access to available supports. It was important to the team that the new design build upon and transform already-existing school structures and functions. The group saw the potential for eventual success by relying on “evolution” rather than “revolution.”

The design team’s first task was to look for other models of schooling that addressed the out-of-school needs of students. Community Schools offered one of the only models at that time. Developed in the 1990s, the Community Schools model recognized the critical role of health and social services in promoting children’s development, and viewed schools as a vehicle for service-delivery. Their strategy co-located child and family services in the school, especially after-school programs, health initiatives, and early childhood programs. The Community Schools approach represented an early and transformative effort to bring student/family services into the school and to link children with supports (Walsh et al., 2000).

The Community Schools evaluation data available at the time focused on only those students who participated in the school-based after-school programs; the other students in the school were not directly impacted by the intervention. Further, while the results were promising, they were based on average scores for a group of students in contrast to a change in scores for individual students. It was apparent from the literature review that evaluating these types of interventions is challenging and

that few rigorous evaluations had – and to this day have – been published in peer-reviewed journals.

Given its central locus in the after-school program of the school, its goal of bringing service organizations into the school, and providing services to children and families who availed themselves, the community-school model was not positioned to systematically reach every child and teacher in the school. Its mission was to promote collaboration between schools and community agencies; it was not intended to transform the internal student support structure and processes of schools. Building on the vision of Community Schools, the City Connects design team recognized a complimentary but distinct set of goals – to reach every children in the school, work with every teacher, and measure impact for individual children on a longitudinal basis.

After looking at several pre-existing models, the design team laid out – albeit in a rudimentary way – two essential components of any intervention – a conceptual framework and a set of best practices. These were critical to informing the shape of the intervention. The result of their efforts was a design for City Connects. Over the nearly 15 years of implementing City Connects, the conceptual framework and the best practices have been deepened and amplified, resulting in a codified intervention or practice for student support staff. After outlining the current conceptual framework, we will review principles of best practice, and describe the City Connects intervention and its measurable impact on student achievement and thriving.

## Conceptual Framework

The theory and research of developmental psychology provide the conceptual grounding for the City Connects intervention. Contemporary understandings from the field of human development suggest that a child’s development: (1) occurs in and is impacted by a variety of contexts, including school, neighborhood, and family; (2) is characterized by plasticity, because early development impacts but does not totally dictate later development – in other words, change is possible; (3) incorporates the continuous interaction of risk and protective factors, so that the presence of risk can be “balanced” by protective factors, allowing for positive growth; and (4) occurs simultaneously at multiple levels – biological, psychological, and social – with each level impacting every other level so that intervening in development must be done in a comprehensive way and not isolate a single domain (e.g. mental health) (Cicchetti & Sroufe, 2000; Sroufe, 2013; Walsh & Galassi, 2002).

This conceptual framework suggests an intervention that should be directed at mitigating risk factors and enhancing protective factors for all students. Therefore, modifying the number and types of risk and protective factors is the theoretical goal of the intervention. Research helps us to understand the particular factors that lead to positive outcomes in spite of adversity (that is, resilience) as well as what can be done to support youth. This framework constitutes the major theoretical reason why the design team made the bold assumption that our intervention could alter the course of children’s development. The conceptual approach also highlights the

importance of tailoring the intervention to the individual needs and strengths of the child, because the course of development for each child differs. As Cicchetti and Sroufe (2000) assert, “the same risk factors may be associated with different outcomes (i.e. multi-finality) and subgroups of individuals manifesting similar problems arrived at them from different beginnings (i.e. equi-finality)” (p. 257). The intervention strategy for promoting positive development was to reduce or mitigate the risk factors and to increase or enhance the protective factors. As a result, the intervention not only needed to be tailored, but also needed to give as much attention to children’s strengths as it did to their needs. Finally, the conceptual framework pointed toward a comprehensive approach that addressed all of the domains of child’s development: academic, social-emotional, health, and family.

## **Best Practices in Student Support**

The conceptual framework guides City Connects’ research and the articulation of best practices; these, in turn, lead to the development of an intervention or practice. Translating theory and research into the “world of action” is a long road that requires continual feedback from practitioners and from evaluation data. In the case of our student support intervention, some of these principles emerged from sources that represent a distillation of: (1) the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control (Marx, Wooley, & Northrop, 1998), (2) the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (Adelman & Taylor, 1993); and (3) the Education Trust (2000). Thought leaders such as Joy Dryfoos and the Children’s Aid Society (Dryfoos, 1990) and the Center for Child, Family, and Community Partnerships at Boston College also identified best practices, as did practitioners with substantial experience in the field of student support with whom the team consulted (Walsh et al., 2000). Taken together, these best practices, which flow from the conceptual framework, have universal application in new designs for student support services. We will now identify and describe these best practices.

### ***Student Support Should be Systemic and Coordinated***

In providing supports to children, it is incumbent upon the intervention to make certain that no child falls through the cracks, and to do so in a way in which the left hand knows what the right hand is doing. One of the more prominent examples of efforts to bring a systemic approach to the work of student support professionals can be found in the National Model of School Counseling, developed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (American School Counselor Association, 2012). The National Model of School Counseling outlines a framework for developing a systemic practice. ASCA leaders created this framework in response to the critique that school counselors were not typically addressing the needs of *all* students in a school (The

Education Trust, 2009). For example, at the elementary school level, many student support professionals were spending most of their time with a small number of seriously challenged students who often presented with behavior problems. Secondary counselors, on the other hand, often focused on helping high-performing students gain access to college. In either situation, a relatively small number of students were supported, while the large percentage of students was not. A systemic approach ultimately addresses this inequity and makes supports available to all students.

### ***Student Support Should Focus on Strengths as well as Needs***

Wise teachers have recognized for years that building on students' strengths is as important as addressing their needs. Supporting strengths and interests can be transformative in children's development. Research on children's competence confirms teachers' instincts and provides an impetus for all educators and human service providers to move away from an exclusive focus on remediating deficits and balance it with an intentional concern for enhancing strengths (Masten & Tellegen, 2012). Finding and enhancing children's strengths will lead to resilience when they are faced with adverse situations and relationships.

Recently, some members of the field have begun to advocate for developing students with "grit," which is defined by Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007) as perseverance and passion for long-term goals (p. 1087). Duckworth and colleagues (2007) explain that grit entails "working strenuously toward challenges, maintaining effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress" (p. 1088). The personality trait of grit has also been shown to predict achievement in academic, vocational, and avocational domains (Von Culin, Tsukayama, & Duckworth, 2014, p. 306). As we attempt to diminish the achievement gap and promote students' ability to succeed in the face of adversity, it is imperative to value resilience and grit as part of a student support intervention.

### ***Student Support Should be Customized for Each Student***

It has become clear that if academic achievement levels are to increase, particularly for children who are poor and of color, student support needs to be tailored to the particular academic needs of each student. Educators have come to understand the importance of finely grained assessments of each student's academic progress in order to provide appropriate supports. For teachers, individual academic plans have become the norm, and systems such as "response-to-intervention" are operationalizing individualized instruction. However, despite their recognition of the importance of individualized support for students' academic needs, educational leaders have not come to grips with the need for individualized support to address students' non-academic needs. In traditional approaches to student support, only students in

crisis or serious need received individualized student support plans. The vast majority of students – that is students who were showing early signs of difficulty and students who appeared to have few academic challenges – typically had little or no interaction with student support staff. Tailored plans for every child make this less likely.

### ***Student Support Should be Comprehensive in Addressing the Full Range of Student Needs and Provide a Continuum of Services***

Because children function as integrated human beings, it is impossible to intervene in one aspect of development without impacting other aspects. Conversely, interventions that are developed for all students need to consider the child in a holistic way and not arbitrarily split the child into parts, e.g. social/emotional versus health versus family versus academic. Primary care physicians deal with multiple aspects of physical health in the same way schools can provide “primary care” for students by addressing multiple aspects of development simultaneously. This holistic approach can result eventually in more specialized care, but it does not start there. Complementing a holistic assessment of a child is the delivery of a comprehensive continuum of services ranging from enrichment to early intervention to intensive intervention. At different points in their development, children can benefit from supports at each of these levels.

### ***Student Support Should be Culturally Sensitive***

Urban schools today are characterized by significant diversity. A large number of students are English Language Learners. In many schools, it is common for 80–100 languages to be represented among the families of the students. Schools also are racially mixed, with each group having its own traditions and culture, and its own approach to child rearing, learning, and behavior. School-based interventions must recognize these differences, train their staff intensively on cultural competence, and – insofar as possible – locate community services that are aligned with the particular racial, cultural, and language identities of the families served.



### ***Student Support Should be Evidence-Based and Continuously Monitored for Effectiveness through Collecting and Analyzing Data to Evaluate and Improve Service Delivery and Student Outcomes***

Largely as a result of Education Reform initiatives, evidenced-based approaches in education have become the “coin of the realm.” If teachers are asked to adopt a new practice, they should be assured that the practice is effective, not simply because someone says that it is, but because research has demonstrated it. Consistent with this call for evidence, the leading professional organizations in student support have also advocated strongly for a focus on outcomes (American School Counselor Association, 2012; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). Despite the profusion of evidence-based curricula in literacy, math, science etc., it is ironic that student support has few measures of effectiveness. Many individual interventions (e.g., violence prevention curricula) utilized by student support professionals are indeed research-based, but the comprehensive practice of holistic student support still depends on individual testimony and long-held beliefs about efficacy, and data that is at best descriptive. Without measures of effectiveness, school counselors and other student support staff become dispensable when budgets are cut. Thus, in addition to directly benefitting students, supporting evidence-based practice reflects counselors’ enlightened self-interest.

### ***Student Support Should be Cost-Effective to Schools by Leveraging the Resources Provided by Community Agencies***

The City Connects planning team learned that it is critical to build on existing school structures and processes wherever possible, and adapt them as necessary and appropriate. The City Connects design recognizes that schools already have structures and processes in place to address student needs. The work of student support staff members is clearly important and helps many students; however, many approaches focus primarily on at-risk children without utilizing a systematic practice that measures effectiveness. The design introduced by City Connects aims to modify and enhance the student support structures and processes already existing in a school.

### ***Student Support Should be Implemented Across Schools with Fidelity and Oversight***

In order to replicate and scale an intervention, one must demonstrate that the intervention is being implemented as intended. Otherwise, the evidence base, which confirmed the success of the intervention, does not have meaning. While some drift

will always occur in an intervention, it must be closely monitored by measuring the *fidelity of implementation*, and corrections should be made on a regular basis.

### ***Student Support Should Require Direct Teacher Engagement in Student Support Interventions***

Because it involves a core function of schools, City Connects is designed to impact and engage the heart of the school – that is, the teachers. Direct teacher engagement in student support proves to be significant and innovative. The typical approach to student support has often had minimal direct engagement with teachers, resulting in two distinct silos of work in the school: one related to classroom instruction and the second related to addressing so-called “non-academic issues.” The goal of the intervention is to directly engage teachers without adding to their burdens. A student support intervention must be efficient, and contribute in a positive way to making teachers’ work easier and more effective.

### **Description of the City Connects Intervention**

Based on this conceptual framework and best practices, the City Connects intervention provides an organized system for coordinating student support in schools. It redesigns and revitalizes traditional approaches to student support by strengthening the involvement of the classroom teacher and leveraging resources in the community. The intervention also provides a clear student support practice in which any school-based student support professional can engage after appropriate training.

At the core of the City Connects intervention is a full-time School Site Coordinator. A coordinator in each school, typically trained as a school counselor or school social worker, connects students to a customized set of services through collaboration with families, teachers, school staff, and community agencies. The ratio of School Site Coordinators to student population is 1:400. The School Site Coordinator follows standardized practices codified in the City Connects Practice Manual. School Site Coordinators are supervised by a Program Manager, who is also trained by City Connects. Each Program Manager is responsible for up to ten schools.

In the fall of each year, the School Site Coordinator works with each classroom teacher to assess and develop a customized support plan for every student. Together, they identify the strengths and needs of each student across major developmental domains (academic, social-emotional, behavior, health, and family), and propose a tailored student support plan, which is discussed with the student’s family. They then connect each child and family to appropriate school- and/or community-based services and enrichments. Students identified as having intensive needs at any point

during the school year receive an individual review, which is independent and distinct from a Special Education referral. In this more extensive review, a wider team of education, human services, and health professionals discuss and develop specific measurable goals and strategies for the student (City Connects, 2012).

A critical aspect of the role of the School Site Coordinator is developing and maintaining relationships with children and families throughout the course of the school year, as well as developing and maintaining partnerships with local community agencies and institutions. These partnerships collectively provide a range of prevention, early intervention, and enrichment services. Relationships are formalized through a City Connects Community Resource Advisory Board, comprised of selected citywide agency leaders, and a City Connects Resource Advisory Council, which includes selected agency representatives working at the local neighborhood level. In addition to developing individualized student support plans, School Site Coordinators themselves provide a range of services within the school and classrooms, including healthy life skills groups that address focused topics such as friendships and family relationships, bullying, and healthy eating.

School Site Coordinators document, track, and follow up on the delivery of the tailored set of services and enrichment opportunities, creating a systematic practice that leads to measurable student outcomes. To facilitate this process, and to permit streamlined tracking and follow-up, City Connects developed a proprietary Web-based database, the Student Support Information System (SSIS). The SSIS database allows for secure collection of data on student reviews, individual student plans, service referrals, and providers (both school-based and community agencies) who deliver services. The SSIS system also allows School Site Coordinators to run reports that provide them with critical information on electronic dashboards. This information is used to guide the School Site Coordinators' practice and develop priorities.

## Evaluation Designs and Challenges

The evaluation of City Connects is guided by a theory of change, which is grounded in research. A comprehensive student support intervention that addresses both students' needs and strengths holistically in the context of urban poverty would – in theory – be expected to achieve positive outcomes in student academic achievement and thriving (Walsh et al., 2014).

As is typical of nearly every school intervention, academic achievement is defined as a major outcome. In addition, because the intervention was anticipated to impact the whole child, student thriving was identified as the second major student outcome. Each of these outcomes was assessed by a number of measures. Measures of academic achievement included report card scores and standardized test scores (e.g. SAT) and high-stakes standardized test scores (e.g. state-wide standards-based assessments). The measures of student thriving included classroom behavior, student work habits, and student effort/motivation to learn. Insofar as possible, the

evaluation made use of existing student measures rather than adding the expense and the burden of new measures with students who were already perceived as over-tested. In addition to student outcomes, the evaluation focused on the impact of the intervention on critical stakeholders – teachers, school administrators, community agency partners, and families.

The evaluation was designed to include rigorous quantitative analysis, complemented by a number of qualitative approaches. The evaluation measured outcomes at the individual student level, as well as at the school level. Quantitative analyses have been done in the context of a quasi-experimental design. The analysis has employed a range of statistical methods with control and experimental groups using student-level propensity score matching on a number of characteristics. A systemic approach to data collection made effective use of technology. Implementation was started with a solid description of the intervention, a theory of change that would drive implementation, a plan for evaluating outcomes, and a method for collecting data.

The intervention's Evaluation Team provides five major functions: (1) monitors data on implementation in order to provide ongoing feedback that would result in changes to the practice or changes in the process of gathering data, (2) provides end-of-year reports to school partners and monitors the implementation through a fidelity system, (3) manages large longitudinal databases and provides the analysis of effectiveness, both immediate and long-term, (4) secures consultants who are experts in various methodological arenas, and (5) seeks feedback from independent external evaluators. It is important to note that the Evaluation Team is distinct from the Implementation Team.

The Evaluation Team for this study is designed as a three-level structure to ensure utmost rigor and independence. First, the **Core Evaluation Team** includes analysts affiliated with the Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation, and Educational Policy at Boston College. This team is responsible for data collection, data management, and analysis. Members include the Director of Evaluation, Associate Director of Evaluation, Manager for Data & Analysis, and Manager of Qualitative Research and Fidelity. Supporting staff members include one full-time Research Associate and several Graduate Students. Except for School Site Coordinator data entry into SSIS (the source for student service data but not outcomes data), no member of the Implementation Team has any role in evaluation.

A second layer is the **Expert Review Team** consisting of university faculty who specialize in associated disciplines including Educational Research, Developmental Psychology, Counseling Psychology, and Economics. This team convenes bi-weekly to review efforts of the core Evaluation Team and provide expert advice regarding study design and analyses. There are five current members of the Expert Review Team.

The final layer for the Evaluation Team is an entirely external **Independent Evaluation Board** (IEB) consisting of national experts in evaluation of social interventions, research methods, design and analysis of randomized controlled trials and school lottery data, and child development. The IEB receive evaluation results quar-

terly for comments and convene in person annually to review all evaluation findings. There are four current members of the IEB.

## Research Findings and Future Priorities

A wide range of evidence and methods of analysis demonstrates that City Connects significantly impacts student achievement, including report card grades and standardized test scores. In every academic subject (reading, writing, and mathematics), at every grade in elementary school, City Connects students achieve significantly higher mean report card scores than comparison school students (City Connects, 2012). After students have left the City Connects intervention in Grade 5, they score significantly higher on the statewide high-stakes test (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) than their peers in comparison schools (City Connects, 2014a). Remarkably, these students achieve close to the statewide average for proficiency levels on both Literacy and Mathematics components of this standardized test, and the significant improvement persists into high school through grade 10 (City Connects, 2014b).

City Connects has a significant impact on student dropout rates throughout high school. The cumulative percentage of students who drop out across the 4 years of high school is substantially lower for students who attended an elementary school implementing City Connects than for those who never attended a City Connects school (City Connects, 2014a). Ultimately, this translates to approximately 50 % lower odds of dropping out in high school – an important outcome because high school graduation is widely argued to yield public economic benefits (City Connects). According to Levin and colleagues (2006), a conservative estimate of the benefit is \$127,000 per graduate.

The evaluation also demonstrated that students who attend City Connects elementary schools are significantly less likely to be chronically absent or to be retained in grade than students who never attended City Connects schools. This pattern is present at every grade level. In summary, the City Connects evaluation has shown that optimized student support can be delivered in a high-impact, cost-effective way.

In addition to evaluating student outcomes, City Connects evaluations also solicit regular feedback from key stakeholders using electronic surveys. For example, in the 2012–2013 school year in Boston, 100 % of principals, 98 % of teachers, and 99 % of community partners indicated that they were satisfied with the City Connects intervention. In a context in which multiple interventions move in and out of schools, these are very high levels of satisfaction.

Beyond City Connects' local benefits, its evaluations also are having a demonstrable national impact. For example, Child Trends, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research center that is “focused exclusively on improving the lives of children and youth by conducting rigorous research and sharing the resulting knowledge with key stakeholders,” recently evaluated nine interventions that involve school-community part-

nerships (Moore, 2014). As a group, these interventions work in the area of linking students and/or families to opportunities in the community that will improve educational outcomes.

Across these nine interventions, Child Trends found 11 studies that meet their standards for rigorous research. Notably, five of the eleven were City Connects studies (Moore, 2014). The overall conclusion of this report was that the interventions constitute “a promising approach for helping more disadvantaged children and youth improve in school and have a brighter path to life,” and that the salutary effects of interventions such as City Connects may be cumulative (Moore, 2014, p. 8).

## Scale-up and Sustainability Planning

In recent years, the City Connects intervention has expanded to other school districts in Massachusetts, as well as districts in Ohio and New York. Based on literature on implementation science, the scale-up of any intervention requires documentation of the intervention, capacity to measure outcomes, staff training and professional development, measures of fidelity of implementation, and a plan for sustainability. City Connects has documented its intervention, established a professional development program, demonstrated its capacity to measure outcomes, and provided evidence of significant positive impacts.

Fidelity of implementation is critical to scale-up and sustainability. Expansion with integrity requires that the program be able to measure the degree to which the intervention is implemented in a way that is faithful to the practice as documented in the intervention’s Practice Manual. To respond to this requirement, City Connects developed a system of measuring fidelity of implementation. Expanding City Connects has provided the opportunity to ascertain the degree to which the model and the outcomes can be replicated in another geographic setting.

Throughout the first 2 years of implementation, indicators from the City Connects Fidelity Monitoring System revealed areas of high program fidelity; for example, strong implementation of preparatory steps for the process of reviewing each student with classroom teachers in order to collaboratively assess individual strengths and needs (City Connects, 2012). Information collected via the Fidelity Monitoring System also assisted the Evaluation Team by highlighting areas of potential improvement or need (e.g., the need to support teachers in filling out a required form during the first year of implementation) as the intervention is implemented in new school districts. The Fidelity Monitoring System has regularly informed the content of professional development.

City Connects also has a documented strategy for entering a new district. This process involves several steps, including introducing the program to stakeholders, recruiting School Site Coordinators to serve in schools, conducting a needs assessment of the schools and community and an environmental scan to identify local devices and supports, launching professional development to train new hires, initiating and establishing a plan for evaluation and reporting structures.

The literature on implementation science points out that rigorous evaluation of programs and interventions is critical with respect to sustainability (Halle, Metz, & Martinez-Beck, 2013). City Connects continues to prioritize quality evaluation. Further, according to Halle, Metz, and Martinez-Beck (2013), sustainability planning has been identified as a critical component of the implementation process that should be considered from the outset (p. 9). This suggests the importance of creating a systematized practice that would ultimately be worth sustaining and expanding.

With this in mind, the members of the partnership are also aiming to expand and scale-up the intervention, not only in different geographic locations but also with respect to grade levels. Though the initial focus was on elementary (K-8) school students, the practice has also been adapted and successfully evaluated with early childhood populations. A City Connects approach for secondary schools has been developed as well. This adaptation is currently being evaluated.

## **Achievements and Current Status**

At this point in time, City Connects has designed, developed, and implemented a nationally-recognized evidence-based practice in student support. As an intervention that reorganizes the way student support is delivered in schools, City Connects is leading Education Reform efforts in an important new direction, through the use of a systematic strategy that connects each and every student to a tailored set of enrichment, early intervention, and intensive intervention services (City Connects, 2014a).

City Connects is currently active in 79 sites across 7 districts in 3 states (City Connects, 2014a). The partnership has defined success in terms of a series of outcome measures, including the positive impact of the intervention on students, principals, teachers, and community partners (City Connects, 2014a). The City Connects team has demonstrated that the intervention can be easily replicated in school districts, that it is cost effective, and that it can teach the practice to either new or existing student support members.

The key components of City Connects and programmatic responsibilities of the School Site Coordinators are codified in the Practice Manual and sustained through an ongoing professional development program. This program enables School Site Coordinators to learn and implement all of the critical aspects of the City Connects approach. All newly-hired School Site Coordinators are inducted into the role via a weeklong City Connects Training Institute. The Institute provides an introduction to the City Connects model and an opportunity to begin building a professional network. This professional development program continues bi-weekly throughout the school year, and is delivered at a district level by City Connects Program Managers.

The content for these professional development modules is developed continually and made available to Program Managers via an online information management system. Using this technology, professional development on a regular basis in order to promote collaboration, provide School Site Coordinators with peer support,

and ensure fidelity of implementation. The goal of this continuous professional development is to support implementation of the core practice while addressing challenges and opportunities for individual schools and districts.

The City Connects Implementation Team is housed in the Center for Optimized Student Support at Boston College. The Center is responsible for expansion of City Connects to new sites and maintaining the practice of existing sites. The City Connects Implementation Team is responsible for carrying out the processes of entering schools and districts. They work with central administrators, principals, and teachers to explain the City Connects process, to support the hiring of appropriate personnel, and to guide and coach the implementation.

## Policy Implications

When the partners from the university, schools, and community began this initiative in the mid-1990s, the national and state policies were focused almost exclusively on academic achievement, with little to no analysis on student support. Teachers were responsible for raising achievement and were told repeatedly that considering the impact of poverty on students and families was a “cop out.” More recently, at both federal and state levels, the language and the policy have begun to shift. Over the past several years, Congress appropriated funds for Promise Neighborhoods and other community schools, suggesting that congressional leadership has recognized their value. The allocated funds will help communities across the country establish and expand schools’ capacity to respond to the non-academic needs of students. The recent federal government requirement that School Improvement Grants (SIG) be given only to evidence-based programs will make high-quality evaluation essential as schools select student support programs as one lever for school improvement.

America’s governmental programs such as Race to the Top have provided opportunities for significant progress in school reform. Some states have built “wrap-around services” into their Race to the Top proposals for low-performing schools. Their efforts have provided small amounts of funding to focus on the out-of-school challenges students face. As Weiss (2013) asserts, school districts that are heavily serving low-income and minority students face some of the most severe challenges with respect to student achievement. Many have advocated for more government resources to address poverty-related impediments to learning, but the message from Washington has not always been consistent with funding decisions.

The 2014 Child Trends report on programs that address non-academic needs introduced several key findings that have direct relevance for policymakers: (a) interventions addressing out-of-school needs can contribute to student academic progress – i.e. decreases in grade retention and dropout, and increases in attendance and overall GPA; (b) it is important for intervention that address children’s out-of-school needs to be firmly grounded in the research on child and youth development and aligned with research on the varied factors that promote educational success; (c) preliminary studies demonstrate a positive return on investment for these types of



interventions; and (d) higher quality is related to the effectiveness of programs (Moore, 2014). With respect to implications for policy, the Child Trends report asserts that programs with the aim of addressing children’s out-of-school needs demonstrate that “success in school (and in life) is more likely when young people’s well-being is met across multiple domains – in other words, when their health, safety, social/emotional, and cognitive needs are consistently met,” (Moore, 2014, p. 7). While education reform efforts have been largely focused on academic factors, an assessment of student strengths and needs beyond academics is necessary for policymakers to consider (Moore, 2014, p. 7).

## Lessons Learned and Their Import for Others

Developing, implementing, and evaluating a school-based intervention has taught many lessons to the school-community-university partnership involved with City Connects. When a university contributes to the development of new practices in schools, complete collaboration with school partners is essential from the outset (McNall, Reed, Brown, & Allen, 2009). We recognized that these partnerships work best when: (a) a shared conceptual understanding informs the design, (b) there is mutuality in roles and relationships, (c) sound operational strategies guide the work, and (d) both the process of the partnership and its outcomes are evaluated (Walsh & Backe, 2013).

Another major lesson revolved around the speed of change in schools – or lack thereof. Redesigning elements of schooling is a very slow process. Schools, like most big institutions, are slow to adopt significant changes. The glacial pace of change requires that all partners commit for the “long haul.” School change mirrors teachers’ patience with students; they recognize that often “slow and steady” wins the race.

Finally, we have learned the exquisite value of program evaluation. We recognize that an evidence-based intervention should be able to give data immediately to the consumer; in other words, principals should be able to see some immediate outcomes in summative fashion. The program evaluation also highlighted use of data to change and tweak the process, provide feedback to the design team, and measure intermediate and long-term outcomes. Ultimately, the program evaluation is valuable because it taught us how to balance of flexibility in being adaptive to individual schools while faithful to a core practice.

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# Chapter 6

## Enhancing and Extending Full Service Community Schools in Saskatchewan, Canada: Educators Becoming Part of the Hub

Twyla Salm, Elaine Caswell, Shelley G. Storey, and Alan Nunn

**Abstract** In Section 1 of this book, a three component planning framework was emphasized: Fit for purpose, in our special context, and at this particular time. The exemplar described in this chapter provides an important, compelling example. Leaders designed it for the special needs, problems, and opportunities associated with the expansive frontiers of Saskatchewan, Canada. Inspired initially by the full service community schools initiative developed in Scotland, leaders for this special Canadian and provincial innovation progressively developed their own design as they learned their ways through the attendant challenges and opportunities. In contrast to the full-service school model, they quickly learned that schools were not the best place or the only place for services needed for vulnerable young people and highly mobile, diverse families. Instead of a full-service school with claims for one-stop shopping, they have pioneered the development of a comprehensive school-linked, community-based services system. They describe in detail how they have organized and mobilized local leaders and community health and social services providers for collective action. Special organizational structures called “The Hub” and “The Centre of Responsibility” serve as intermediaries for services provision and policy coordination and change. Educators, students, families and schools are among the beneficiaries, but educators working alone do not have to shoulder often-overwhelming burdens to be the only service providers in particular places.

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These leader-authors' lessons learned for other leaders are especially important, including procedures for confidentiality protections and the community linkage strategies they have developed for educators and schools.

**Keywords** Community-based health and social services • Rural education • Indigenous education • Student support services • Interprofessional collaboration • School-community governance systems • Community school • At-risk youths

*Many educators have experienced the sadness that comes with seeing the name of a former student in the paper accused of a crime or the announcement of their untimely death. At that moment, we recall the ordinariness of their time with you in your class: their smile, their walk, the way they worked on a project or became distracted by it. But beyond the daily routine, we also recall the signs and the memory of having that ugly thought – that thought that warned us of the impending sense of doom. But, we bury those worries and worked-away hoping that this student, this time, has a chance to escape such a trajectory. No teacher wants to have “the thought” but it creeps into our minds as we see our students experience various combinations of poverty, addictive or risk-taking behavior, learning and health challenges or absenteeism. Many times we have seen the signs, we have had the thought but, alone, we did not have the tools to interrupt the pattern (authors).*

## **Full Service Community Schools for 30 Years**

Full-Service Community Schools have been part of the Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (SRPSD) since the 1980s when the provincial government provided targeted funding for schools with high rates of vulnerable children. Even schools that did not receive extra financial support adopted the community school philosophy and strategy. For example, all schools strived to integrate services, involve parents in meaningful ways and promote strategies for life-long learning. These features, along with other typical community school components, have been widely accepted in SRPSD as the best ways to reduce health and social barriers for children and their families.

At the same time, the SRPSD recognized that, while community school practices have built a positive learning environment in the school building, children and their families still faced formidable social and health challenges that impacted learning. In other words, senior administrators concluded that, while community schools may be a first line mechanism for social, health and academic change, they are not by themselves a sufficient strategy for deep structural change that impacts life circumstances or interrupt generational patterns associated with complex health and social issues.

This chapter provides details about the expanded strategies developed and implemented in tandem with community schools. It begins with a description of Coleman Community Public High School.<sup>1</sup> It is a Full Service Community School (FSCS) in Saskatchewan, Canada. Then we explore why SRPSD identified a need to go beyond schools and revision a new system and service designs.

We describe in subsequent sections of our chapter the distinctive features of the cross-system leadership infrastructure, the evolution of the interprofessional designs, and how these new designs and FSCS fit together. We highlight the unique and important role of the Educational representative as well as the lessons learned so far in the reconfiguring journey. Finally, we explore the vision for future development and next phases.

## **Gateway to the North: The Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division**

Geographically the Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division is in north-central Saskatchewan, Canada. It is a large region, extending over 165 km in one direction and 100 Km in another. Consequently, it intersects with multiple health regions, social service areas and justice systems. Within the division, there are 31 schools that serve 9000 students.

Many of these students attend schools in Prince Albert, the only city in the region. Although it is a relatively small city, Prince Albert (population – 35,000) has a fluctuating and transient population. It is known as the “Gateway to the North” because it is the main route for entering and exiting the remote, northern part of the province. From an Education perspective, this “gateway” phenomena contributes to high levels of transient students. Families often enroll their children in schools for short periods of time as they enter or exit the north. An increasing rate of young people and families in this locale experience poverty.

Coleman Community Public High School (Coleman) is one of the schools in Prince Albert that has been a full service community school for many years. Like many FSCS, it has a wide range of programs and a variety of professionals working in the building to support approximately 350 students ages 14–21 years old. One way to understand how the school works is by examining these professionals’ responsibilities, including the diverse programs and the range of services they provide.

Coleman has a full-time community school coordinator and two community school educational associates that liaise between the home and the school. One educational associate focuses on improving attendance by building relationships with students and by calling and “texting them back” to school. The other educational associate coordinates the nutrition program. This program provides healthy

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<sup>1</sup>Pseudonym.

breakfasts and lunches and also is designed to educate students in regards to their nutritional needs. All three community school personnel strive to build positive relationships with students, their families and community.

Community school programming includes a nutrition program for students, noon hour and after school activities. After school and evening activities vary depending on the needs of the students and community members. Activities have included:

- A specialized program where students work with horses
- A First Nations Elder program<sup>2</sup>
- A mentorship program where staff members mentor students
- An empowering young woman's group
- A parenting group
- Daycare for children
- A mediation program
- Other typical high school sports and activity clubs.

Through integrated school-linked services, the school partnership with the health region offers the services of an addictions counselor who works 4 days per week, a mental health worker, and a public health nurse who work 1 day a week. In addition to individual support through addictions and mental health counseling and individual public health support, these health care professionals also make classroom presentations, presentations to school assemblies and meet with small groups of students who may have similar concerns or who are facing similar challenges. The public health nurse is available to provide immunizations, talk to teen parents about their baby's health and offer support in terms of caring for a newborn/or toddlers. The nurse also provides sexual health information and guides students to other health services that may meet their needs.

Additionally, the school has access to a division team of psychologists, occupational therapists, and speech and language pathologists. These professionals are available to provide assessments and intervention to support a student's learning.

Underpinning all of these services is a learning program that is consistent with the five learning tenants of community schooling<sup>3</sup> while also incorporating culturally appropriate First Nation and Métis pedagogy and ways of knowing. At Coleman

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<sup>2</sup>A Metis Elder is available 1 day a week to mentor students who have children and to work with teachers when invited. Additionally, the school division has an Integrated Learning Consultant who provides teachers with knowledge of First Nation and Metis culture and works as a liaison between the SRPSD and neighboring First Nation communities and First Nation and Metis organizations.

<sup>3</sup>(1) The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students. (2) Students are motivated and engaged in learning – both in school and in community settings, during and after school. (3) The basic physical, mental, and emotional needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed. (4) There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families and school staff. (5) Community engagement, together with school efforts, promote a school climate that is safe, supportive and respectful and that connects students to a broader learning community (Blank, Melville, & Shaw, 2003).

courses are taught in five blocks, rather than half or full year semesters so students have a greater chance of completing courses within the 8 week period. (Recall that students and their families often are “on the move” so this scheduling arrangement was developed in response to student turnover data.) For example, in Grade 9 math and English are taught all morning all year. The afternoon classes vary depending on the block but a typical year might be:

- Block 1: Phys. Ed. and Health
- Block 2: Social Studies
- Block 3: Fine Arts/ Home Economics
- Block 4: Science
- Block 5: Industrial Arts/ Info Processing

Regular provincial curriculum is offered in all subject areas but there are also transition and alternative education courses for students who are not succeeding in the regular program. Class sizes are small and individualized programming is practiced.

Even though the school is rich in resources for vulnerable youth, the students who attend Coleman often experience multiple challenges that are not fully addressed by the services and programming offered by the school. To benefit from a FSCS students need to be actually in the building; however, at Coleman there can be up to a 100 % change in student enrolment by the end of the school year. Even between Blocks, when courses change, the student population can change over 50 %.

In other words, some students that attend Coleman are quite transient. Some leave and return 4–5 times before they graduate or stop attending altogether. This pattern of intermittent attendance starts at an early age and is coupled with a frequent change of schools. Some Coleman students have attended 4 or more elementary schools and have gaps in their learning or learning disabilities.

Clearly, Coleman students do not typify an average Canadian high school, but at the same time, the characteristics of the students and the FSCS environment here are not particularly unique. There are many schools in our province and nation who serve populations that are transient or vulnerable and many of them use a FSCS model which emphasizes a multi-service approach. In some contexts, this approach may be sufficient to improve learning outcomes but, at Coleman and schools like it, an additional and more intensive approach is required to improve the intricately intertwined outcomes related to learning, social and health.

SRPSD leaders wisely recognized that many student challenges are more chronic, generational and embedded in wider social structures than can be solely addressed by a multi-service system based in schools. In other words, FSCS provides a micro-system of integrated services. Professionals at the school genuinely seek family and community inclusion, but at the end of day, schools are mandated to support the child-as-student as the primary client. Participating in a broader community approach is often a considerable challenge for the Education sector.



## The Centre of Responsibility and the Hub

In response to this policy challenge, in 2010 SRPSD, along with an array of other human service sectors, co-constructed two structures: (1) the Hub and (2) the Centre of Responsibility (COR). These two structures expanded the school's role to mitigate risk and support families and communities in multi-sector and complex ways.

The Hub and the COR provide schools with an opportunity to be part of an inter-agency approach. This approach produces a framework that supplies families with a wide array of supportive services aimed at preventing health, social and learning crises. While full-service community school tenets remain central, together the Hub and COR offer a unique structure that de-centers schools as the center of service and embeds services in a wider network of schools and other services. In brief, this special design feature adds a community development framework with a community collaboration strategy to the full-service, community schools.

### *What Is the Hub?*

The Hub is not a crisis intervention strategy. Rather, it is a regularly scheduled and structured discussion amongst service providers to prevent problems by offering support to individuals and families to mitigate risk. Notably, the Hub does not offer case management or have authority to deliver services. The service delivery responsibilities remain within the scope of practice of the participating agencies.

For educators, the purpose of this type of collaboration is to identify students with acutely elevated risks and to mobilize existing school and community resources with the view to reduce the likelihood of the situation worsening. In other words, when students demonstrate behavioral patterns such as running away, anti-social behaviour, addictions, changes in education and/or residential instability the Hub aims to interrupt this negative trajectory before the behaviours become critical. The fundamental condition for having a student's or family's situation discussed at the Hub table is the presence of acutely elevated risk factors across a range of agencies. Therefore, to be considered "elevated" and "at-risk", there must be multiple risk factors present. To date, Hub leaders have identified 105 such risk factors. For example, a student that runs away from home is *not* a candidate for a Hub referral. In this situation, it is likely that the family and school would work together to engage with the FSCS supports; however, if the student comes from a home where there is known substance abuse or mental health issues or s/he is experiencing these same challenges, a Hub referral can be indicated.

By offering assistance and options for services to those in need,<sup>4</sup> the goal is to prevent students from entering into health and social care systems. Approximately, 61 % of the Hub clients are children and youth, but many adult clients are related to

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<sup>4</sup>Problems and needs refer to elevated risk factors.

the Education sector as parents who have school age children. However, some clients may be adults without a direct connection to the Education sector. Hub members represent a host of frontline workers from the following sectors:

- Ministry of Social Services (Child and Family Services),
- Income Assistance,
- Mobile Crisis Unit,
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police,
- Ministry of Health: Prince Albert Parkland Health Region (Mental Health, Addiction Services Adult and Youth, Public Health Inspections),
- Ministry of Justice (Adult Probation, Youth Probation),
- Ministry of Education (Roman Catholic Separate School Division, Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division.)

Each of these agencies has the capacity to bring forward situations (i.e. clients) that might benefit from existing services when they are experiencing emerging problems and have elevated risk factors.

After a referral is made, Hub members are charged with contacting the clients and arranging intervention if needed within 24–48 h of Hub meetings. Hub members meet in a highly structured meeting format twice per week. There are three parts to these two hour meetings: (1) presentation of new information and situations; (2) follow-up from the interventions from the last meeting; and (3) small group planning sessions for the next 24–48 h. The norm of high standards and accountability in these meetings is remarkable. There is no evidence of the typical barriers to collaborative service; for example, service providers do not say they could not find a time to meet – they make time. The members do not persevere on disruptive behaviours such as jockeying for status or posturing their privilege. While teams are organized at the Hub and they prepare ideas for service, there is genuine respect for clients and families who ultimately maintain their power to decide on any course of action. In some circumstances, the services that the family selects may not have been the first choice of the professionals but the team honours the idea of client-centered practice.

The Hub professionals all work within the mandates of their respective agencies, and there are no internal Hub policies. That said, the confidentiality agreement may be the one exception to this point. Members sign a confidentiality agreement that protects the privacy of the clients who are discussed at the Hub table. Additionally, clear guidelines are in place to support ethical and confidential practice. The confidentiality framework will be discussed in a subsequent section.

How has the Hub supported the learning environment at Coleman? In order to explain how the Hub complements but goes beyond the FSCS model, it is useful to provide an example. Like any high school, there are some situations that occur at Coleman that even fall beyond the scope of the Hub. For example, if a student commits a crime in school, the student is not referred to the Hub. The school would call the police and the judicial system would be involved and multiple supports from within the FSCS could be provided.

However, if the parent of the student reveals that their child is becoming more and more involved in risk-taking behavior, and they don't know how to support the child and interrupt this negative cycle, a Hub referral can be made to support both the parents and the child. The issue at hand would not be the crime. Rather the priority would be to ensure that the family has the support they need to parent the student effectively, keep the child engaged in school and support the entire family unit. In this way, the Hub is mitigating risk rather than responding to crisis.

Similarly if students are frequently absent from school, their truancy is not an appropriate Hub referral. However, if the student discloses that they have multiple other risk factors a Hub referral can be made to put support in place. In all such situations, the school becomes a conduit to other services. The school benefits from this function because, to the extent that these referrals are effective, education goals are achieved because an otherwise-disengaged student remains engaged in school.

### ***What Is the COR?***

The COR (Centre of Responsibility) is comprised of a group of seconded professionals from education, policing, health and social and addiction services who are charged with addressing long term complex issues which require sustained effort over time and systemic change. Members of COR work in the CMPA office space. This space is a suite of offices in a building in downtown Prince Albert.

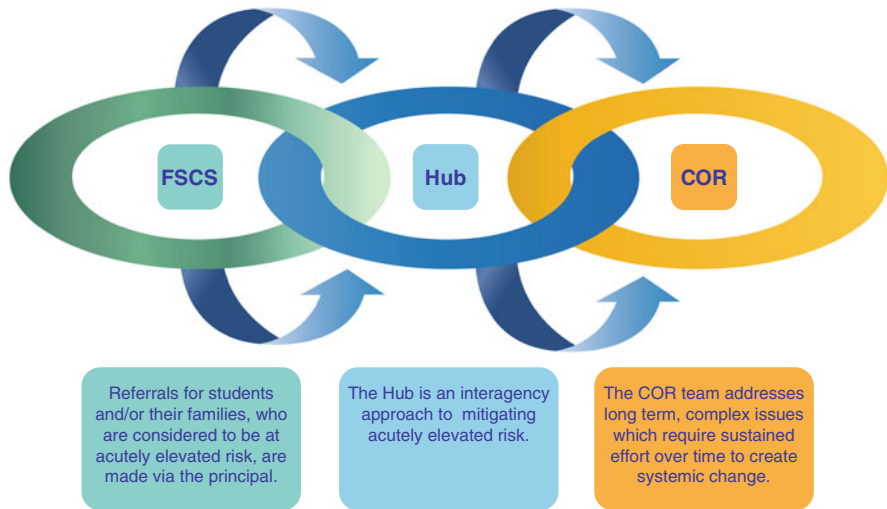
Some members of the COR are also members of the Hub but the COR's responsibilities are clearly different than the Hub. Members of the COR work together to mobilize community resources, advocate for change in legislation, and adapt resources for integrated services teams.

Research is central to the COR. Currently, the Educational Representative is leading research initiatives in the areas of truancy, adolescent alcohol use and teen facility centre transportation. The COR is somewhat removed from the everyday operation of a FSCS. However, the Educational Representative provides the link between school system and the COR. In this forum, the Education Representative is critical to ensure that there are equitable opportunities for all children and that the barriers that interfere with learning and achievement are addressed.

In short, mutually beneficial relationships have been developed among the schools, the HUB, and the COR. Figure 6.1 depicts these relationships.

### ***Early Development of the Hub and COR***

While schools were discovering both the merits and limitations of full-service community schools, other human service providers also took stock of their respective program's outcomes. For example, the Prince Albert Police Service acknowledged that they could not "arrest their way out" of the high and steadily increasing crime



**Fig. 6.1** Mutually beneficial linkages among Full Service Community Schools (FSCS), the Hub and the Center of Responsibility (COR)

rates. Similarly, Mental Health and Addictions Services reported that despite useful programming, mental health conditions and social issues related to poverty and addictions were proliferating. This context helped educators and service providers imagine how to construct a second line mechanism for individuals to access services as a preventative, capacity building strategy.

In 2010 the Prince Albert Police Chief, organized a group of human service professionals from multiple sectors to visit the city police in Glasgow, Scotland to examine their model (Scottish Office, 1998). In this model, interprofessional teams improved social and health conditions and engaged in a successful crime reduction strategy. In many contexts it would have been unconventional, if not spend-thrift, to send a school superintendent on an exploratory journey across the Atlantic. However, Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division who had been steeped in interagency type work for many years, knew that improving complex social issues that impacted student learning could not be done in an education silo. The challenge for the school division was to not only discover what was successful about the collaboration in Glasgow, but have the conviction and leadership to construct something new that would provide tangible results, not only in crime reduction but to improve learning as well.

## Challenges of Developing a Structure: Extending and Supporting FSCS

With the Police Chief as their leader, a group of human service providers including an administrator from the SRPSD, adapted and adopted elements of the Glasgow model to construct a strategic alliance called CMPA (Community Mobilization

Prince Albert). This initiative was also linked with a provincial strategy called Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime. This partnership was based on recognition of the need for collaboration among sectors at both regional and provincial levels. CMPA's first task was to construct a governance structure, a comprehensive business plan, and secure provincial funding to hire an Executive Director. To understand how SRPSD participates and, in fact, co-constructed the governance structure to forge new collaboration territory for the Education sector, it is helpful to understand the general governance structure of CMPA.

At the most senior level an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) was formed. It consists of senior executives from local, regional and provincial agencies in Police, Social Services, Health, Education, and Adult and Youth Corrections, Prince Albert Grand Council and the City of Prince Albert meet twice annually to ensure goals and priorities are being met. The next level of governance is the Operational COR Committee (OCC). This OCC consists of administrators and managers from the aforementioned participating agencies who meet monthly to set goals and priorities and hire and support the Executive Director. The Executive Director's primary task is to lead the two CMPA structures – the COR which is dedicated to addressing broad systemic issues and the Hub which is devoted to mitigate immediate issues of risks.

### *How Does Education Fit into the Governance Structure?*

As mentioned early, the SRPSD was one of the founding members of CMPA, and as such, one of the school division's superintendents became a member of the Operational COR Committee (OCC). Although the range of responsibilities for the OCC is broad, from reviewing discussion papers to considering personnel issues, one of the superintendent's primary roles was to ensure Education had adequate representation on the Hub and COR. At first, it was a challenge to reallocate Education staff to the COR because it called for a full-time teaching position to be moved out of schools and incorporated in the COR responsibilities.

At the onset of CMPA, each participating organization, except Education, dedicated a full-time professional to contribute to the COR. Simply relocating a full time school administrator or superintendent to work at the COR initially stretched the responsibilities and accountability boundaries of an educator beyond what was traditionally reasonably financially, politically and structurally feasible. It took 2 years to obtain school board approval as well as the Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation (union) approval. The superintendent, as a member of the OCC, was able to second a principal to work alongside the other sectors as a member of COR.

Having the voice of the Education sector in this forum raises the awareness of how the entire COR team can support equitable opportunities for all youth and how they can build capacity to ensure that students transition through different aspects of the Education system smoothly. Currently, the COR Educational Representative

supports the Hub Educational Representative on the Hub, as these positions continue to evolve.

### ***The Educational Representative's Role on the Hub***

Since the inception of the Hub, SRPSD has always had some form of consistent Educational Representation but it has been a challenging process to establish a sustainable model. For the first 2 years, a principal was assigned Hub responsibilities and essentially juggled her role as a principal of a FSCS with the role as the Educational Representative to the Hub, representing the entire school division. Retrospectively, this principal's dual position was an effective way to prove how necessary Education's role was to the success of the Hub.

For example, even though not all of the Hub clients are youth, Education was the originator of 24 % of the Hub discussions, acted as the lead agency in 18 % and assisted in 50 % of the discussions. Therefore, Education participated either as lead or on the team of 68 % of the interventions. With such an active education role on the Hub it became easier for SRPSD to more deeply understand and clarify their role on the Hub. This clarity was needed to justify the unique re-allocation of the principals' responsibilities to the Hub but the model was difficult to sustain.

In the current year, a teacher has been allocated 0.5 of her full time teaching responsibilities to participate on the Hub as the Educational Representative. Now the former principal has shifted roles to be a full time seconded member of the COR and plays a supportive role on the Hub. With these moves, SRPSD has dedicated 1.5 teachers to participate in non-traditional roles outside of the school building.

In this Hub position, the Educational Representative is the central receiving point for all of the referrals made by the SRPSD principals who have concerns about particular students. Then, she contacts the referring school to discuss the referral and collects any other pertinent information including a record of interventions and known agencies involved with the child. After she ensures that the school has already expended all of its own FSCS resources to support the student, and the student's risk is elevated, then a Hub referral is considered.

The role of the Educational Representative at the Hub meetings includes presenting potential discussions from SRPSD students/families, recording their own notes or minutes and taking the lead on some interventions and assisting other agencies as part of the intervention team. At the Hub meeting, the lead agency is identified and other members of the Hub form the supporting team. An intervention is planned within 24–48 h and the Education representative is responsible for attending and participating in those student and family meetings. Planning and intervention meetings can take place in schools. Oftentimes these meetings take place in homes, frequently "after hours" in the evening or on weekends. The primary goal of all interventions is to provide the best support possible to a student and family and to mitigate risk. This kind of teamwork requires genuine collaboration between all members of the team.

Another important role of the Educational Representative is to articulate when the Hub discussions are ready to close or determine if they must remain open. Discussions are not closed for the sake of convenience or because they have been at the table for numerous Hub meetings; they are closed when the risk is mitigated and the Hub team believes that the appropriate supports have been offered, and most often, accepted. The Educational Representative is also responsible for all SRPSD notes including recording and collating them in a manner which is conducive to analysis and review.

In total, the SRPSD contributes to the CMPA governance structure and practice in four different ways. First, the Director of the School Division participates on the Executive Steering Committee. Second, a superintendent participates on the OCC. Third, a principal is seconded full-time on COR. Fourth, a teacher has a half time appointment to the Hub.

Creating this complement of people for CMPA has taken almost 3 years. It also required fortitude and endurance to ensure that adequate financial resources are available and that the philosophical vision and mandate of CMPA is understood and supported by a wide range of Education stakeholders. The education sectors level of community based commitment is a unique way to fully maximize the effort and outcomes, not only outside the school building but also within the Full Service Community School.

## **Strategies to Safeguard Confidentiality**

Issues related to confidentiality have traditionally been one of the primary barriers to effective interagency collaboration. FSCS often provide multiple services but those services may not be coordinated and professionals may not be collaborating as a result of confidentiality barriers. In the context of the Hub, however, sharing pertinent personal and health information with other human service providers is necessary in order to mitigate acutely elevated levels of risk in youth. It was clear from the onset that for CMPA and the Hub to work effectively it was necessary to address issues of privacy and confidentiality.

Subsequently, CMPA was a catalyst for the Province to provide clear direction and guidelines for information sharing. In order to reconcile, “information sharing and privacy” – these seemingly discordant issues, the Joint Policy Committee of Saskatchewan Justice and Attorney General established a working group<sup>5</sup> to review and recommend improvements to interagency information sharing. After a full review of various pieces of provincial and federal legislation a comprehensive set of guidelines<sup>6</sup> was established to direct service providers in strategies to share information that complies with requirements of existing privacy legislation.

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<sup>5</sup>Information Sharing Issues Working Group – Ministries of Justice, Health, Social Services, Education, and Corrections and Policing Division.

<sup>6</sup>Information Sharing Guidelines for Community Mobilization and Hubs- April 2013.

There is inherent complexity in the collection, use and disclosure of personal information and personal health information. The guidelines assist the agency leaders as they determine the situations in which personal information can be shared in an integrated context.

### ***Four Filters***

Specifically, CMPA has adopted a “four filter approach” to working with confidential information. The first filter allows only situations of acutely elevated risk to come forward to the Hub to be discussed, that is, risks that are multiple, probable for harm and beyond the scope of any one agency. The second filter works to minimize identifiable personal information and personal health information that is disclosed and discussed. Also, the Hub members identify if the situation is at an acutely elevated risk in a de-identified format, so as to move to filter three where the individual is identified.

The third and fourth filters act together to limit the agencies to which the information is disclosed and the recording of identifiable information. With both of these filters, information is limited to those agencies with a direct role in the discussion. No identifiable information is currently recorded in the central records of the Hub integrated service because the service providers are always acting on behalf of their agency and therefore maintain their own records. Ostensibly, these records are subject to the policies and legislation applicable to the individual agencies.

### ***How Do the Four Filters Improve Confidentiality?***

Prior to any names being disclosed, there are screening processes that takes place before situations are presented at the Hub meeting. The originating agency, such as a school, must first determine that there are elevated risk factors, that they are probably beyond the agencies scope of practice and all their traditional prevention and intervention approaches have been exhausted. If this criterion is met, then the second filter is to present the situation to the Hub in a de-identified format. Then, the members of the Hub must determine if there is acutely elevated risk before any personal information is disclosed. If the circumstances do not meet the threshold for elevated risk, no personal information is disclosed and no further discussion occurs at the Hub. The pace of these aspects of the meetings is quick and to the point without elaborate narrating and storytelling, yet there is sufficient context for discussion.

At the same time, if all the agencies conclude that Hub involvement is warranted because of elevated risk, the individual’s name is disclosed only before the name is assigned a number. In all subsequent discussions, the Hub members use the individual’s number, not their name. At this point, if Hub members know the youth, they



can share relevant information and use this opportunity to determine which agencies will be required to participate in a full discussion. If the individual is school aged, it is likely that the Education Representative would be involved.

Notably, members of the Hub expressed concern that using numbers rather than names may de-humanize these complex situations. However, after using the system for a short time they found it easier to communicate with numbers to ensure that other members at the table who may not be involved with the situation are not privy to the confidential information. The transition to this system was less cumbersome than they expected.

After the conclusion of each large Hub meeting, agency representatives break into smaller groups for full discussions to plan their next course of action which is filter four. At this time, a team and a team leader are selected. The team often will plan a “door knock” to visit the youth and their family within 1–3 days.

In the meantime, the Education Representative might call the youth’s principal and collect pertinent information about attendance, learning and behavior. They would also further review the type of FSCS supports that are already available for the student. From there, the team will visit the family, ask for their permission to intervene, collect more information and then offer appropriate services. Most often, these are services are already provided by the agency but the family may not be aware of, or utilizing them.

One significant feature to this Hub team approach is that the services inherently become more integrated. For example, the Education Representative and the social worker might work together to ensure that the youth has transportation and access to become involved in some of the existing FSCS afterschool or evening programs. In that way, the Hub becomes a means to ensure that the benefits of FSCS are maximized.

The Executive Director of CMPA and also the chair of the meetings ensure that sub-teams are accountable to the Hub by asking the leader to report the outcomes of the client meeting at the next Hub meeting. The turn-a-round time from client meeting to outcome reporting is very quick. Normally, client discussions do not reappear for more than 2–3 meetings as the intent is to make contact quickly and deploy the services immediately. In some circumstances, clients do not accept the services, or conversely, require comprehensive services that go beyond the mandate of the Hub. Since the professionals that work on the Hub also work within the mandates of their respective agencies when crisis situations arise, the professionals can engage the appropriate support without it necessarily being a collaborative effort.

## **Is Education the Weak Cousin in the Human Service Family?**

It is not uncommon for the Education partner to be on the margins of human service collaborations. There is a hint of this problem in our work. Sometimes it feels like the Education sector is the weak cousin in the human service family. One reason is structural, and it derives from public policy and budget management.

In Saskatchewan, there are many structural differences between the Education sector and other human service sectors that interfere with “seamless” collaboration and the type of interdependence and synergy that is often sought. One of the main differences between the Education and the other human services is the way budgets are managed and financial decisions are determined. Like all school divisions in Saskatchewan, the SRPSD is governed by a locally elected board of education, which is responsible for allocating funding in ways consistent with provincial education policy, union contracts and historical practices. Deviations from typical funding regimes or traditional roles and responsibilities are often too daunting for most school divisions to tackle.

While not always an easy conversation, the SRPSD has pioneered new roles for their principals and teachers in this Hub model. Notably, for most of the Sectors, the Hub does not have any new costs associated with it. Each sector is charged with re-allocating staff and sometimes priorities but they maintain their agency mandate. Education is, of course, an exception to that rule. The necessary shift in roles for educators comes with a financial cost for every teacher and principal that is at the Hub and not performing tradition school roles.

Like the COR, the structure and membership of the Hub presented challenges for SRPSD. Determining who would represent SRPSD on the Hub was not as straightforward as it was for other human service agencies. All of the other Hub members were supervisory front-line workers in their health and social care agencies who were also capable of providing direct interventions and carrying case loads.

In the field of Education, there are no comparable positions. Superintendents are the administrators with the most the flexibility in their schedule to accommodate Hub meetings, but they are not frontline workers appropriate for *ad hoc* interventions. Teachers and principals are the frontline workers. However with 31 schools in the division, the Hub representative could not serve as frontline worker for every school. Instead, the schools built a network to support one Educational Representative who serves on the Hub and liaises with all SRPSD schools. The frontline workers, in Education’s case, are the teachers and the principal who work directly with the referred child or youth.

Because the education sector has not traditionally been a fully integrated partner in the social and health care family, old and marginalizing practices sometimes still emerge. In other words, even with the Hub in place, there are times when educators are left out of the circle of care developed to serve students and families.

Sometimes, for example, a principal will make an appropriate Hub referral. Unfortunately, when the case is presented at the Hub table, other members recognize the discussion because they are already working with that particular family. Had Education already known that those supports were in place, a Hub referral may not have been necessary because school personnel could have contacted those agencies and become part of the plan to support the child and their family in the first place. For that reason, the Hub has also served as an important structure to disrupt and make visible, old practices where Education has been marginalized and establish new roles as an integral member of the human service team.

Now as a full time partner at the Hub table, the Educational Representative can offer an Education perspective in collaborative meetings, be available for immediate interventions and liaise with SRPSD's 31 schools. An old cliché ("build it and they will come") certainly applies to the strategy that CMPA used to help SRPSD find creative alternatives to historical barriers that has impeded Education as substantial, interdependent partner in the health and social care sector. If Education was the weak cousin, as SRPSD charts new territory for ways that school divisions can imagine new roles and responsibilities and networks for their teachers/principals, the Education sector is bound to be a more robust partner in the human service family tree.

## **Current Status: Progress Markers, Achievements and Next Phases**

Because CMPA is still in its infancy and Education has had to focus on building a sustainable structure, progress markers to date tend to focus on outputs (e.g. the number of students served) rather than outcomes (e.g. improved attendance). In the same vein, evaluations have attended to structural and organizational achievements (e.g., securing secondments) rather than learning and social achievements (e.g., improving academic achievement). Four achievements mark the structural success in these early years of development. These are: improving Education's "in-house" communication, refining the service strategy, holistic child development, and changes in professional roles.

### **In-House Communication**

Except for the creation of the Hub representative from a principal at SRPSD, the roles of principals and teachers have not significantly shifted. At the same time, for the Hub to be effective principals and teachers need to be informed and knowledgeable about how to identify an appropriate Hub referral and what services the partners can reasonably provide. In that way, educators must learn to position themselves as part of the human service team, not at the center of it and not on the margins.

After 18 months of implementation, anecdotal data suggested that some schools made several referrals, while others made none. For example, many of the collaborative efforts were family and student based but others were more comprehensive. One group of high school students collaborated with the school and service providers to write and perform their own play about domestic violence. While the play was a useful teaching tool for students, it was also a way for the service providers to demonstrate in a public forum how collaboration is required to address complex social issues.

One of the critical roles of the Educational Representative is to improve the “in-house” communication and ensure that principals, teachers and FSCS staff understand the role they could play in advancing a student to the Hub. To advance this goal, multiple presentations are provided for vice-principals, groups of inclusive education specialists and social workers. Additionally, there is an emphasis on providing one-to-one conversations with principals that further augment the in-service communication processes.

While engagement with the Hub over time will provide much needed experience for the teachers and principals, staff changes will always necessitate a certain amount of information sharing from the Educational Representative and the network she creates within the Education sector. In other words, these needs are ongoing because staff turnover is normative. Building and maintaining in-house communication will continue to be a formidable goal, even as the Hub matures.

## **Refining the Service Strategy**

Another typical Hub referral scenario that involves schools occurs when other human service agencies recognize a family with an educational need. For example, when health or social services identifies that there are young children in the home that could be going to pre-school or older students who are not engaged in school, they can make a referral to alert the school systems. With this new knowledge the SRPSD can take initiative and invite the families to become part of the school community. Whether it is attracting a family to an early learning program or older students back to school, other sectors can connect students and families with schools.

This is a good example of why Education needs to be involved in practices that extend beyond the traditional boundaries of one student with one teacher within one school. In some situations, the client(s) are actually the parent(s) and parents are clearly not traditional mandates of school systems. However, by collaborating with other sectors to support the parents, the Education system achieves its goal to provide early learning and/or consistent education for all students.

## **Holistic Child Development**

Education literature is ripe with rhetoric associated with the need for educators to provide “holistic support” for the “whole” child within a family context. Unfortunately, in practice, “holistic” is rather narrowly defined and often poorly executed. The Hub collaboration offers a means for the Education sector to provide authentic holistic support without disregarding their learning mandate. In this context, challenges that parents and families might be facing are not separated from the needs of the child; students are not treated as if they can be disengaged from complex

home circumstances during the school day, nor must parents cope alone with their child's learning, health or social needs.

## **Evolving Professional Role Identities**

Inherently, the structure of the Hub creates a shared responsibility among all of the specialized professionals working with the same child and family. One reason is that that child and family needs are interdependent, so it doesn't matter if the primarily client falls within in the mandate of a particular organization. For example, if the Housing Authority and Social Services are working together to support a family where there is children, the school is invested in the Hub process even though the services may be beyond the scope of Education. These kinds of experiences also build capacity and competencies in professional practice. Shared accountability and genuine interdependence between professionals, that work together on the Hub, fosters opportunities for professional development that eventually alters professional roles and working relationships among once-separate, specialized professions.

This kind of growth often occurs when professionals have the opportunity for role clarification in context. Notably, professionals who have worked together on the Hub have the opportunity to examine their assumptions and misunderstandings about other professions and sectors and reframe their understanding of other professions. The Hub members have dealt with classic questions such as, "why don't schools improve student attendance – can't you just make kids just go to school?" Similarly, social services has had the opportunity to explain the criteria for apprehending a child and answer "why did you take the child away?"

The most compelling story came from one of the police officers who admitted that he joined the force, "to catch the bad guys, certainly not to collaborate with teachers". After being part of collaborative teams and on the Hub, however, he discovered that connecting with teachers about student's attendance and learning about student assets from professionals that knew the students intimately served him better as a police officer. Now he finds himself, inquiring more about youth's attendance, reading levels and social capacity rather than looking for breaches and charges.

And, when this kind of professional role identity shift happens – the real work gets done. When professionals can work within a structure that fosters opportunities to collaborate and re-imagine how to assist families interrupt negative life trajectories, the range of desirable outcomes expands beyond students, parents, and families. Education and health/social service professionals experience powerful, practice-embedded learning and professional development. In addition to the technical skills these professionals develop, they also experience changes in their role identities, including the outcomes they prize and the interventions they prefer and employ. Here, in short, are indicators of systems change, and they derive from shifts in how individuals and teams think, interact, plan, and do their work.

## Evaluation Designs and Challenges

The main evaluation targets and priorities for the Hub have been primarily focused on establishing an evaluation culture that will allow for appropriate measuring of outcomes and process evaluation. The evaluation piece is achieved in collaboration with the Centre for Forensic Behavioral Science and Justice Studies from the University of Saskatchewan and the Corrections & Policing Division of the Ministry of Justice.

CMPA has two highly specialized analysts. One is the tactical analyst. This person is a central source for data, particularly identifying and tracking daily calls to the police service to identify potential candidates for the Hub. Among a host of other duties, the tactical analyst also collects data and evaluates Hub processes and systemic issues identified through the Hub process.

The strategic analyst is the other specialist. This person is involved with long-term systemic data collection. One of his primary roles is to develop and maintain metrics in support of Hub and COR data, and liaise with provincial departments to ensure consistency and quality assurance. Ultimately, both analysts track information and ensure that Hub and COR members are making informed decisions based on data, rather than instinct. In order to collect data in an organized and useful way, the collection of data and the databases themselves have evolved rapidly since the inception of the Hub. The database has evolved from a narrative summary, to an excel spreadsheet to a unique BPRC database system that the analysts have constructed for the sole purpose of collecting and analyzing Hub data. To our knowledge, they are the only two analysts of this kind in North America. Most significantly, they (along with the province) have constructed a unique database system that is garnering global attention for its effectiveness in collecting data related to risk factors.

During the Hub meetings, the two analysts use the BPRC database to track multiple statistics. After each client is de-identified, the situation is discussed and appropriate risk factors are assigned to the individual and they are noted in the database. On average six risk factors are identified per situation. Also, the agencies that brought forward the situation for discussion, the lead agency and the assisting agencies are tracked. Each situation is categorized. The categories include: dwelling, environmental, family, neighborhood or person. Although it might appear beyond the scope of the Education sector to be involved in all of these categories, it is enlightening to see the breadth of Education's legitimate involvement. For example, in an "environmental" category students might be affected by waste that is being dumped in an area that marks their path to and from school. Similarly, a neighborhood issue might focus on a park where there is lots of criminal activity and is close to a school grounds where students frequent at noon or afterschool. Since educational issues and concerns are often embedded in each of these categories, the wide range of the school's mandate is underscored, and education's contribution to other sector mandates also is emphasized.

When discussions are closed, the tactical analyst documents the outcomes of the intervention and they select from the following options: connected to services and/or cooperative, connected to services in another jurisdiction, deceased, informed about services, refused services or uncooperative, relocated and unable to locate. The final step in closure is to review the original risk factors and ensure that they are still accurate. Although the process may appear militant and detached, the Hub members describe this database as “a consistent professional approach”, “structured”, “action oriented” and “efficient” and there is great affinity to this approach to data collection.

As the two analysts manage routine descriptive and demographic data related to the number and type of referrals, they also track Hub outcomes particularly in the area of crime prevention. The analysts are currently developing new methods of tracking and mapping risk, and integrating the concepts associated with Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis in CMPA initiatives. For example, the SROI analysis can help to determine the value of a discussion or actions that emerge out of it such as a “door knock”. In other words, if the Hub offers services to a family and intervenes in high risk situations, prior to crisis, SROI analysis provides a method to show the economic benefits of investing early in preventative measures. While it is a great challenge to show causation, there have been significant shifts in some areas since the work of the COR and Hub has begun. The statistics from year end 2012, when compared to 2010, show several encouraging results. For example:

- Decrease of violent Criminal Code violations in Prince Albert by 38 %.
- Calls for service to Prince Albert Police Service decreased by 5 %
- Overall crime reduced by 18 % in Prince Albert (number of General Occurrences: that number had been on a steady incline for many years)
- Youth crime reduced by 20 % (number of General Occurrences showing one or several juvenile individuals that were charged, diverted or warned)
- Youth victimization reduced by 41 % (number of General Occurrences showing one or several juvenile victims)

Although crime rate is not directly related to Educational outcomes, any system that is able to reduce crime and victimization means that many youth are more likely to be able to regularly attend and learn in their FSCS environment. At this point, the Education sector has not established a formal evaluation strategy to measure the outcomes specific to Education, however, there are plenty of success stories that provide justification for their involvement with the Hub. The complexity and indeterminacy of integrated initiatives like the Hub and COR, present substantial challenges to school based evaluators (Dyson & Todd 2010). The kinds of outcomes that educators might be concerned with include:

- Better access to local services
- Reduction in health inequities
- Enhanced partnerships with the community
- Increased attendance

- Increase in senior matriculation in high schools
- Greater engagement with learning
- Increased self-regulation, self-motivation and self-esteem

There are structures currently in place tracking attendance and registration. However, collecting data and analyzing the interactions between factors to demonstrate statistically significant outcomes is a considerable challenge. Additionally, some of the investments that are made in the Hub may not show “pay-off” in a typical evaluation period – some of the outcomes may be very long term. Therefore, conventional evaluation designs are not likely to demonstrate substantial improvements on learning outcomes or student performance, unless the data is collected in a uniquely designed, and often qualitative way (Dyson & Todd, 2010). The evaluation opportunities that are available for Education in the immediate future, focus on studying specific discussions studies and the patterns that emerge among the specific discussions. This type of data will demonstrate how student behavior and/or attitudes may have been affected by Hub but it will not be generalizable data in the traditional sense.

It also would be worthwhile to imagine alternative forms of evaluation that measure the value of the “education sector” fully participating in a “human service sector” health and social initiative. For example, how has Education’s role influenced the thinking and actions of other sectors and reciprocally how has Education developed more skills, trust or knowledge about other sectors? How do schools become more innovative and creative problem solvers when they are not the weak cousin in the human service sector? How do schools negotiate their role in the margins and move to the center of a variety of collaborative partnerships?

## Important Lessons Learned

The evolution of the Hub and COR has occurred in a relatively short period of time, and they continue to develop, even as we write this chapter. However, it can be reasonably assumed that a project of this complexity will always be a dynamic structure, constantly changing to meet new agency and client demands. At the same time, we have learned some valuable lessons, and they help to explain our current level of success.

1. The Hub created a “push back effect” in schools. In other words, as part of the reflective cycle and as a member of the Hub, teachers and administrators found out that they must understand and use their own resources prior to seeking collaborative or outside assistance. It is not appropriate for every health and social issue to be directed outside of the school; there are many issues that FSCS can address on their own. The internal structure of the Hub prevents referrals from coming to the Hub when they are issues that individual organizations can address independently. When leaders of organizations know their



internal capacity and can count on external resources when they need it, there is less “finger pointing” and “blaming” between sectors.

2. Distinguishing the difference between mitigating risk and crisis intervention is paramount. The Hub’s goal is to recognize individuals that are on a negative trajectory and intervene before a crisis occurs. Often, service providers’ mind-sets are focused on crisis intervention, and therefore, switching paradigms for some stakeholders takes time.
3. A business plan is needed because resource generation, sharing, allocation, and evaluation are important. The business plan constructed a thoughtful, feasible and sustainable strategy that guided the development of the project. Addressing difficult financial, procedural and organizational policies directly and early was an asset for the Hub and COR.
4. Effective, efficient communications systems are critically important, both within organizations and systems and between them. CMPA was in full and constant communication with local, regional and provincial partners. They made excellent use of their public relation skills and promoted the merits of their early work, emphasizing its potential for their respective organizations. Public presentations and community consultations were abundant, creating a contagious enthusiasm for collaborative change.
5. Human service professionals need pre-service and in-service training to learn to work within multi-sector collaborative enterprises. This kind of training is called “interprofessional education and training.” This means that people who work within sectors need to understand each other’s systems in order to collaborate effectively to best support their students and/or clients and their families. Hub representatives and those at the COR have learned how to work collaboratively because the CMPA model embraces that philosophy, but more work needs to be completed before every teacher, social worker, mental health professional, addictions worker and police officer understands that in a collaborative, inter-agency response may be the necessary model to adopt when addressing the needs of those who are considered to be at acutely elevated risk across multiple human services providers.
6. Confidentiality issues are critically important and challenging, but they are not insurmountable. If there is a will to work collaboratively together, there is an ethical way. The unique four filter approach works to maximize confidentiality and allowing situations with acutely elevated risk to be discussed.
7. The role of educators can be successfully expanded outside the boundaries of the school and incorporated into an interagency approach. Creating problem solving and willingness to experience new roles opened up new ways to support students and build a network of genuine collaboration.
8. As an extended FSCS, the Hub does not disrupt or negate the possible benefits of FSCS. It is merely an extension and no doubt enhances the effects of FSCS.
9. The tactical and strategic analysts are vital agents for data collection and interpretation and evaluation-driven learning, knowledge generation, and continuous quality improvement. These roles may be foreign constructs in the Education sector but embracing their approach as one means to understand

process and outcome data enhances the impetus for evaluation of meaningful educational outcomes.

10. Educators have unique perspectives on children, youth, and families. When they share their perspectives with social and health service providers, providers gain valuable resources. In brief, educators need to accept their responsibility as a member in the human service family and attend family discussions even when there might be no direct pay out for the sector itself. The same can be said to be true for other sectors participating in education conversations.

## Next Phases: System Building and Policy Change

SRPSD has extended its boundaries beyond individual schools to a vision of system building and policy change. In Prince Albert, FSCS are no longer isolated multi-service individual schools. These schools are members of a regional network that links them to multiple services that extends the client base beyond the students that attend the FSCS. Parents, siblings and extended family members are all part of this Hub network which provides services to mitigate risk for all. Extending and enhancing FSCS as part of the CMPA team has been a formidable challenge but pioneering this unique initiative has strengthened both alliances.

Undoubtedly, FSCS and CMPA have discovered reciprocal benefits, each strengthening the purpose of the other. For more information about current initiatives visit <http://www.mobilizepa.ca/> or join us on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Community-Mobilization-Prince-Albert/211914945588954> or twitter: [twitter@cmpasask](https://twitter.com/cmpasask)

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# Chapter 7

## Community Schools in Ghent: Strengthening Neighbourhoods in Belgium (Flanders)

Lia Blaton and Piet Van Avermaet

**Abstract** This chapter describes how the City of Ghent, a city in Flanders (Belgium), has uniquely developed and scaled up the concept of community schools. Inspired initially by the community schools movement in the Netherlands, leaders for this innovation developed their own design and implementation strategy. These leaders' developmental story covers 15 years and identifies key features of this approach as well as the different phases in its development. One noteworthy feature of this exemplar is the neighborhood-oriented model of community schools. In this model, all primary schools and participating organizations in the selected geographical area (neighborhood) are included. This chapter provides valuable insights in the pioneering work at the local level in which bottom-up initiatives in different neighborhoods, jointly developed by educators and human services providers, are progressively supported by local policy makers and aldermen (local politicians). Ghent's leaders opted to provide funds for infrastructure supports and resources, with a special priority for the community school coordinator, emphasizing the importance of cross-boundary work, coordination and resource maximization. The authors conclude with an overview of lessons learned, pointing to factors that can further support the development and sustainability of the community school initiatives that serve children and adults, while strengthening their schools and neighborhoods.

**Keywords** Community schools • Urban renewal • School-community governance systems • Area-based initiative • Partnership working • Cross-boundary leadership

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The idea of community schools began in the Netherlands, and it found its way to Flanders in the 1990s. This chapter describes how the City of Ghent, a city in Flanders (Belgium), has scaled up and uniquely developed the concept of community schools.

For example, the City of Ghent has developed a neighbourhood-oriented model of community schools. In this model, all schools from the neighbourhood participate. This means that when we talk about community schools, we are talking about partnerships among all of the schools and all of the participating organizations in a neighbourhood. To give the reader a better understanding of how this works, we illustrate the different aspects of Ghent's model of community schools on the basis of one case: the community school in the neighbourhood Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham.

The analytical progression is as follows. We introduce in section “[Introducing the context: community schools in Flanders](#)” relevant government policy, the policy of cities and municipalities, and education policy. In section “[The adopted framework for community schools](#)” we describe the emergence of community schools in Ghent. Then we focus on the way the City of Ghent is increasingly doing pioneering work in designing community schools, which sets the stage for our description of the current situation and future developments of community schools in Ghent.

In section “[The development of Ghent's community schools](#)”, we describe how community schools in Ghent are organized, emphasizing the role of the coordinator and describing a system of roles, relationships, and responsibilities. Next, we discuss the way community schools are (or can be) evaluated. We conclude with ten lessons learned in the Belgium case.

## **Introducing the Context: Community Schools in Flanders**

The City of Ghent has been committed to the development of community schools since 2001. In order to have a better understanding of relevant developments in Ghent, we first outline the background of community schools in Flanders. The first subsection deals with the way community schools have taken shape within the Flemish Government policy. We also discuss the frame of reference of community schools that has been developed for Flanders on the basis of pilot projects.

In the second subsection we describe the role of the local policy, the cities and municipalities and the place of community schools in their policy plans. Then we discuss education in Flanders and how educational entities themselves interpret community schools.

## *Community Schools and the Flemish Government Policy*

In Flanders (Belgium),<sup>1</sup> the concept ‘Broad School’ (*‘Brede School’*) is used, and it was adopted from the Netherlands. This concept highlights the fact that the school opens up to the neighbourhood and broadens its scope. Henceforth, we use the more generic descriptor “community schools.”

Community schools in our part of the world developed in a special context. For example, some of our schools already collaborated with other partners. These partnerships widened these schools’ scope. These partnerships also were integral to the development of children and youngsters.

At the policy level in Flanders, interest in the community school concept developed in 2004. Influenced by the administrative culture of the Flemish Government, the Research Institute for Work and Society (*Hoger Instituut voor de Arbeid (HIVA)*, *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*) was charged with the a literature review on the community schools movement in the Netherlands and other countries. This review included the charge to map initiatives in Flanders and work out some concepts for the structural development of community schools in Flanders (Pirard, Ruelens, & Nicaise, 2004).

In 2004, the policy paper of the Flemish Minister of Labour, Education and Training (Vandenbroucke, 2004), entitled “The road to community schools” (*“Op naar de brede school”*), was published. This paper introduced community schools as a response to many challenges and expectations schools are faced with. For instance, the expectation that schools should teach their pupils a wide range of competences and broaden the curriculum was emphasized. Community schools were also seen as a means to enhance equal opportunities to quality education. All in all, the Flemish Government wanted to create community schools by supporting partnerships between organizations and with the expectation that academic programmes, social skills, sports, culture and practical experience are explicit components in community schools, both during the regular school day and after school hours.

In order to facilitate community schools, 14 Flemish and 3 Brussels pilot projects got the chance to shape community schools from 2006 until 2009. Provisions were made for the organization (e.g. provisions for materials, workshops) and co-ordination of staff resources for a wide range of community school-related projects. Seventeen special projects were launched at this time.

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<sup>1</sup> Belgium is a federal state. The Flemish Government (Flemish region and Flemish community) is in charge of territorial issues (Region: e.g. economy, employment, agriculture) and community matters originally oriented towards the individuals of the Community’s language (e.g. as education, culture, welfare, youth, sports).

The former Centre for Equal Opportunities in Education (*Steunpunt Gelijke Onderwijskansen*), which supported the policy of equal opportunities in education,<sup>2</sup> monitored these 17 pilot projects, while providing support and developing a vision for Flanders and Brussels.

Later, three more projects were financially supported and monitored by the Flemish Government's youth department. Two were facilitated by the flanking educational policy (*Flankerend Onderwijsbeleid*, see below under 'local policy'). Based on international literature and pilot project experiences, the following framework on community schools was developed (Joos & Ernalsteen, 2010).

## The Adopted Framework for Community Schools

The framework on 'community schools' is mainly based on experiences in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (Joos & Ernalsteen, 2010; Joos, Ernalsteen, Lanssens, & Engels, 2006). It was developed and refined by experiences of the above-referenced, 17 pilot projects. The following definition of a community school was adopted and used (Joos et al., 2006).

A community school aims at ameliorating the broad development of all children and youngsters by supporting and/or creating a broad learning and living environment in which children and youngsters can gain a wide range of learning and living experiences. In order to achieve this goal a broad network is established between organizations and authorities from the various sectors that jointly shape and support the learning/living of children and youngsters. (p. 6)

Figure 7.1 provides a special depiction of this expansive conception.

In this community school framework, five key aspects of development are emphasized: health, safety, participation, development of talents and preparing for the future. These developmental priorities are called the 'aims' of the community schools. They are kept very general, leaving the possibility open for organizations of different sectors to link their own goals to the aim of the community school.

This overall approach helps to create a 'broad learning and living environment' for our community schools. It emphasizes broad learning, widening the learning and living environment and strengthening the learning and living environment. In order to achieve this aim, a broad network is established between organizations

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<sup>2</sup>The Decree on equal opportunities in education (Vlaamse Regering, 2002) aims at creating an integrated Flemish educational policy that offers children and youngsters the best possible opportunities to learn and develop themselves. At the same time, the policy for equal opportunities in education wants to combat exclusion, social segregation and discrimination and therefore gives specific attention to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The policy for equal opportunities in education comprises three parts: the right to enrol at the school of one's choice, legal protection (the establishment of local consultation platforms) and a committee concerning pupil's rights and an integrated support programme, in which schools are given means (teaching hours for teachers) for pupils with certain background characteristics. In the meantime, this support programme has made the switch to teaching periods that are allocated to all schools based on socioeconomic criteria and that are part of the school's framework.

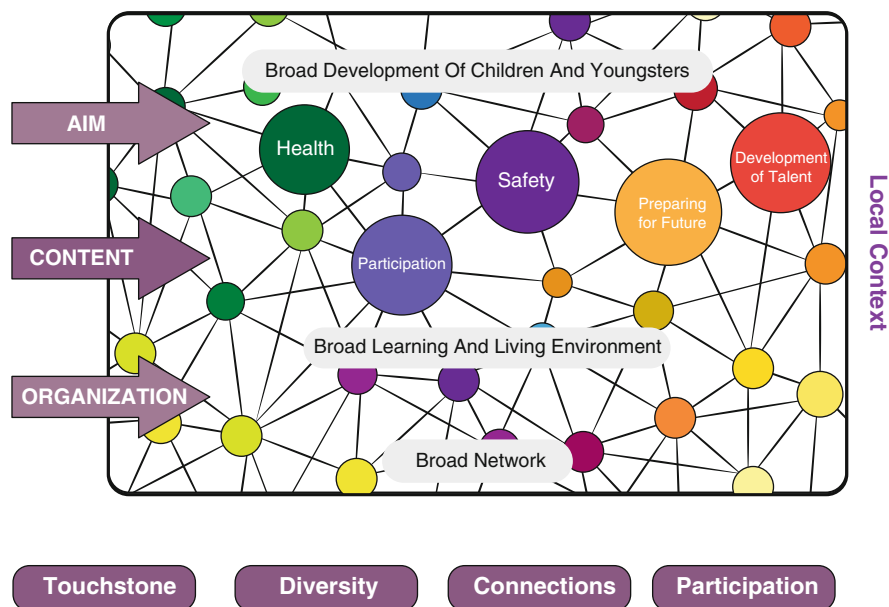


Fig. 7.1 The community school model

and authorities from various sectors that jointly shape and support the learning/living of children and youngsters.

Three community school touchstones helped leaders achieve these aims. The touchstones are *diversity*, *connections* and *participation*. They were developed to function as three impulses to help a community school grow in terms of goals, content and organization. Proceeding with these three touchstones, leaders for community schools and broad school-neighbourhood networks were able to assess local possibilities and respond to the local opportunities, dynamics, needs and requirements.

In addition to this local, grassroots organization, community school development also can be instigated in a top down fashion. This also occurred in our nation. Municipalities and/or organizations that are active at the supra-local or meso levels sometimes play an inspiring, stimulating role and be the instigator and/or coach of the local dynamics.

In the new Flemish Government Agreement (2009–2014), community schools again are a central policy priority. Policy papers of various domains (education, youth, sports, Brussels, culture) and the report on welfare, public health and family mention the concept of community schools.

At the same time, the youth department has financed and monitored five community school projects in the context of the 'Participation Decree'. This Participation Decree (Vlaamse Regering, 2008) is directed toward broad participation by Flemish people in a wide range of leisure facilities and outlines the first steps to promote participation in these domains.

In spite of the above-mentioned policy supports for community schools, they presently are not a top priority for the present Flemish Government's five year plan, spanning 2014–2019 (Vlaamse Regering, 2014). However, in the context of the education policy, school partnerships are recognized as an element that requires extra attention: cooperation between education and other sectors are on the agenda.

Furthermore, the Flemish Minister of Education (Crevits, 2014) and the Flemish Minister of Culture, Media, Youth and Brussels (Gatz, 2014) support the development of community schools in Brussels and the 19 Flemish municipalities around Brussels, emphasizing the directive role of the Flemish Community Commission<sup>3</sup> within it.

In fact, the Flemish Minister of Labour, Economy, Innovation and Sports (Muyters, 2014) rolled out 'community schools with sports facilities' all over Flanders. This Minister wanted to enable as many children and youngsters as possible to take part in after-school sports at their own pace through a differently organized, accessible and flexible set of programme and activity offerings. In this plan, community sports facilities and programs are mechanisms for healthy development and active living. For example, 'SportSNACK' – Sportive after-school Active Kids (*Sportief Naschools Actieve Kids*) for primary education and 'Sports after School pass' (*Sport na School-pas (SNS-pas)*) for secondary education, will be facilitated and organized all over Flanders in cooperation with local sports clubs or sports providers. To this end, 32 physical education teachers have been seconded to work half-time in these new programs. They are responsible for networking in the area of sports, organizing accessible sports activities, organizing and providing after-school sports activities and setting up interaction between schools and sports clubs.

We note that community schools in Flanders are supported by the sports policy and also that community schools in Brussels get support from the ministers responsible for education and Brussels in cooperation with the Flemish Community Commission. A new government clearly makes new choices, in which community schools do not have priority at this moment.

## Local Policy: Community Schools in Cities and Municipalities

In the final report of the pilot projects (Joos, Ernalsteen, Engels, & Morreel, 2010b), local policies were assigned an important directive role. After all, urban services have often been represented in the community school pilot projects and are important partners of community schools. In the local policy plans of various cities and municipalities, community schools have been included throughout the different policy periods (2008–2013 and 2014–2019).

Some variability is the norm. The way that this work is done largely depends on the local municipality. In some municipalities project grants are awarded. In other

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<sup>3</sup>The Flemish Community Commission is the competent authority for cultural, educational and person-related matters (welfare and health) in Brussels.



local settings, leaders for community schools are self-organizing. In still other settings, plans for building new facilities such as a new sports hall are incentives and opportunities for community school development.

The Flemish Government plays an important role because it grants subsidies to local policies in order to support education in municipalities. We view these subsidies as “flanking policies” because they are developed with recognition that traditionally, many cities and municipalities in Flanders are education organizers themselves and therefore take charge of schools. Through these flanking education policies the Flemish government ensures that local policies not only pay attention to their own schools in the municipality/city, but to all schools, regardless of the educational network they belong to (De Vry, 2009).

Practically speaking, this means that a local policy plays a directive role in the education policy of its city/municipality, while also having to ensure that all schools are treated in the same way. This decree pays special attention to school attendance control, the call for anti-truancy measures and the stimulation of maximum infant attendance at nursery school level. Additionally, it stimulates local authorities to set up projects to support the creation of broad learning environments and the collaboration between different sectors (education, youth, welfare, sports, et cetera).

With this Flemish Government policy strategy, much thought is given on how a city can take control of education and development opportunities for children and youngsters on a local level. The Flemish Government Agreement stipulates that a number of sectorial subsidies, including flanking educational policies, will be incorporated into the Flemish municipal fund<sup>4</sup> as from 2016. This will give municipalities more autonomy in conducting their own policy.

## Education and Community Schools

Community schools have developed in the context of education policy, and traditional conceptions of what a school is and does have influenced community school development. Here, it is important to emphasize that freedom of education is a constitutional right in Belgium, and governmental structures have been developed accordingly.

Education in Flanders is organized through governing bodies and three educational networks (Department of Education and Training, Agency for Educational Services [AgODi], 2008). These governing bodies are responsible for one or more schools and are comparable to a board of directors in a company. These governing bodies enjoy considerable autonomy: They are entirely free in choosing teaching methods and are allowed to base their education on a certain philosophy or educational view. However, if schools want government recognition or funding, they must meet the attainment targets. Also, the Flemish Government has defined developmental

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<sup>4</sup>The Flemish municipal fund redistributes tax money of the Flemish Government to cities and municipalities based on different criteria. The municipalities are unconstrained in spending these resources: they can use the financial resources at their discretion.

objectives and attainment targets that schools have to reach with their students. Community schools also are held to these targets.

Educational networks are established to link these several governing bodies. Educational networks are representative associations of governing bodies and often take over some of the responsibilities of governing bodies. There are three educational networks in Flanders:

- GO! Education of the Flemish Community (*GO! Onderwijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap*) is publicly run education and acts under the authority of the Flemish Community. This GO! Education is required to be neutral;
- OGO Subsidised Official Education (*Officieel Gesubsidieerd Onderwijs*) is publicly funded, publicly run education and comprises municipal education (organized by local authorities) as well as provincial education (organized by provincial authorities);
- VGO Subsidized free schools (*Vrij Gesubsidieerd Onderwijs*) is the network for publicly funded, privately run schools, they deliver education organized by a private person or private organization. The governing body is often a non-profit making organization. Catholic schools form the major part of this privately run education, they are associated in the umbrella body called Flemish Secretariat for Catholic education (*VSKO – Vlaams Secretariaat voor Katholiek Onderwijs*). Furthermore, there are also protestant, Jewish, orthodox, Islamic... schools. In addition to these denominational schools, there are also schools which adopt particular educational methods, as Freinet, Montessori or Steiner, also known as 'method schools'.

To reiterate: There are common developmental objectives and attainment targets, designed at the Flemish level that all schools have to reach with their pupils. Becoming a community school does not provide an exception; community schools are held to the same standards and rules as conventional schools. Different educational networks (GO! Education of the Flemish Community, VSKO-Flemish Secretariat for Catholic education, and FOPEM – Federation of independent pluralistic emancipatory method schools) have developed a vision for community schools. The developed reference framework has been used and altered over the years.

## The Development of Ghent's Community Schools

Ghent is one of the larger cities in Flanders, with 250,000 inhabitants (in 2013<sup>5</sup>). In this city, community schools were developed in several neighbourhoods. In the ensuing discussion, we highlight one example: community school Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham. This community school has grown bottom-up and was included in the activities of the City of Ghent. The name of this community school has changed throughout the years, and it has continued to evolve.

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<sup>5</sup><http://www.gent.be/gentincijfers/>

## *In the Beginning: Bottom-Up Development in Local Neighbourhoods*

The community schools in Ghent grew out of local initiatives in different neighbourhoods. Various primary schools and organizations (e.g. basic education, youth welfare, the library) in a number of neighbourhoods in Ghent started to cooperate for a lot of reasons. For example, one neighbourhood wanted to improve the communication between parents, school and neighbourhood, while another focused on leisure activities. These partnerships looked very different. For example, one worked together *ad hoc* on certain occasions. In other instances, different organizations found each other and developed long-term collaborations.

The cause for collaboration was twofold: The elimination of (educational) disadvantages and the creation of equal opportunities. Partnerships arose in what some persons called “disadvantaged neighbourhoods.” These neighbourhoods were characterized by a high population density, poor-quality housing, a high level of unemployment and many people who have to live on limited means. In these neighbourhoods, children rarely participated in leisure activities. Additionally, many residents have health problems. Some of these children, like their peers, also have learning difficulties at school, and teachers experience communication problems with their parents.

## *Early Development: The City Gets More Involved*

The city of Ghent’s involvement increased over time. We view this involvement as occurring in three phases. Figure 7.2 depicts this developmental progression.

**Phase 1** Phase 1 (up to 2004) witnessed the development of several local initiatives in various neighbourhoods. Importantly, several organizations (e.g. schools, community work, welfare work, neighbourhood health service, socio-cultural organizations and sports organizations) from different sectors (such as education, welfare and culture)



**Fig. 7.2** Developmental phases for community schools in Ghent

joined forces. In these initiatives, precursors of the present community schools, urban services such as community work and (youth) welfare work were important partners.

**Phase 2** In phase 2, the city slowly but surely became more involved in the functioning of these community schools. Ghent supported local initiatives in different ways—for example, by using urban services (e.g. youth work, welfare work, community work) and by appointing a community schools co-ordinator.

A very important development occurred at the end of 2004. The Pedagogical Guidance Service (*Pedagogische Begeleidingsdienst – PBD*) of the City of Ghent appointed a co-ordinator for developing a community school in the “Brugse Poort” neighbourhood. For this purpose, resources of the City Fund were used.

The PBD Ghent already had experience with developing cooperation between schools of various educational networks (see above) and therefore had already gained trust. In the ensuing years, community schools in Ghent continued to expand.

In 2006, community schools in Sint-Amandsberg and New Ghent were started. Two of the community school projects in Ghent, i.e. the project “Your child grows up in the neighbourhood” in the neighbourhood Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham-Blaisantvest-Voormuide (we discuss this in detail in this text) and “On to ... New Ghent” in the neighbourhood New Ghent, were part of the community school pilot projects (2006–2009) and received project subsidies from the Department of Education and Training of the Flemish Community. These two community school projects were supported by the Centre for Equal Opportunities in Education, which had been commissioned to monitor and substantively support the community school projects, to give training, to develop materials and methods and to guide processes. In addition, the Centre for Equal Opportunities in Education developed a vision text, “Community schools for Flanders.”

**Phase 3** Phase 3 is marked by the City’s direct involvement in community school development. Today a team of community school co-ordinators is coached by a team leader who is in charge of the community schools as well as the specialists called school mediators (described later). This team is integrated in the Pedagogical Guidance Service. The team leader and the community school co-ordinators are appointed by the City of Ghent.

Drawing on survey data collected from residents in eight neighbourhoods, community schools have developed differently. In some neighbourhoods community schools grew bottom-up, e.g. in the neighbourhood Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham-Blaisantvest-Voormuide at the request of a neighbourhood committee, whereas in the neighbourhood Brugse Poort, the community school was started by the City of Ghent itself, which provided means to a community school co-ordinator in order to start up a partnership (Lecoutere, 2009). At the same time, the neighbourhoods in which community schools have started are characterized by the same kind of background and challenges.

In Ghent, these neighbourhoods are labelled as “disadvantaged neighbourhoods”. They have a high population density, many houses, few green areas, and

score low on a number of poverty indicators (such as rate of employment, level of education, family income). In these neighbourhoods it is often more challenging to focus on development opportunities for children and youngsters.

The community schools within these neighbourhoods combine all existing (primary) schools, together with partners from other sectors (e.g., culture, youth, and sports). In only one of the neighbourhoods, i.e. Ledeborg, a secondary school is affiliated to the community school.

## Community School Vision, Definition, Foundational Pillars, and Other Features

As the City of Ghent became increasingly involved in community schools, there was a growing need for developing a vision on community schools. At the same time, at the Flemish level, as mentioned above, the former Centre for Equal Opportunities in Education also aimed to develop a framework on community schools for Flanders (Joos et al., 2010a). The Pedagogical Guidance Service (PBD) of the City of Ghent developed the vision text “Community Schools Ghent”, as well as the related pillars on which community schools in the various neighbourhoods focus. In April 2009, the bench of Aldermen of the City of Ghent endorsed this vision text. This meant that community schools had been included as a topic on the political level of the city as well.

Community schools in Ghent have been defined as follows (Lecoutere, 2009): *Community schools in Ghent are a local partnership between various partners who want to work together with schools in a certain area in order to maximize development opportunities for children.* More concretely, in Ghent a community school is:

- a choice to valorise a child in all its development aspects;
- a choice for local (bottom-up) partnerships (territorial delineation);
- a choice to strengthen disadvantaged groups;
- a choice for targeted mutual reinforcement of products and processes in consultation with each other;
- a choice to work with the existing strengths of the various partners or new ones yet to be developed (Ibid, p. 4).

In addition to the general vision and targets, which clearly incorporate the importance of collaboration in a local context, five pillars have been identified for community school projects (Lecoutere, 2009). These five pillars were inspired by the Community School Service of Groningen (*Vensterscholenwerking van Groningen*) in The Netherlands (van der Vegt & Studulski, 2004). The five pillars are:

- making best use of buildings;
- integral working and promoting cooperation;
- encouraging parental involvement;
- encouraging the link between within-school and out-of-school activities;
- pursuing social cohesion and neighbourhood improvement.

What is more, community schools in Ghent are based on a special view of children and how they develop (Pedagogische Begeleidingsdienst Gent, n.d.). In this view, children:

- learn everywhere;
- learn all kinds of things;
- learn from everyone;
- learn together;
- set the world in motion.

This view fits in closely with the framework on community schools that had been developed for Flanders in 2009 (Joos & Ernalsteen, 2010) (see section “[Introducing the context: community schools in Flanders](#)”).

Three other aspects of community schools also help to define the approach in Ghent.

Firstly, community schools are services that have been developed in a number of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In each neighbourhood, a co-ordinator is responsible for controlling the partnership of organizations. Different schools of different educational networks are part of one community school.

Secondly, the projects are mainly on the level of primary education. In one neighbourhood there is also a comprehensive school (lower secondary education) involved, simply because there are no secondary schools in the other disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The decision to work with neighbourhoods is closely connected to the choice for working at the level of primary education. In primary education the connection between school, child and neighbourhood is clearly present. Consequently, the cooperation of organizations within the community school of a neighbourhood gradually enhances.

Thirdly, the focus is on realising development opportunities for children and youngsters. The key concepts for this are: expanding and enriching experiences of children during school hours and after-school activities, and at the same time building a bridge between the things children learn, experience and do outside school, and the things that happen during school hours. In community schools, learning is a very broad concept. After all, learning is not only something children do in school. In their spare time children also acquire a lot of social skills. For example, drama stimulates linguistic development, and when computer games enable children to learn information technology skills. Community school projects are designed and implemented accordingly.

## **Current Status: Progress Markers, Achievements, and Next Phases**

Presently, community schools can be viewed as entering a new developmental phase. In this phase, community schools are being expanded. In a number of neighbourhoods community schools are being started (e.g. Rabot-Blaisantvest in 2014,

in a later phase in Gentbrugge-Moscou) and consideration is being given to a community school service in the city centre. So it is all about broadening, more neighbourhoods, but not only disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In addition, the focus is also on analysing the current community school service and the development of community schools 2.0. With these new community schools 2.0. the city seeks to clarify how community schools can be characterized, ranging from community schools in terms of the building, to community schools as a network as part of Ghent's Administrative Agreement 2013–2018 (Stad Gent, 2013).

The policy paper 2008–2013 (Stad Gent, 2007) describes neighbourhood-oriented actions and community schools. It focuses on neighbourhood schools. This is related to the current problems in major cities in Flanders. For example, because of the baby boom, schools and classrooms are highly needed. A lot of schools have to contend with a shortage of space and therefore cannot respond to the demand of parents who want to enrol their child.

To this end, a central enrolment system was set up (across educational networks) to streamline the enrolment of pupils. At the same time, they want to ensure that children choose a school in the neighbourhood they live in. Because of the freedom of school choice and the image of some schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, many children left their neighbourhood and went to schools outside the neighbourhood, often to method schools or schools with a better reputation (Albertijn & Smeyers, 2009).

Various policy areas refer to community schools as a means of achieving the above-mentioned policy goals as well as others. We sum up next the main rationale.

Community schools as a means of creating broad learning experiences and linking within-school and out-of-school learning, have been included in the local social policy plan (Versnick & Balthazar, 2008), the policy on after-school care (Coddens, 2008) and the youth policy (De Clerck, 2008). The cultural policy plan links community schools with learning in formal and non-formal learning environments (such as libraries). In community schools, culture occupies an important place (Decaluwe, 2008). Partnerships between education and culture are important: part-time art education (Peeters, 2008), which offers art education (visual arts, music, drama...) to children after school hours, is being integrated in community schools and is establishing more accessible departments within neighbourhoods.

A second matter is making best use of accommodations in order to let children gain learning experiences. In the policy on after-school (neighbourhood-oriented) care, this topic is highlighted (Coddens, 2008). The local youth policy (De Clerck, 2008) aims at investigating how to cooperate in community schools and how to open the school infrastructure to the neighbourhood in order to improve sports and playing opportunities. The sports policy plan (Peeters, 2008) stipulates that opening the sports infrastructure of the school (after school hours) to socio-cultural and sports associations, within the framework of the community school, creates added value for the offering and making best use of buildings.

At the same time, the current administrative agreement 2013–2018 (Stad Gent, 2013) is taking shape in times of austerity, on a Flemish level, but also on the level

of cities and municipalities. Community schools remain an important part of Ghent's policy. The aforementioned flanking educational policy is being expanded and strengthened. In other words, there is a focus on cross-educational network cooperation.

The City of Ghent provides the leadership with regard to cooperating with the governing bodies of the various educational networks and joining forces for children, youngsters and adults in the city. The administrative agreement (Stad Gent, 2013) indicates: "We continue focusing on community schools and school mediators. After all, community schools allow for pedagogical gain and added value in the leisure policy and are the engine for neighbourhood improvement" (p. 73).

Apart from the idea of investigating how community schools can be started in other neighbourhoods, the current administrative agreement is looking at how broad learning (and connections to the environment) in secondary education can be developed. A last element is making best use of the school infrastructure (of secondary schools as well) for youth work, sports and local residents.

In the realization of the policy plans of the alderman for education, upbringing and youth (Decruyenaere, 2014), it is indicated that the community schools concept is being modified. This is formulated in terms of 'on to a community school 2.0.'

But what is actually meant by these community schools 2.0.? A new, key concern is *making best use of school buildings*. Many cities in Flanders, like Ghent, have to contend with a shortage of space. After school hours and during holidays, school buildings are often empty. Therefore the City of Ghent also focuses on making best use of these spaces for children, their parents and the neighbourhood. Opening playgrounds is also a part of this. Consideration is being given to ways in which the city can support to open up school buildings.

With the new enrolment policy, which focuses on a link between primary education and the neighbourhood in which children live, the policy plan indicates that schools and neighbourhoods are an ideal place for organizing *leisure activities* and for organizing training for parents. In this way, it becomes easier for groups that are difficult to reach and for vulnerable families to take part in the leisure programme.

Furthermore, there is a commitment to *disadvantaged neighbourhoods*. In two extra neighbourhoods (2014: Rabot-Blaisantvest and Gentbrugge-Moscou in a later phase), a community school service will be developed during the next policy period.

Finally, a new model for community schools 2.0. provides a framework to develop different forms of community schools (ranging from opening up school buildings to developing community schools as a network in a neighbourhood). The aim is to identify in which phase the different primary schools in Ghent are situated with regard to community schools, in order to gain an overview of the whole functioning and the different forms of community schools, and at which speed they are developing in Ghent.



In 2014, the community school team chose to reformulate and rearrange the above-mentioned five pillars<sup>6</sup> (van der Vegt & Studulski, 2004), to ensure that the above-identified pillars are more in line with practical reality. We identify and describe the new ones below.

### **1. Interaction between home, school and neighbourhood**

The first pillar has been reformulated from ‘integral working and promoting cooperation’ to ‘promoting interaction’, because the term ‘integral working’ required too much explanation. The term ‘interaction’ is meant to emphasize that it is all about encouraging active relations between home, neighbourhood and school.

### **2. Social cohesion and neighbourhood improvement**

There is still a commitment to social cohesion and neighbourhood improvement. This is also related to the method of working in Ghent: the explicit choice has been made to start community school networks in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

### **3. The broad development of the child**

This is about linking within-school and out-of-school learning, and encouraging this in the community school service.

### **4. Parental involvement**

Parental involvement remains a key concern for community schools. In the list of pillars, parental involvement has been moved from the third to the fourth position. This is because community school co-ordinators have indicated that realizing parental involvement within community schools is not easy. The pillar of parental involvement is dealt with by the school mediators. These school mediators closely work together with the community schools (see section “[The development of Ghent’s Community Schools](#)” for more information about school mediators).

### **5. Making best use of buildings**

The priority of the pillar ‘making best use of buildings’ has dropped from the first to the fifth position. The team thus acknowledges that it is not a central issue, but only a means of serving the purpose. At the same time, we note a difference with the policy plans: here we see that, within the framework of the community school service, giving the run of school buildings and playgrounds are highlighted.

In the following case example of the community school Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham, we will elaborate on the different kinds of activities that are being organized, to illustrate what specific steps community schools undertake in practice.

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<sup>6</sup>Making best use of buildings; integral working and promoting cooperation; encouraging parental involvement; coordinate within-school and out-of-school activities.

### **Community School Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham**

In the policy plan of Ghent's new government (2013–2018), the focus on community schools remains. This means that the service will be continued in the next 6 years. The policy plan (Decruyenaere, 2014) places some new emphases: making use of school buildings, creating adventure playgrounds, mapping out schools and the way they are connected to the community school service. It is still not clear what that means for the community school in the neighbourhood Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham. The service is locally embedded; together with all partners involved in the community school, needs are explored, objectives set and activities worked out. The service is also repeatedly checked against the framework and pillars that have been set for community schools in Ghent.

What is the aim of community school Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham? Different activities, connected to the pillars, are set up. An overview of different kinds of activities that have been carried out is given below.

#### **\* Week of the Little Snail**

Road safety is a main issue in the neighbourhood. During this week, neighbourhood partners and schools address parents and passers-by at the school gate. Raising awareness of road safety is central. Staff members of the different schools jointly develop activities for this week. This way, teachers get to know each other and other (neighbourhood) organizations involved.

#### **\* Reading Aloud at Home**

In collaboration with the teacher training programme of the Artevelde College (Arteveldehogeschool), trainee teachers visit the homes of children of the third year of kindergarten five times to read to them. This initiative has been run since 2001. The reading project aims at encouraging the linguistic development of children and allowing students to learn about the home environment of children. There is cooperation with children's library Baloe.

#### **\* Children's Library Baloe**

In 2000 children's library Baloe was opened in one school in the neighbourhood. The various schools made use of the library service, storytelling and reading sessions, parents' involvement programmes... In 2009 the children's library moved. The toy closet of non-profit organization *Jong* (youth welfare work) and the children's library were brought together at one location in the neighbourhood. Parents can borrow toys, story bags and books, it is a meeting place for parents and children in the neighbourhood, reading sessions are held...

(continued)

**\* Children's Theatre**

The objective of this action is to stimulate language development of toddlers and infants. Theatre plays are performed at different locations in the neighbourhood. Children and parents are invited to come and look and thus become acquainted with theatre. In addition, workshops are being organized in the first and second year of primary education by *Larf!* (a theatre production company for children and youngsters).

**\* Teachers and Workers at Base Become Acquainted with the Neighbourhood**

Activities are regularly organized for teachers to help them become acquainted with the neighbourhood. An example of this is a neighbourhood walk, providing them an introduction to the different organizations in the neighbourhood, background information to the environment in which children grow up, possibilities for learning at school by becoming acquainted with local artists, organizations, museums...

**\* At the Neighbours**

This project has been set up in association with theatre company Luxemburg, the social-artistic organization *Bij De Vieze Gasten, Larf!* and theatre training students at the School of Arts (Hogeschool Gent). Schools can sign up classes and invite parents to come with their children and listen to a story being read aloud. Parents are then encouraged to get a trainee actor reading a story aloud at home (for friends and family). Language stimulation, reading aloud... are central.

**\* Folk Games, Intergenerational Boxes**

The community school has created boxes with old folk games, like a spinning top, jackstones, chess sets, board games, dominoes, marbles, jackstraws... Voluntary workers/seniors teach the children how to play these games.

**\* Carnival Procession**

In 2000, the 4 neighbourhood schools and the neighbourhood centre organized a carnival procession for the first time. The objective of this procession is getting to know each other better on the one hand, and tightening the bonds between the neighbourhood and the community school and making known the community school service on the other hand.

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**\* After-School Leisure Activities**

Initially, the community school organized a lot of activities during school hours. Because leisure time is an important aspect as well, after-school sets of activities were started in 2013, with the aim of gradually easing the way to leisure activities. Children can have a taste of several activities at school. Neighbourhood organizations (sports, theatre, music...) offer an after-school set of 5 sessions to all children from the 4 primary schools. Each school makes sure that the children are brought to the location (another school) where the sessions take place. The last session is organized by the organization concerned and is considered a presentation to which all parents are invited. This way, children can have a taste of leisure activities in their neighbourhood. Organizations work together to find out why children and their parents do not find their way to the supply of activities: it concerns barriers that exist for entering organizations and taking part. In 2014–2015 the following activities are organized: darbuka, breakdance, taekwondo and a sewing workshop. The price is kept low: 1 euro per session. The sessions are promoted by the school; this breaks down barriers, because parents have confidence in the school. This is implemented with the help of the school mediator and the community school co-ordinator.

**\* Health**

Health is an important issue. The local health centre De Sleep is a driving force behind the study group Health. The neighbourhood mascot 'Vita Mike' promotes health by organizing workshops. Several themes were covered in these workshops: making healthy sandwiches for their lunch boxes, the importance of drinking water, dental care, encouraging physical activity... This theme is concluded with an annual picnic in Baudelo Park for the 4 neighbourhood schools, their partners and the residents.

**\* School Visit Tour**

Together with the Local Consultation Platform (LCP Ghent) a school visit tour is organized for parents of the neighbourhood. This initiative has been taken place since 2003. This way, parents get the opportunity to get to know the schools and each other.

**\* Sports**

'Vita Mike' is used, a mascot encouraging children to do a lot of physical activities. Vita Mike is part of the study group Health, but is the thread that runs through other study groups as well.

A physical education teacher of one of the schools is the driving force behind this study group. Two joint sports days are organized and a 'start to run' for children of the 4 neighbourhood schools. To the closing event of the 'start to run' parents and local residents are also invited. The possibility of involving parents and local residents more actively is currently being explored, e.g. by offering alternative physical activities, such as walking.

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**\* Dummy Tree (*tuutjesboom*; ‘*tuutje*’ is Dialect for Dummy)**

In 2006, a local resident came up with the idea to set up a dummy tree in the neighbourhood. She had discovered this tradition during a holiday in Denmark. To help children to give up their dummy, they hang it in a tree. The neighbourhood’s community service immediately liked the idea. At a playground in a neighbourhood a tree was inaugurated as a ‘dummy tree’. Families of the neighbourhood responded enthusiastically. But the dummies did not remain in the tree. Therefore, the search was on for a tree that was accessible to everyone, but in which the dummies would remain. In the neighbourhood, the educational garden of the nature museum ‘The world of Kina’ is situated. The nature museum immediately liked the idea, because it is a way to connect with the neighbourhood. Other bodies in the neighbourhood joined as well: the neighbourhood health centre, but also local pharmacists and dentists. For the latter two the health aspect prevails: research has demonstrated that the use of dummies after the age of 3 is not so good for the jaw. The ‘dummy tree’ brings this health aspect to the attention in a fun way (LECA, 2012).

At the feast of St Nicholas, an event is organized around the ‘dummy tree’. The nursery classes, day-care centres and ‘The garden of Kina’ encourage children to give their dummies to St Nicholas. His attendants then hang them in a colourful tree in ‘The garden of Kina’. But throughout the year, children and their parents can come over every Wednesday to hang their dummy in the tree.

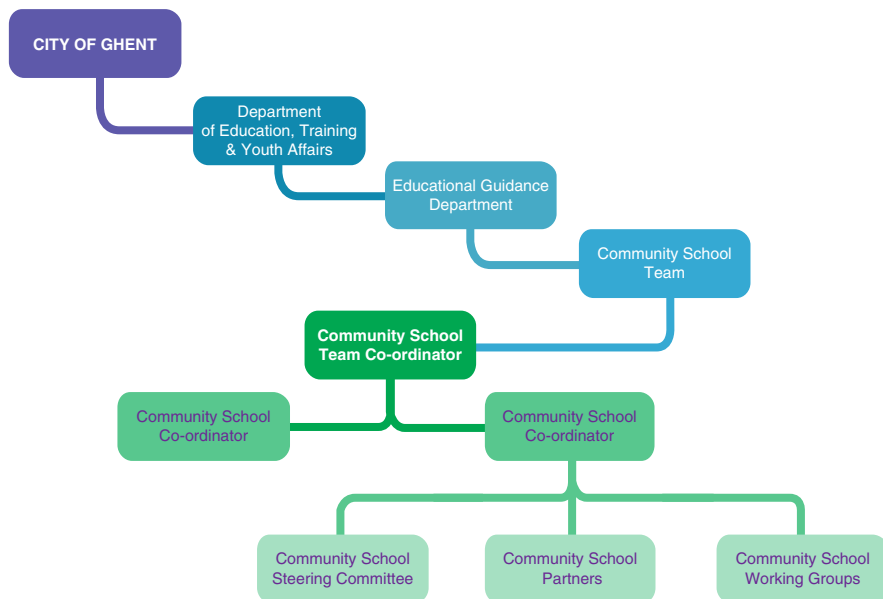
## A Formal System of Roles, Relationships, and Responsibilities

Ghent’s leaders opted to provide funds for infrastructure supports and resources; and with a special priority for coordination and resource maximization with local neighbourhood partners (Lecoutere, 2009).

Figure 7.3 summarizes this new system of roles, relationships, and responsibilities.

A few examples are in order. The community school projects are supported by a community school coordinator. These community school coordinators are embedded in the Educational Guidance Department and make up a team that is guided by a co-ordinating team leader. The City of Ghent appeals to the resources of the City Fund for the financing of these staff members. This fund of the Flemish Government provides financing for the 13 regional capitals (Flemish cities which are located in a metropolitan area and are specified by the Flemish Government as regional capitals).

The work volume of the community school co-ordinator differs from school to school. It depends on the neighbourhood and the stage the community school is in



**Fig. 7.3** A system of roles, relationships, and responsibilities

(e.g., starting up or already functioning). In case of new community schools, more hours are provided for the community school co-ordinator. For each community school a steering committee is set up to outline the community school services. The constitution of the steering committee is defined by the individual community schools, since it depends on the partners in the partnership who are willing to take a role in the steering committee.

Granting these city-side commonalties, a community school in Ghent is clearly a unique neighbourhood story. Within a neighbourhood a partnership is set up between the different organisations and partners. It is a cross-network cooperation of the (primary) schools and other partners in the neighbourhood: cultural, social-artistic, youth work, welfare, etc. Within the City of Ghent the community school service is also interwoven in the different city services.

For example, the department WOCC – Working on Education, Culture and Art (*Werken aan Onderwijs, Cultuur en Kunst*) is involved in the organisation of culture and art projects in schools during school hours. The community school examines the possibility of extending this to activities after school hours, but within the school walls. Also the youth service of the city is an involved party and in the different neighbourhoods youth work.

The City of Ghent has been concentrating on school mediators for a couple of years now. These school mediators are an important partner in the community school network. School mediators (Decruyenaere, 2014) are co-workers who liter-

ally form the bridge between the school and the parents. They are mainly persons with an education in welfare and social work who are given the duty of breaking down barriers and mediating between the school and the parents. They inform, sensitise and strengthen the parents and the school team.

The activity of the school mediators crosses the educational network borders in stimulating the communication and cooperation between the school and (vulnerable) parents. A school mediator supports the school and the teacher in the field of communication with the parents with the aim of tackling the social exclusion of vulnerable children and parents and developing strategies promoting equal opportunities. The school mediator involves every parent as much as possible and addresses them as a partner in the learning and educational process. In addition the school mediator supports the cooperation and communication with the neighbourhood and the community school. In short, the school mediators' project works together with the school, the parents and the neighbourhood in favour of the child.

In Ghent school mediators are allocated to primary schools with a high percentage of vulnerable children. The allocation is based on the earlier criteria for equal educational opportunities (*GOK criteria*<sup>7</sup>). School mediators are deployed in a half-time or fulltime position in accordance with the number of students in the school. In 2012 the project was reinforced with 5 extra co-workers (*School mediator Intra-European Migration, BIEM*) who concentrate specifically on the population of Intra-European migrants. In 2015 the City of Ghent starts with school mediators in secondary education. The job of these school mediators differs from the job of school mediators in primary education. In secondary education school mediators concentrate mainly on youngsters and their parents who are difficult to reach by the school. The school experiences difficulties in reaching these parents and youngsters to discuss certain matters (such as school results, but also other issues).

The City of Ghent does not stipulate which role teachers or other workers should play in the community school. The form of the cooperation is determined per community school, guided by the community school co-ordinator. Through steering committees, work groups and other moments of consultation different organisations and co-workers are involved in the community school. Below we give an example of community school Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham by way of illustration.

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<sup>7</sup>The decree Equal Educational Opportunities (Vlaamse Regering, 2002) provided extra resources for students with the following characteristics:

- the parents are part of the travelling population (bargees, fairmen, circus managers or artists, caravan dwellers ...);
- the mother has no diploma or certificate of higher secondary education;
- the child lives temporarily or permanently outside his original family;
- the family depends on a replacement income (the family has no other income);
- the language spoken at home is not Dutch.

The criteria are adjusted and extra teaching periods 'Socio-economic status' are granted to children with the following characteristics: the home language of the student, access to a scholarship and the highest level of education of the mother.

### **Community School Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham**

#### **The following partners belong to the partnership:**

The four primary schools in the neighbourhood (of different educational networks), childcare, after-school care, community work, the district health centre, the Integral Easy Accessible Educational Supporting Centre (*Inloopteam*), *Jong* (a non-profit organisation in youth welfare work), the toy library, the Area-specific Service (*Gebiedsgerichte Werking*), a service of the City of Ghent which focuses on neighbourhood development, a neighbourhood project for sports (*Sportnetwerk Gent Noord*), *Larf!*, a theatre house for children and youngsters, the service centre *De Thuishaven* and the intercultural centre *De Centrale*.

#### **Functioning:**

The co-ordination is in the hands of a half-time employed co-ordinator. This co-ordinator is appointed and paid by the City of Ghent and is embedded in the community school team, headed by a community school team leader. Each neighbourhood organises the service in accordance with the neighbourhood and the involved organisations. In the neighbourhood Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham this is done by a steering committee. This steering committee, represented by organisations and schools, assembles four times a year. The steering committee also outlines the service each year: the course to be taken with the community school, the things to focus on, which plan to be drawn up, et cetera. The community school co-ordinator collects all this information and surveys everything. In addition to the steering committee and the working groups of the community school (see below) the community school co-ordinator sees to it that other existing consultation platforms linked to the community school service in the neighbourhood are used, such as: the local consultation platform (*Lokaal Overleg Platform, LOP*),<sup>8</sup> welfare consultation and the youth policy working group of the neighbourhood (this working group already existed and was not set up within the framework of the community school). Before drawing up a plan an analysis of the neighbourhood is made and the strengths and needs of the neighbourhood are examined. In the analysis of the neighbourhood the parents are asked for information. Parents are an indirect partner: they are involved through projects, inquiries and the school mediators. The same applies for the students: they are asked for information

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<sup>8</sup>There are local consultation platforms (LCP's) for primary education and LCP's for secondary education. The LCP does not only consist of all the directors and trustees of schools and Centers for Pupils' Counseling, but also representatives of the school staff, parents and students, local socio-cultural and economic organizations, organizations of immigrants and poor people, integration centers and welcome offices for newcomers. A LCP has a number of duties under the terms of the decree concerning Equal Educational Opportunities (research, counselling, mediation and also dealing with truancy).

(continued)



but do not take part in the steering committee. The analysis of the neighbourhood is made by the community school on the basis of documents of the City of Ghent and on the basis of an inquiry of the different partners. The municipal service *Gebiedsgerichte Werking* (area-specific service) supports this. The co-ordinator is attentive to signals from the neighbourhood. In addition to this working groups consisting of workers at base (such as teachers and youth workers) are started up. These working groups are created within the community school: they are composed when certain issues arise. These working groups are responsible for the development of practical activities that are linked to the goals of the community school. In that way the involved organisations of the community school and/or co-workers can take up clear-cut tasks. A gym teacher, for instance, can lead the working group for sports. Each working group has a leader who guides the service. In the neighbourhood Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham different working groups are active: *Dummy tree* (a pacifier tree in *De wereld van Kina*, a nature museum for children and youngsters, situated in the neighbourhood, see paragraph 4), health, sports, school visits, children's theatre, reading at home, *Week of the little snail* (to create more road safety in the neighbourhood) and the carnival procession. A working group for leisure time was set up in 2013, because a lot of activities organized within the scope of the community school appeared to take place during school hours. Furthermore they wanted to put more effort in familiarising children with the leisure activities in the neighbourhood, giving them a chance to have a taste of these activities and helping them find the way to leisure organisations. At the moment it turns out that poverty is also a subject that deserves particular attention. The figures of the neighbourhood speak volumes: 75 % of the neighbourhood residents are confronted with poverty. Currently there is an association with other organisations in order to examine what the situation in the neighbourhood is, which organisations are working on that subject and what is being done about it. In a next step it will be considered if this subject also needs to be included in the community school service and in what way it can be integrated.

## What Are the Effects of Community Schools?

Each community school in Ghent is evaluated separately. The local policy of the City of Ghent does not encompass criteria on how the evaluation of the service should be made. Evaluations are made per year of operation. Steering groups, headed by their own community school co-ordinator, evaluate the service in their own way. The service is then analysed and adjusted on the basis of this evaluation.

The City of Ghent draws up annual reports on the community schools (Lecoutere, 2009; Pedagogische Begeleidingsdienst, 2010, 2011). These annual reports mainly

give an overview of the community schools. In 2009 the annual report specified which goals were aimed at in each community school, which actions were undertaken to that end, and what the effects were (see text box, an example of evaluation by the community school Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham). The other reports are rather descriptions of the service with some practical examples.

The evaluation of the community school services and programs needs particular attention. Even though process evaluation and product evaluation are part of the community school process, and all community schools make their own evaluation, there is no overall evaluation framework of all community schools. In practice, it appears that the different community schools have various ways of evaluating their process and product (impact). Furthermore, there is a need for expertise on how the effects can be identified. For community school co-ordinators it is not easy to make a comprehensive evaluation in addition to their tasks.

The urban policy of Ghent influences evaluations because it demands indicators of impact and quality. This emphasis is reflected in the new policy agreement. When formulating ‘Community school 2.0’ the aim is to map out what the current phase of the different primary schools in Ghent is regarding ‘community school’: ranging from a school that puts classrooms at the disposition of others to a school as a partner in a network. At present, research is being done on how this will be realised.

In Flanders, there has not been a large-scale enquiry and/or follow-up and evaluation of the existing community schools. In 2009, the Centre for Equal Opportunities in Education, which followed up the community school pilot projects, conducted an impact study on community schools. This study focused mainly on the composition of the partnerships, the actions that are taken and the goals that are pursued. Additionally, attention was focused on the perceived effects of the community school service. To this end, all community school co-ordinators were interviewed and an online survey was taken among the partners involved in the different community schools (Joos et al., 2010a).

Community schools face severe pressure from (subsidising) authorities to demonstrate effects. At the same time, however, evaluators are challenged by a major constraint—namely, resources for carrying out an evaluations are not really available.

Leaders of these new community schools also have concerns regarding the conducting of evaluations. For example, they ask: “How can you grasp all kinds of processes of community schools operating in a complex social environment? How can you grasp the impact on the individual lives of children and their families?” Support in developing effective instruments in this regard is needed, obviously taking into account the diversity of (goals of) community schools.

The concerns are similar to research abroad. Owing to the diversity of goals and to the fact that the organization of community schools differs greatly, it is not easy to complete outcomes-focused evaluations in which direct cause-and-effect relationships are established between community schools and changes in children’s well-being (Kruiter, Fettelaar, & Beekhoven, 2013). Evaluations also are complicated by the fact that community schools operate in complex circumstances. For example, co-operation and various interventions (such as youth welfare work, parental involvement, community building activities, education...) make it very

difficult to state which aspects lead to certain results, and totally different strategies are used at the same time (Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011). The goals of community schools are also extremely varied: ranging from the improvement of school results to the support of families and social cohesion in a neighbourhood.

Thus, a lot of the aimed-for results are difficult to evaluate (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003; Cummings et al., 2011; Kruiter et al., 2013). Additionally, it appears that the effects of community schools are closely related to the community school processes, such as a strong relationship between goals and means, sufficient facilities for children and high-quality community school activities (Kruiter et al., 2013). These elements should also be examined and identified. Finally, evaluation studies are often planned in the short term and as a result of that, the effects of community schools cannot be identified, because they are only felt on the long term, which is longer than the duration (generally 3 years) of the studies (Cummings et al., 2011; Kruiter et al., 2013).

Because of this complexity, Cummings et al. (2011) argue that a more complex evaluation instead of only an input-output design should be set up. After all, complex interventions need complex evaluation methods, as an evaluation can not only be made on the basis of a test. A complex evaluation pays attention to processes and backgrounds and makes room for individual stories of changes made by community schools at the level of families and children. Complex interventions call for a complex evaluation, which is more than what can be measured through tests. Appropriate evaluation methods are needed to identify subtle impacts.

## **Ten Important Lessons Learned**

We conclude with the ten most important lessons learned by leaders of our community schools. We complement these with the lessons learned from the enquiries on the impact of the Flemish community school pilot projects (Joos et al., 2010b). In the lessons we also indicate points of interest for the further development of community schools.

### ***Lesson 1: Neighbourhood-Oriented and Local Shaping of Community Schools***

A community school is a partnership that can better be shaped on a local level, since the various neighbourhoods in a city have different needs. When starting up the service, the City of Ghent has explicitly chosen for specific disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The development of the service and the shaping of the partnership are left to the various involved partners in the neighbourhood itself.

The City of Ghent supports the community schools by appointing a community school co-ordinator. It is the job of this co-ordinator to co-ordinate the partnership.

The partners of the community school decide together on the goals and the actions to be taken to enhance the development opportunities of all the children in the neighbourhood.

This flexible arrangement creates room for the various involved organizations to link the own goals of the organization to those of the community school. In this fashion, partnership leaders can respond faster to local needs. For example, the community school Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham focused on strengthening the relationship between the community school and the neighbourhood, whereas the community school Ledeberg concentrated more on expanding the opportunities for physical activity and the community school Brugse Poort in that same period on the optimisation of after-school leisure facilities (Lecoutere, 2009).

### ***Lesson 2: A Community School Needs to Grow: Support and Continuity Are Important***

When creating a partnership it is important to make all the involved partners (organizations, neighbourhood residents...) enthusiastic for the cooperation. A community schools needs to get and take the time to grow and to develop a service. Continuity in the policy is therefore important. The community schools in Ghent have been supported by the city since 2004. The current government (2013–2018) also included the community schools (City of Ghent, 2013) as a focal point in their policy. So, the City of Ghent opts for supporting and continuing the service. Support is given by the City of Ghent in the form of operating and staff funds (for community school co-ordinators).

In other Flemish cities and also in Brussels the continuity of the community school service is difficult: the decision to invest in community schools or not is in the hand of the politicians. When the composition of an urban or municipal government changes, the policy often shifts its accents and actions started by the predecessors are put to a stop. Furthermore, political thinking has a short-term character: on the Flemish level a government is elected for 4 years, on the local level (cities and municipalities) the mayor and aldermen are elected for 6 years. The logic of the policy (rather short-term) sometimes is detrimental to the time the community schools need to grow and make changes. Continuity in a community school calls for a long-term policy and political-administrative cooperation.

### ***Lesson 3: Explore Periodically Lasting and Emergent Local Needs and Strengths***

Of utmost importance when developing a community school service is defining the strengths and needs of a neighbourhood. Therefore it is necessary to explore the neighbourhood well. This implies querying various organizations that are active in

the neighbourhood and interviewing neighbourhood residents, children and adolescents. To this end, existing data and expertise can be used. Ghent disposes of an area-specific service that has a clear view of the different neighbourhoods and their composition and that helps analysing the neighbourhood. These local needs and context are important for building a community school service. Naturally, it is also important to stay alert for signals, as points of interests and needs in neighbourhoods change. At the same time, there should be a solid process evaluation, which encompasses that the community school is constantly evaluated and adjusted. Quality control is therefore a key word.

#### ***Lesson 4: Bring People Together – Create a Win-Win Situation***

A fourth lesson is bringing together partners in the neighbourhood, not only because of common needs, but also because of common strengths. When partners discover that the cooperation provides added value for their own tasks within their organization, it gets a lot easier to cooperate. This is encouraged within the various community schools in Ghent. In the community school Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham, for instance, there is a close cooperation between the district health centre (*Wijkgezondheidscentrum* or WGC), the primary schools and other neighbourhood partners regarding healthy nutrition: health prevention is a task of the WGC and is also an objective of primary schools. The cooperation reinforces the two organizations.

The impact survey of the pilot projects (Joos et al., 2010a) has shown that community schools provide added value for (non-school) organizations whose objectives are strongly in line with the objectives of the community school service, where reciprocity exists and who actively contribute to the service. The organizations need to experience clearly that cooperation provides added value and creates support for actions.

#### ***Lesson 5: A Community School Co-ordinator is Indispensable***

The experiences in Ghent and the Flemish impact studies (Joos et al., 2010b) show that a community school co-ordinator is indispensable. The community school co-ordinator is the engine and the glue of the cooperation. He/she steers, organizes, brings together... In the policy recommendations (Joos et al., 2010b), written by the Centre for Equal Opportunities in Education as a result of the monitoring of community school pilot projects and a study on the impact of community schools, the researchers advocated an assignment of at least 0,5 FTE (full time equivalent). To reduce fragmentation of tasks, they advise that this minimum assignment should be carried out by one person. In addition, a distinction can be made between community schools that are being started and community schools that are already in progress.

A new community school (at start-up) needs more support and especially coordination than a community school that already has a well-structured functioning. New community schools require a great deal of energy in terms of context analysis, determination of objectives, partner search, gaining trust... and can therefore certainly use a fulltime community school co-ordinator.

In Ghent, community school co-ordinators get an assignment of at least 0,5 FTE. This depends on the neighbourhood, the needs of the neighbourhood and the phase the community school has reached. They co-ordinate a maximum of two different community schools. The policy invests in community school co-ordinators, because it recognizes that someone needs to bring together the different partners in a neighbourhood in order to facilitate cooperation and networking.

Moreover, there is added value in community school co-ordinators being a team led by a team leader. This way, issues arising across community schools or common challenges can be tackled efficiently. These collaboration and exchange strengthen community school co-ordinators on a professional level.

### ***Lesson 6: Involved School Leaders Are an Added Value***

Involved school leaders are an added value for the service. When school leaders realize why community schools are important, much more is possible. This is also reflected in the survey of the community school pilot projects (Joos et al., 2010a). In addition, this impact survey showed that the partnership of a community school looks different depending on where the community school co-ordinator resides.

When the community school co-ordinator is associated with the school, the service generally concentrates on school matters, mainly focuses on what happens during lessons and partners are addressed on an ad hoc basis. The teachers' involvement in community schools is usually greater than in other schools. When the community school co-ordinator is external to the school, the partnership exceeds school matters: a diverse group of partners is addressed and the collaboration is set up in a more structured way, with attention to shared objectives for a broad target audience. However, it appears to be more difficult to involve teachers in the community school service and to respond to what happens in school during school hours.

The community school co-ordinators in Ghent experience this set of demands first-hand. Because of the neighbourhood service, various primary schools are partners of the community school. At times, community school co-ordinators invest a lot of time in involving school leaders and teachers. The extent to which schools are really involved in the community school service largely depends on the involvement of the school leader. When he/she is committed, carries out the value of the community school and informs the team, much more is possible. Then the community school has an impact on the school day and after school hours.

### ***Lesson 7: Define Tasks and Work with Concrete Actions***

Within partnership like community schools, a lot of things are organized and a lot of different partners are involved in different ways. Therefore it is important that tasks are clearly defined. The steering group outlines the general content and direction, the work groups work out and carry out concrete actions. The driving force of each work group is in theory someone from an organization whose work is in line with the objective of the work group. Community school Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham, for example, works in this way. By defining tasks and appointing persons in charge for concrete actions, partners become actively involved in community schools. Moreover, community schools seem to have more impact when the partners are more closely involved. This means that partners who contribute to giving substantive shape and direction, gain more from the collaboration (Joos et al., 2010a).

### ***Lesson 8: Start Small!***

Analysing needs, exploring a neighbourhood, outlining goals, and the other developmental priorities for community school start-ups involve a long-term process. Therefore it is also important to start with small actions that can be adjusted. One action has not been structurally embedded yet, but can eventually evolve that way (Ernalsteen, Blaton, & Joos, 2012). The community school co-ordinator of community school Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham strongly advises this. Apart from starting small actions, it is also important to ensure that all parties involved (teachers, children, parents, et cetera) experience that activities are fun and collaboration pays off. When all parties involved see the added value of projects, they will engage themselves more easily for community schools.

### ***Lesson 9: Genuine Participation of all Parties Involved Is Crucial***

A lot of organizations organize activities for children and youngsters with great enthusiasm. But it is also important to involve children and youngsters: what do they want, can they play a role in activities, what is their opinion? In the example in this chapter, i.e. community school Sluizeken-Tolhuis-Ham, children and youngsters and their parents are requested to track down their needs and wishes.

Apart from conducting surveys among children and youngsters, it is also important to let them help organize and think along in developing and carrying out activities. Enabling real participation of children, youngsters, parents and local residents remains a challenge. After all, it is important to really involve them in shaping com-

munity schools. Different forms of participation are possible, ranging from taking part in the work and steering groups of the community school, to being responsible for one aspect of an activity. Community schools in Ghent (or others) are still struggling with this: how can real participation be organized and enabled?

### ***Lesson 10: Encourage Efficient and Systematic Partnership Working***

Developing a long-term vision, translating this into workable medium- and short-term objectives and formulating criteria to verify the functioning, are necessary for developing a long-term successful service (Joos et al., 2010a). Working efficiently and systematically is a concern for many community schools, as shown by the Flemish impact studies, the rural effect measurement of community schools in the Netherlands (Kruiter, Fettelaar, & Beekhoven, 2013) and the evaluation of Full-service-Extended schools in England (Cummings et al., 2007). This also represents a challenge for community schools in Ghent. When partnerships have been in progress for some time, a lot of matters are ‘done’ without taking into account ‘why’. Process evaluation and quality assurance of community schools is necessary. Community schools in Ghent (and Flanders) can use a great deal of support here.

### **Conclusion**

The development of community schools in Flanders is a combination of bottom-up initiatives and top-down support from the Flemish and local governments. The local policy has been assigned an important governing role with regard to community schools. Based on local challenges related to equal opportunities, social integration and cultural participation many cities and municipalities support partnerships such as community schools.

In these partnerships schools are important partners. For community schools, long-term (financial) support is necessary: a clear choice of policy and management, combined with long-term thinking are therefore essential. In terms of support, evaluation and identifying the effects of community schools in Flanders, there are still many needs. Several cities and municipalities contribute to the development of community schools, but therein lies an inherent danger. The danger is that important, transportable local experience and expertise stay on a local level and are not shared.

Finally, considering community schools as a means to create a broad learning and living environment poses special challenges alongside the opportunities to help people and strengthen neighbourhoods. In the beginning, the various partners have different ways of working and diverse goals—as expected from existing sectoral



fields of expertise and both organizational and professional specializations. It is very challenging to develop a consensus-based, community school vision with shared goals and firm agreements to collaborate.

So, there are many challenges for leaders for community schools. But these challenges go hand in hand with an enthusiasm that sparks little changes that later result in strong local, community school initiatives that help children and adults, while strengthening their neighbourhoods.

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# Chapter 8

## Community Learning Centers in Quebec: Changing Lives, Changing Communities

Paule Langevin and Patricia Lamarre

**Abstract** The Community Learning Centres developed in the Canadian province of Quebec are advanced exemplars with special contributions to leaders worldwide. In French-speaking Quebec, English speaking Canadians are a minority who are at risk of social exclusion and social isolation. A powerful innovation was needed in response to their needs and aspirations, and the Community Learning Centre model was selected as the best response. Leaders' approach to developing this new design is noteworthy and exemplary. For example, they have proceeded with a theory of change strategy; they have dovetailed it with a research-supported framework for implementation science; and they have developed and worked with policy councils who help with resource related needs and accountability requirements. At the same time that they have advanced a model with shared features, leaders have ensured that each Centre is tailor-made for its locale. Even more impressive is the province-wide scale up: Leaders have progressively developed more than thirty such centers. Alongside their still-evolving lessons learned and evaluation findings, these leader-authors offer valuable lessons learned for newcomers and more experienced colleagues alike.

**Keywords** Theory of change • Implementation science • Social inclusion and integration • Community learning centres • Policy change • Scale-up • Sustainability • Community school • At-risk youth

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## Introduction and Context

The Quebec Community Learning Centre (CLC) initiative was launched in 2006 as part of a growing educational reform movement in Canada and around the world to transform existing primary, secondary and adult centers schools into “community schools.” We understand a CLC as both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and the larger community (Melville, 2002).

Quebec is the only dominantly French-speaking province in Canada, an officially bilingual country. Quebec’s school system has both a French sector and an English sector. A major mandate of Quebec’s English schools is to promote an official language minority. At the present time, there are 62 CLCs in Quebec’s English sector, representing over one in 6 of all English-language schools.

CLCs in Quebec are no longer experimental “pilot projects.” Today CLCs are found throughout the province, and the settings for these schools vary widely. In other words, CLCs are being scaled-up and evaluated as a viable and proven model and this, in a wide range of urban, rural and remote contexts. In brief, our work has reached a fairly advanced stage of development, enabling us to look back in time, reflect, and offer colleagues worldwide some of our key lessons learned as we describe some of the defining features of our CLCs.

In this chapter we examine the development and implementation of the Quebec CLC model and its underlying concept. We will also look at its achievements and the lessons learned along the way. We finish with a reflection on what we are doing differently from when we started.

We pay particular attention to how we worked with *Theory of Change* and a *Framework for Action*. Together these conceptual planning tools provided a systematic approach, which drove implementation and planning, the building of new partnerships, and our evaluation process. *Theory of Change* has proven to be invaluable, guiding us through the process of transforming schools into Community Learning Centres – in essence, providing a road map for the journey from school to Community Learning Centre.

### *In the Beginning: Origins and Early Development*

In June 2006, the *Secteur des Services à la communauté Anglophone et aux affaires Autochtones*<sup>1</sup> (SSCAA), a sector of the Ministry of Education, Recreation, and Sports, invited schools in the sector to submit proposals for funding to become a CLC. Initially, 15 schools were awarded grants. Given the promise seen in initial CLCs, the initiative was quickly expanded. Another 22 schools, many located in economically challenged community contexts, were funded. Today, 62 CLCs are underway.

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<sup>1</sup>Translation: Service Division of the English and Aboriginal communities.

To lead the initiative, a Provincial Resource Team (PRT) was established to work in collaboration with the SSCAAA of the Ministry of Education. The PRT was originally composed of four professionals who carried out both distinct and overlapping roles during the implementation phase. The team<sup>2</sup> provided technical assistance, professional development and support to CLCs as they worked with the *Framework for Action* (which we will describe later), and identified local needs with local CLC stakeholders. The PRT is recognized as having played a critical role in leading the CLC initiative at the provincial level.

At the outset, another provincial committee structure was also put in place to ensure ongoing support and guidance. This structure enabled all stakeholders to provide input. Stakeholders included the Assistant Deputy of the SSCAAA at the Ministry, Director Generals of school boards, provincial and local partners, principals, teachers and coordinators. One of the key factors in the success of Quebec's CLC model is that it has involved stakeholders in planning and implementation from the start at both the local level and the provincial level.

A factor deemed critical in the success of the CLC initiative is that it was guided by a systematic approach to implementation and development called *Theory of Change*. The theory of change developed for the Initiative provided a clear road map for our work. It was built on previous research in Quebec and other contexts, as well as experience with other community school initiatives in Québec. Thanks to the *Theory of Change*, we set out on the journey of transforming schools into CLCs with a long-term, shared vision, and a clear idea of where we were headed as we developed CLC partnerships.

Before launching CLC implementation, a study was mandated to identify key issues and challenges for building and sustaining school-community collaboration<sup>3</sup> and several models for community schools were studied. We looked in particular at how other approaches would align with the reality of Quebec. Drawing on this overview of research and what we learned from key experts,<sup>4</sup> a CLC *Framework for Action* and the *CLC Resource Kit* were designed, complete with a guidebook and templates. These tools helped leaders move their schools toward becoming CLCs.<sup>5</sup> These key documents describe the steps schools should follow to implement a *Theory of Change* (ToC), based on collaboration between the school and its partners in the community.

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<sup>2</sup>The original PRT was formed with each member bringing a different but complementary strength: a Project Manager, a teacher, a community development officer, an evaluator/researcher and a part time technology coordinator.

<sup>3</sup>*From Values to Results: Key Issues and Challenges for Building and Sustaining School-Community Collaboration* author: Bill Smith. [http://www.learnquebec.ca/export/sites/learn/en/content/clc/documents/From\\_Values\\_to\\_Results\\_14Jan2013.pdf](http://www.learnquebec.ca/export/sites/learn/en/content/clc/documents/From_Values_to_Results_14Jan2013.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Experts on community schooling were contacted and asked for advice and orientation: Joy Dryfoos, known as “the founding mother” of the community school model; Darlene Kamine from the Cincinnati Public School; Jane Quinn from the Children’s Aid Society in New York; and Mary Walsh from the Boston College.

<sup>5</sup>[http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc\\_documents.html](http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc_documents.html)

The CLC Initiative benefited from startup funding from the Federal Department for Canadian Heritage and from Quebec's Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports.<sup>6</sup> Funding covered the work of the Provincial Resource Team (PRT), responsible for overseeing CLCs, providing training and supporting networking and partnerships at the provincial level. Funding also covered the initial salaries of CLC coordinators and videoconferencing equipment to allow schools to access the network of CLCs, as well as resources that are often scarce in the regions where CLC-schools are located.<sup>7</sup> Since it is under the supervision of the SSCAA, a sector of the Ministry of Education, CLCs have been closely aligned with Quebec's strategies for school improvement, in particular, programs to counter the effects of poverty<sup>8</sup> and support the wellbeing of children.<sup>9</sup> Support for the CLC initiative is clearly stated in the Ministry's Strategic Plan for 2009–2013 (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2009). Policy support and the different resources provided have had import for the initial development, scale-up, and sustainability of CLCs.

Given the great diversity in schools and communities across Québec, it was understood from the outset that taking a "one size fits all" approach to CLCs would not work. Schools in Quebec's English sector face the extra challenges of being a minority language school system in a predominantly French-speaking province. Furthermore, they differ on many factors such as school size, school type and location, ranging from urban to rural to the challenges of schools in isolated settings where there are no connecting roads between villages. The Framework for Action allowed each CLC to take into account the very different needs and realities of their local student population and community.

Underlying the Community Learning Centre Initiative is a major preoccupation: The future of the English-speaking communities of Quebec and what can be done to promote their vitality. Despite a still widely-held perception in the province that the Anglophone community is not a real "linguistic minority" and is not facing serious challenges, recent portraits based on census data reveal a population facing critical issues and stakes (see Bourhis, 2012; Floch and Popcock, 2012). Examples include an ageing population and the outmigration of youth, resulting in a shrinking demographic base and diminishing resources. In the educational context, this translates into increasing difficulty in providing educational services and the possibility of school closures (Lamarre, 2007, 2012).

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<sup>6</sup>Funding came through a special agreement between Quebec and the federal government called the "Entente for Minority Language and Second Language Instruction."

<sup>7</sup>Schools receiving a CLC grant were mandated with developing partnerships with community groups to serve student/school and community needs.

<sup>8</sup>Quebec has two major programs to counter the effects of poverty in schools: *New Approaches, New Solutions* and *Montreal Schools For All*.

<sup>9</sup>*Healthy Schools*.

### *Early Indications of Success*

Although CLCs are a recent innovation, they are quickly showing what can be made possible when a school chooses to become a Community Learning Centre. In 2012–2013, and only 7 years after start-up, CLCs across Quebec were working collaboratively with more than 700 local, regional, provincial, and national partners. Together these partners leveraged more than three million dollars (\$3 M) of in-kind services and resources to serve their schools and communities.

But CLCs are doing much more than leveraging resources. They are changing lives and communities! They take schools that continue to serve as a place for traditional education and expand what these schools do to include lifelong learning and community development. In this way and others, CLCs offer a viable and energizing model for future policy and practice. They demonstrate that all schools can gain from being rooted in their communities and also that community learning Centres can become important sites of community change.

Two keys to the success of CLCs can be identified at the outset. One is the systemic approach that has guided the Initiative, under the leadership of a provincial resource team.

The other is the establishment of mutually beneficial collaborative partnerships. With the help of a dedicated coordinator who works closely with school principals, agencies are brought into the school to provide supports, services and resources. In turn, these agencies, thanks to their partnerships with schools, are better able to reach target populations and meet their mandates. In very little time, it became obvious that these important partnerships benefit communities, including children and their families, but also other members of the community, such as the elderly, who are often isolated.

In short, Community Learning Centres in Quebec are taking the place called ‘school’ and transforming it into a physical and social hub for local populations. These CLC hubs not only focus on improving the educational and life outcomes of school-aged students, but also become a place where the English community can meet to voice needs, plan and implement local initiatives, and make better use of existing local resources and energies. Located in urban, rural and also very isolated settings, and serving elementary students to adult learners and seniors, CLC schools are bringing resources and new life to schools with declining populations spread out over a huge geographic territory, and having to cope not only with poverty but often scarce and/or declining access to resources. These hubs are bringing vitality, and oftentimes hope, back to their communities.

In summary, CLCs are proving to be all about people and relationships. At the very heart of CLCs are new partnerships between schools and a range of stakeholders to strengthen schools as they strive not only to attain educational goals, but to enlarge their mandate and become hubs for their communities and the site of lifelong learning. Partnerships provide a range of services and activities beyond the school day to meet the needs of school-aged learners, their families, and the wider community, linking schools to the delivery of other resources, such as health and

social services, as well as efforts to promote community development. By becoming part of a multi-sectorial network, CLC-schools are starting to break down the isolation of English-speaking schools and communities in the province.

### ***Digging Deeper: Evaluating Progress***

The new mandate for schools which have become CLCs covers a broad range of goals, including youth development, lifelong learning, community engagement, and family support. For example, CLCs are structured to:

1. Foster improved school performance in young people,
2. Promote the language, culture and vitality of the Anglophone community,
3. Encourage a reciprocal relationship between schools and their communities,
4. Become centres for Lifelong Learning

Underlying this approach is the belief that a school that is anchored and engaged with its community will make for a healthier and more vibrant community and school setting, ultimately impacting the relationship of students and their families to schools and improving students' academic engagement and success.

We adopted a *Theory of Change approach* to the implementation of the CLC Initiative.<sup>10</sup> A *Theory of Change* (ToC) is as much about the process as the result. Basically, it's a specific and measurable description of a social change initiative, one that forms the basis for strategic planning, on-going decision-making and evaluation.<sup>11</sup> In the development of CLCs, the *Theory of Change* offered a process that enabled leaders of each CLC to define their own « theory » of the change process they were engaged in. Although each theory is somewhat unique, overall every CLC's *Theory of Change* aims to bring about a cultural shift. The most important feature of this shift is that the school is opened to partners, not only for the benefit of students, but equally important, to support the whole community.

This work is not easy. Like any good planning and evaluation method for social change, a *Theory of Change* requires participants to be clear on long-term goals, identify measurable indicators of success, and formulate actions to achieve goals. Essentially, a *Theory of Change* helps stakeholders define the building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks, interchangeably referred to as outcomes, results, accomplishments, or pre-conditions, is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change framework. This

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<sup>10</sup>We did so with the help of Helen Clark of ACTKNOWLEDGE (and we would like to offer our special thanks for this help here).

<sup>11</sup>This description is derived from a quote provided on the website for the Theory of Change Community: <http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/#2>, consulted December 1, 2013.



framework, expressed in a figure diagram, provides a graphic representation of the change process.<sup>12</sup>

ToC enables local stakeholders to orient and then assess what local CLCs accomplish. Specifically, one of the major principles of a ToC is that schools and communities should build a results-based framework for change. Such a results-driven framework helps to make everyone accountable for results, while also positioning them to make adjustments as they monitor CLC development in each local context. To do this, leaders of each CLC engaged in the process of elaborating their own ToC to guide implementation over the first 3 years. Each CLC's ToC served as the basis for evaluation at the end of this initial startup period.

Before asking local CLC stakeholders to undertake this ToC development process, the Provincial Resource Team engaged in writing their own ToC, following the same steps that would be proposed to individual CLCs and their communities. CLCs were a new initiative in our province. Their initial support was accompanied by a strong, dual mandate. CLCs needed to contribute to student success, but more than this, they also needed to enhance community vitality. Easy to proclaim and emphasize, the actual design and development work were very challenging, in part because there were no benchmarks or any other initiative to compare to. Under these circumstances, it was critical that we ask ourselves a basic question. Where do we want to be 5 years from now? Once we agreed on our destination, we were able to start the process of backward mapping. This backward mapping process requires thinking about the following question: Given the outcomes we want and need to achieve, what do we need to do differently and better to achieve them? Then: Given our current status ("here"), how will we get to these outcomes (i.e., how to we move from "here" to "there")? A *Theory of Change* Approach accommodated and provided support for the Framework for Action.

The PRT's ToC states that the team will support the CLCs, individually and as a group, through training, technical support and networking, providing as needed, individualized support for local CLC coordinators, principals, teachers and other stakeholders. This support is intended to develop the capacity of CLC leaders to build and eventually sustain the work and services of local CLCs (Community Learning Centres, 2009<sup>13</sup>). By elaborating its own *Theory of Change*, it quickly became clear that the PRT also had to play a role in the broader policy environment in which CLCs operate by working with school boards, government agencies and provincial organizations and building support for CLCs.

Although ToCs are invaluable, they lose their potential if they remain on the CLC drawing board. Implementation matters. Toward this end, the Framework for Action defines the stages guiding implementation. More specifically, the Framework has five stages, which were given the following headings: (1) explore, (2) initiate, (3) plan, (4) implement and (5) evaluate. As local stakeholders move through and complete the steps in the Framework, they arrive at Step 3: Plan. Step 3 is when CLC

<sup>12</sup> Idem, consulted December 1, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/documents/CLC\\_Theory\\_of\\_Change\\_version-March2010.pdf](http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/documents/CLC_Theory_of_Change_version-March2010.pdf) under CLC Project Theory of Change.

leaders engage in the collaborative planning process with partners to develop their own ToC. That means identifying common outcomes that respond to both the needs of the school and the Anglophone community, and that draw in the maximum amount of resources available. The Framework and accompanying tool kit (consisting of a guide book, examples and templates) are not intended to serve as prescriptive elements. On the contrary, they are intentionally adaptable and highly flexible at all stages of development. Thanks to these features, CLCs are able to arrive at their own tailor-made and collaboratively-made plans and missions.

At the beginning of its mandate, the PRT worked through the Framework, a process that schools would be undertaking. This proved extremely useful in overseeing the implementation of individual CLCs and also guided the PRT's leadership role in providing support to the network of CLCs as they got off the ground across the province. Importantly, the Framework and the elaboration of a *Theory of Change* allowed all of the people involved in the CLC Initiative to elaborate a shared vision and goals for the network of CLCs.

To summarize, ours is an outcome-based approach. This requires us to identify collaboratively short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes and then to monitor, evaluate, generate useful knowledge, learn together, and improve.

From the outset, the CLC Initiative has relied not only on existing research but also on ongoing and built-in participatory evaluation to help guide and orient implementation and development. In fact, this seems to be one of the factors contributing to the successful implementation of CLCs. In addition to the self-evaluations that each CLC conducts to help orient and assess their local "theory of change", larger external evaluations were integrated into the implementation process. The first evaluation, which began in June 2007 and was completed in June 2010, assessed and helped guide the implementation and outcomes of the CLC Initiative for the initial 22 CLCs developed over the first 3 years. In collaboration with the PRT, the team chosen to conduct the evaluation<sup>14</sup> developed a detailed evaluation framework for the 3-year period.

In the next section, we draw on key findings of the mid-term and final evaluation reports<sup>15</sup> for this initial startup and implementation phase. We also draw on the self-evaluations conducted by individual CLCs as well as a recent study of how CLCs support efforts to counter the effects of poverty on student success.

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<sup>14</sup>The evaluation was carried out by Learning Innovations at WestEd located in Boston, Massachusetts. The evaluation team was chosen through a competitive application process.

<sup>15</sup>*Evaluation of the Quebec Community Learning Centres: An English Minority Language Initiative* – [http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc\\_res\\_eval.html](http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc_res_eval.html)

## ***Current Status, Progress Markers and Achievements***

The final evaluation report (2010), *Evaluation of the Quebec Community Learning Centres: An English Minority Language Initiative*, concluded that over the 3 years of implementation, the CLC initiative had made significant progress toward most of its intended short-term and intermediate goals as defined in the PRT's *Theory of Change*. To help assess the implementation status of each CLC, the evaluation team adopted a special framework. Specifically, we used the developmental typology produced by Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace (2005) to monitor program implementation. This typology has six progressive steps: (1) Exploration and adoption; (2) program installation; (3) initial implementation; (4) full operation; (5) innovation; and (6) sustainability. This developmental framework serves as an evaluative guide and schools in the process of becoming CLCs are understood to be somewhere along the continuum of change.

Fixsen et al's typology was modified somewhat by the CLC evaluation team, so that it could be applied to analyze CLC implementation at the local level. Whereas Fixsen and colleagues consider these stages separate categories, we view the stages as markers along a continuum of achievement.

Based on the site data for CLCs examined, the evaluation determined that within a category, such as initial implementation, a CLC can be at the beginning of the stage, somewhere in the middle, or at high implementation (i.e. almost at full operation). The CLC evaluators found that among the 22 initial CLCs, all had moved past program installation. Within an initial 3-year time span, all were solidly situated in initial implementation, high initial implementation, or full operation.

The Fixsen et al. (2005) model proposes that if a program or initiative makes it through initial implementation, it becomes fully operational. At this point, the change or initiative becomes common practice and the benefits or intended outcomes of the program or initiative begin to be realized. Furthermore, there is capacity within the organization (or in this case, CLC) to sustain operation. Programs or initiatives may remain at this stage or progress further.

An example of a CLC at the full operation stage is the Netagamou CLC.<sup>16</sup> This CLC developed quickly, establishing buy-in from parents, teachers, community members and leaders in its small and very remote Lower North Shore community. Proceeding with support from the local school board and driven in part by concerns over growing social and economic community needs, all key stakeholders were engaged in an inclusive planning process. The successful implementation of this CLC was attributed to local engagement and two other factors. One was the attention given to following the Framework for Action, and the other was a good working relationship involving two key people – the school principal and the CLC coordinator.

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<sup>16</sup>A case study of this CLC can be found in Volume 2 of the final report (2010). Seven CLCs were chosen for case studies. [http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc\\_res\\_eval.html](http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc_res_eval.html) under Evaluation and Research, CLC Evaluation Report Compilation, Volume 2.

The talents and traits of the coordinator were especially important. This person had a community development background, understood engagement strategies, and possessed a deep understanding of her local context and school.

The 2010 evaluation report concluded that the CLC Initiative as a whole has shown success and that the majority of schools funded were developing into community schools that can be nurtured into true hubs for the English-speaking communities that they serve. All CLCs had action plans to guide implementation, and some had developed more complete *Theories of Change*. Furthermore, all of the CLCs have begun to identify positive impacts for their students and their communities, impacts with the potential to deepen through further institutionalization of the CLC approach and services. The findings in this report also support the conclusion that the CLCs had achieved many of the intermediate project outcomes, especially demonstrating organizational capacity and implementing an action plan.

The report also examined the issue of sustainability. The evaluators concluded that it was unrealistic to expect CLCs to achieve this after only 3 years of implementation. They also concluded that despite some attempts, a business model for CLC sustainability did not seem to be emerging or viable. CLCs were showing, however, very clear signs that they could pull in important resources and programs that could be run at no-cost to school boards. What is more, the evaluators found that CLCs that had made it past early implementation were already providing a high return for the investment in a CLC coordinator salary.

Once these facilitators for sustainability were identified, focused sustainability planning commenced. For example, the PRT has helped CLC leaders learn how to write grants with partners – and this has proved to be a successful strategy. The in-kind resources and programs generated by CLCs working in mutually beneficial partnerships have become key to CLC sustainability and this has strengthened school board support.

Additionally, 20 of the 22 CLCs had conducted a self-evaluation of their implementation process and action plan. All 22 had established a core group of stakeholders who actively participate in the CLC. The report made clear that even if implementation is not always easy and smooth, solid progress had been made in the majority of sites.

The report also proposed that the CLCs that are *fully integrated* into the school are also more likely to have reached *full operation* and to be community hubs. More specifically, in an integrated model, the school and CLC are woven together into a holistic vision of a community school. In other words: The school and the CLC are not considered a parallel structure. Put yet another way: The CLC is not a tack-on to a conventional school. In our integrated approach, the school has effectively been re-envisioned as a Community Learning Centre, providing educational experiences for children, but also embracing and advancing its expanded role in the community.

Another salient finding in both the literature on community schools and this evaluation is that effective management and leadership, as well as shared vision and commitment from key stakeholders (teachers, school boards and community partners) are critical for the success of community schools. Principals in particular are

very important, and our principals have emphasized the integration of schools and CLCs. CLCs with high levels of leadership from the coordinator and principal, teacher buy-in and school board support were more likely to have reached the full operation stage of implementation.

One of the most interesting findings in the report was that the CLC network was working with partners of different types, provincial and community, non-governmental, as well as para-public agencies, to provide services, programs and activities not previously available to students and communities. This is an indicator of the value-added by the CLC Initiative.

Our CLC Initiative also emphasized self-evaluations conducted by local CLCs. These local evaluations examined whether CLCs were having positive and demonstrable effects on the well-being and success of students. Although CLCs are not designed to serve only students, but also families and the local English-speaking community, results to date have shown that students remain the primary beneficiaries and “targets” of CLC programs and services (Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2009). The question of how CLCs impact student engagement and success remains one of the most decisive indicators of perceived success, given that CLCs remain, at the core, schools with an educational mandate to meet. In the establishment of CLCs, stakeholders have often asked if the CLC will add to, or detract from, the educational role of the school.

Drawing on the self-evaluations conducted by 20 CLCs, a report written by a PRT member<sup>17</sup> attempted to answer the question of student success and explore how CLC programs and services have been contributing to the learning experiences and development of students. Exploring the impact of CLCs on students is no simple task because CLCs are complex and, multifaceted, often operating several different programs at the same time. They are also taking place in schools where other efforts to improve student engagement and success must be taken into account, such as the professional development of teachers and ongoing school reform initiatives.

This said, we know from research that a combination of mutually supportive interventions – including those implemented by CLCs – do have the potential to make significant, positive differences in the lives of students and their families (Schorr, 1997). We know from research studies in other contexts that certain programs that CLCs have established- such as after-school programs, early childhood education, family support, academic support, and literacy initiatives – are associated with a number of positive outcomes for children and youth (Little, 2009).

The hallmark of many of the programs implemented by CLCs is that they were chosen in response to identified and documented needs of students (e.g. low literacy levels, limited access to accessible after-school activities, poor school performance), their families and community members. CLCs often chose existing programs that have been proven effective in other settings and are supported by research, for example, the *Reading Buddy Program* and *Mother Goose*. Based on the local response to programs, CLCs are clearly responding to the needs of local stakeholders,

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<sup>17</sup>Anne-Marie Livingstone. *Contributions of Community Learning Centres (CLCs) to Student Engagement and Success*. [http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc\\_res\\_eval.html](http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc_res_eval.html)

particularly students, and provides more opportunities for them to learn, grow and succeed. From the CLC self-evaluations, student oriented programs appear to have met with a high level of satisfaction on the part of students, parents and teachers. We are finding traditional Ministry of Education indicators of student success (such as results on ministry exams and graduation rates) hard to work with – in part because half of Quebec’s CLCs are in schools that are too small for these types of results to have value. Our thinking is that we should be assessing the contributions we make to the school and community, contributions that are recognized as helping support student engagement and retention.

Furthermore, the goals of CLCs go beyond the traditional goals of schooling to include lifelong learning and community vitality. Evaluators and implementers alike must perform a balancing act when so many goals are prioritized. It requires leaders in each CLC to find ways to meet traditional student- and school-focused goals and, at the same time, achieve broader community goals. The extent to which a particular CLC is school/student-focused or community-focused varies. The balance is achieved locally – in each CLC it takes shape through the discussion of stakeholders leading to Action Plans.

All CLCs have partnerships with at least one or more community group. However, some can be described as more focused on students than on the community, or vice versa. 15 of the initial 22 CLCs are classified as being student-focused and six of the CLCs as being community-focused. Only one was described as being equally student-focused and community-focused.

Ultimately, the focus of a CLC does not seem to be related to success in implementation. Among CLC stakeholders, principals, teachers, parents and school boards all see students’ education as the primary function of a school; however, more of these same stakeholders are beginning to see the benefits of collaboration and partnerships that support the broader community and how this, in turn, makes for a stronger school environment.

English schools in Quebec are the often the last remaining English language institution under community control and this has import for the CLC Initiative. Interview data and partnership data collected during the WestEd evaluation indicate that English-speaking communities see a need and a role for CLCs in supporting community vitality and this is especially true outside of the Montréal region. Many partners stated that the CLCs, and the presence of a CLC coordinator, provide a way for them to reach and serve the outlying regions of the province more easily. CLCs help their partners better serve the English-speaking population, particularly outside of cities. Some partners see this as enhancing equity of access to English services.

More recently, the potential of CLCs to counter poverty in schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods has been the subject of a small study.<sup>18</sup> The study showed that many of the goals of other educational programs established to counter the effects of poverty and increase student engagement and success<sup>19</sup> mesh easily and naturally

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<sup>18</sup>Lamarre, P. (Unpublished, 2013) *When School Initiatives Are Combined*. To be posted on Learn Website in the fall of 2015.

<sup>19</sup>New approaches, new solutions (NANS) and Montreal Schools for All.

with the goals and mandate of CLCs. This study's conclusion acknowledged the strong potential of CLCs to support programs to counter the effects of poverty and support disadvantaged school populations. CLCs in effect provide the link to the community that has been missing in existing programs, recognizing the importance of family and community engagement in education to ensure student success, but tend nevertheless to focus on classroom-based strategies. CLCs provide the structure needed to anchor a school in its community.

### ***What are We Doing Differently and Where Do We Go From Here?***

In this section, we look at how we are moving forward based on what we have learned from the evaluation of the first 3 years of implementation. We present some of our more recent initiatives and look at some of the areas we intend to focus on in the future and how we plan to achieve success. More specifically, we have chosen to respond to the following planning and design questions. What's next on your agenda; what will it take to go beyond "business as usual" and be successful; and how will we marshal resources and supports needed to do this.

### ***Teacher Buy-in: Community Based Service Learning Institute (CBSLI)***

According to a network evaluation report released in 2010, one of the aspects we needed to work on was building teacher buy-in to the concept of CLCs. In response, the PRT implemented a strategy to engage CLC teachers through professional development in the form of an *Institute for Community Based Service Learning* (CBSL). We define CBSL as learning in and from the local community, while providing a service to the community. CBSL is essentially a teaching strategy that combines the pedagogical goals of the classroom with the aim of increasing student engagement. It accomplishes this aim by giving students the chance to apply what they learn in the classroom to local community issues. This approach not only contributes to student success, but helps teachers develop authentic learning situations which can cover all of the competencies laid out in the Quebec Education Program, while simultaneously helping to strengthen community vitality.

Additionally, the Institute allows us to showcase projects launched by inspired teachers that contribute to a school culture in which students have opportunities to make an impact on their communities. The institute design builds on the belief that learning together, PRT and teachers will ensure the sustainable development of the role of teachers in the CLC network. At the time this chapter was written, over 250 teachers had taken part in this training, which is offered once a year. The goals of the institute included:

- Clarifying the role of a teacher in a CLC
- Learning and sharing best practices for integrating CBSL with curriculum goals
- Becoming inspired to lead Community Based Service Learning (CBSL) projects
- Understanding and having a stake in the CLC concept and the role of partnerships
- Clarifying how to effectively utilize the resources of the CLC coordinator as well as local and provincial partnerships

This institute has already met several of our short-term outcomes. Teachers felt engaged and more informed about the teacher role in the CLC concept. They reported that the institute helped them plan CBSL projects for their CLC. Many commented at the end of training, that they were going back to become catalysts for change in their CLCs.

### ***Aboriginal and Indigenous Peoples: Moving Toward Reconciliation***

In Quebec, some of the First People's population can be found in the English language sector.<sup>20</sup> In this next phase of development, we are attempting to positively respond to the unique challenges that Aboriginal students face. It is well documented at provincial, national and international levels that the success of Aboriginal students in Canada falls well behind that of non-Aboriginal students. Within the CLC network, 9 % of students in secondary schools and 13 % of students in elementary schools identify as Aboriginal.<sup>21</sup> The PRT recognizes that to work on such challenges requires us to begin facing inter-generational traumas and working to overcome distrust in educational institutions, both of which stem from the history of the "Indian Residential" school system.

To support Aboriginal students in the school system, CLCs have begun to engage students in activities that explore and honour Aboriginal history and culture. We hope to use CLCs as sites for building positive relationships and reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. CLCs are particularly well placed to become role models in this movement towards healing and reconciliation within public education institutions in Quebec since they are already actively advancing the concepts of holistic education and strong school-family-community connections. Our long term goals are to see an increase in the academic and social success of Aboriginal students in CLC schools through the integration of Aboriginal history and reconciliation projects and the development of culturally adapted practices.

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<sup>20</sup> Parents sometimes choose to take their children out of the school on the reserve and enroll them in provincially run schools.

<sup>21</sup> This data comes from students in CLC-schools who answered the survey "Tell them from Me" in 2011–2012.



For example, in one CLC school, where 50 % of students are Aboriginal, staff recognized a significant bullying problem. Traditional disciplinary methods were not working. Therefore, the school partnered with a neighbouring Aboriginal Friendship Center to develop a disciplinary model grounded in restorative justice, which they called “The Ambassador’s Program.” This involved training all students in grades 3–6, the entire staff and Principal. An informal evaluation of the program was undertaken by the coordinator of the St-Willibrord CLC. Based on this evaluation, it appears that teachers are finding that behavioural challenges in classrooms are less frequent and more manageable, as student awareness and accountability grows and restorative practices are accessed. Students (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike) are reportedly more focused in class and ready to engage in learning, knowing that they will have time to express themselves and resolve any conflicts that may have come up in the Ambassador Program.

### ***Focusing on Early Childhood Development***

In 2011–2012, a decision was made by the PRT to prioritize early childhood development (ECD) as an area of major intervention in the CLC network. This decision builds on the research on school readiness and on other educational efforts in Quebec to improve the social and literacy skills of preschool children and better prepare them for kindergarten. The desired outcome we established for 2011–2014 is for CLCs to contribute to the holistic development of children aged 0–5. We reasoned that the CLC’s approach of engaging partners and stakeholders would ultimately serve schools by improving the support that families with children age 0–5 receive, providing students with a stronger foundation for learning and thus in the long-term, contribute to student success.

### ***Lifelong Learning***

One of the long-term goals for CLCs is to contribute to improving community and individual well-being, community vitality and economic development. Having schools develop lifelong and informal learning opportunities for all ages is a very possible extension of the school’s role in the community. It is also believed in educational settings that the increased participation of adults in learning endeavours sets a positive example for students and may also increase interaction between students and adults in their communities. Provincial and local partners in Lifelong Learning (LLL) have contributed to the development of this aspect of CLCs by sharing their experience and documentation.

Offering access to LLL activities is a natural fit for CLCs. Unfortunately, not all of our schools have a culture or infrastructure that supports offering LLL to adults. One of the difficulties encountered was ensuring that the building is accessible after

school with suitable space for LLL activities. It required coordinated action by the CLCs leadership team, including the principal and coordinator.

Several models have been developed in this priority area. Two have proven successful in a very short time. Our first example, the Adult Night School,<sup>22</sup> began in the spring of 2008. During that first spring session a volunteer Executive Committee was formed. The volunteer committee members were also the instructors offering six courses for 6 weeks. Only three students attended the first volunteer-led courses. Knowing that it takes time to build and to get the word out for such events, volunteers persisted and since then attendance has blossomed to over 130 participants. The volunteer executive committee is an ideal example of how community members can turn into community leaders when individual and group leadership is strongly supported. It is all based on “the ABCD concept”--Asset Based Community Development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). This ABCD approach avoids the often-dominant tendency to focus exclusively on needs and problems, typically with deficit thinking and language. Instead ABCD frameworks focus on strengths, aspirations, and opportunities, and it draws on local expertise in crafting innovations.

Another successful example of LLL is a peer Learning Group that has been implemented in several CLCs in partnership with McGill University, and is called the McGill Community of Life Long Learners. MCLL programs are for people of retirement age who want to continue learning for the joy of it, and share their knowledge, ideas and experience with others. The concept has been adopted by six CLCs and was implemented in collaboration with the School of Continuing Studies.

### *Continuing Evaluation (2012–2014)*

To continue following the evolution of CLCs, a new phase of evaluation was undertaken, covering the time span 2012–2014. Its purpose is to provide timely and pertinent information to support the ongoing evolution and implementation of CLCs in Quebec. This next phase of evaluation has many goals. It will look at how a second generation of CLCs are handling implementation (14 new CLCs located in disadvantaged communities) and also how they are working with the Revised Framework for Action and revised guidebook for collaborative school community partnership (phase 3).

Additionally, the evaluation will examine how the first generation of CLCs are continuing to evolve. The evaluation will also assess the PRT’s Theory of Change, as well as where we are getting the most « return for investment » in terms of new services, new programs, and new sources of funding and in-kind resources.

What is more, this evaluation will identify exemplary models of partnerships and the outcomes of these partnerships. As our focus in this phase of development has

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<sup>22</sup>Memphremagog CLC (at Princess Elizabeth School) 2013\_ Reports and Presentations [http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc\\_res\\_eval.html](http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc_res_eval.html)

been very much on teacher buy-in, the evaluation will provide us with information on how the CLC concept is being integrated into teaching practices and curriculum, professional development for teachers, student engagement and success, and the use of videoconferencing. The evaluation will also examine the leadership role of stakeholders and whether policy development to support the CLC initiative is taking shape. The issue of sustainability and the identification of successful models and strategies is another important piece of the evaluation. Finally, evaluators<sup>23</sup> will look more closely at the role of the CLCs in the context of the vitality of English-speaking communities. As can be seen, evaluation continues to be an integral part of the evolution of CLCs.

## Most Important Lessons Learned

At the beginning of this chapter, we stated that two major elements have contributed to the quick success of the Quebec CLC Initiative. One was having a Provincial Resource Team committed to supporting the Initiative. The other was that we worked with an outcome-based and collaboratively-designed road map, the *Theory of Change* to orient and assess the implementation and now the continuing development of CLCs.

### *The Importance of a Project Resource Team*

It is not that surprising then that when we take a step back and think about the major lessons learned from the CLC community school model, one of the most important lessons is the value of having a team, like the Provincial Resource Team (PRT), to support the implementation of such an important shift in school culture. As revealed by the external evaluation, key stakeholders attribute the success of CLCs in large part to the leadership role of the PRT. It appears that the mixture of support and pressure from the PRT spurred many CLCs to engage in planning, including the development of Action Plans and early engagement with partners. The PRT is also recognized for its work in building capacity locally and provincially thanks to professional development, biannual gatherings and on-going individual CLC support. Initially, the PRT focused on building the capacity of principals and coordinators to successfully implement the CLC concept. This included professional development and technical assistance around developing Action Plans, and *Theories of Change*, self-evaluation, and grant writing.

Across our Province, the PRT has also played a critical role in networking at different levels. Teams initially focused on building a network of CLC coordinators and

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<sup>23</sup>A Quebec-based evaluation team has the responsibility for this second phase of external evaluation: QU'Anglo Communications and Consulting.

principals involved in implementing CLCs. Within this network, information, experiences, and resources are shared to the benefit of all. While the PRT continues to support principals and coordinators, they have more recently focused on building teachers' support and understanding of the CLC concept. The PRT has also taken a very active role in building partnerships with key agencies and associations for the CLC network. These new partnerships within the CLC network seem to be breaking down the traditional isolation of the English-speaking communities in Quebec and providing a real meeting place and voice for stakeholders within the community. Without the leadership and commitment of the PRT, it is reasonable to ask whether the CLC initiative would have developed as well and as successfully as it has in such a short time.

### *The Importance of a Theory of Change and Framework for Action*

The second major lesson learned in the CLC initiative is the value of a **guided plan for action and change**. To reiterate: CLCs that have drawn on the Theory of Change and Framework for Action. It is worth noting that while the first generation of CLC coordinators found working with the Framework for Action difficult and perplexing, new coordinators are drawing on the experience and concrete examples available from the initial CLCs, making implementation considerably easier.

A *Theory of Change* approach and the Framework for Action contributed greatly to building the engagement of stakeholders in CLCs as well as they allowed CLCs to find their own local roadmap to guide the process of transforming local schools into CLCs. As this approach is outcomes-based, it requires thinking ahead and integrates evaluation into the process of moving forward. We also strongly believe that this approach has also helped the PRT coordinate the CLC network and pull CLCs and their partners together at the provincial level.

### **Four Implementation- and Evaluation-Related Lessons Learned**

When we look at the evaluation findings, there are some important lessons to be learned as to the **best practices for implementation at the local CLC level**. More specifically, implementation is most successful when there is a good working relationship between a supportive principal and an effective coordinator; when there is an active partnership table that convenes all key stakeholders and facilitates coordinated, collective action; and when there is a supportive school board. Effective management of the CLC, including thorough planning, stakeholder involvement, partnering, and self-evaluation also contribute to successful implementation. Having

a clear definition of the community to be served and a good understanding of community and school needs and assets thanks to the Framework for Action also plays a major role in CLCs moving quickly through the implementation stage to “fully operational.”

Leadership of course is important. In a CLC, the school principal remains the primary leader because he or she is ultimately responsible for student’s safety and overseeing the educational program. This said, the development of a CLC is a collective effort. Therefore, **collaborative leadership** is needed, starting with the CLC principal, extending to the CLC coordinator and including leaders from partner agencies.

Evaluation reports have enabled us to observe that the fully operational stage of implementation is most likely to be achieved when the **CLC is closely integrated into the school** and the school is perceived as the community learning centre, as opposed to a parallel integration where the school has, or houses, a community learning centre. School board representatives who participate in PRT trainings and professional development activities and who act to support the CLC at the board level are viewed as effectively supporting implementation and an environment for successful implementation.

### *Collaborative Stakeholder Participation and Planning*

We have also learned that **involving stakeholders in a collaborative effort and collaborative planning** for the CLC is highly important to effective implementation. Partnership (or stakeholder) “tables” (where partners meet, plan, brainstorm, and problem solve) are especially important. CLCs are collective products and can only thrive if they build on organizational structures and opportunities for all key stakeholders to participate in decision-making, planning and mutually guiding the CLC, contribute to effective implementation. Stakeholders, it should be noted, include teachers, parents, and students, and not only formal partner organizations. Coordinators who work closely with partners to write grants for CLC projects further support implementation. Ideally the coordinator works to make the community of stakeholders the CLC, sharing responsibility for the development and delivery of programs, rather than becoming identified as the driving force behind the success of a CLC.

### *The Importance of Organizational Partnerships*

Mutually beneficial partnerships among local organizations are proving important. They are mutually beneficial when the partners provide services that meet student and school needs and reciprocally, and when the school enables a community partner agency to achieve its goals. In turn, communities benefit. The development of

school-community partnerships involves building and renewing relationships and this is an ongoing process that requires constant nurturing and attention. Over the years, a number of key provincial school-community partnerships, however, have been developed and new ones are emerging. But it also pays off. In less than 6 years, more than 700 activities and initiatives have been organized and delivered in CLCs across the province, resulting in more than \$3 million worth of in-kind contributions (human, material and resources). These represent services and resources that were brought into a school as a result of CLC-initiated partnerships.

### *A Flexible Design that Results in Tailor-Made CLCs*

Without a doubt, one of the important strengths of the CLC Initiative is the flexibility its model offers to build local tailor-made CLCs that can meet all of the different needs present in the wide range of community and school settings across the province. While schools in rural and remote areas were the quickest to see an impact, a growing number of schools in poor urban settings are revealing the need for a strong community relationship and the value of partnerships in strengthening schools faced with a disadvantaged population.

### *Employing External Evaluators at Start-Up*

A final lesson learned is the value of having external evaluation built into the implementation process from the start. Such an outside view has enabled us to better visualize where we were and where we have gone and whether we are still on track. The findings from the external evaluation have been put to immediate use in determining what needs to be done and what needs to be remembered as good practices and strategies. A second external evaluation is underway to provide information on how the initial 22 CLCs are evolving and moving towards sustainability and how recently implemented CLCs in disadvantaged neighborhoods are helping school teams counter poverty and low rates of student achievement. These reports will help guide us in the years to come.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter we looked at the particular context of schools in Quebec's educational sector, a sector facing a number of important challenges as a school population decreases and its resources are stretched over a large geographic area. We then described the complex and challenging mandates given to the CLC Initiative. The first mandate falls clearly into the educational realm. More specifically, it calls on a

community school approach to strengthen the educational mission of schools by making schools more vibrant and rich environments that promote student engagement and success.

But CLCs were given a second ambitious and challenging mandate: Provide opportunities for lifelong learning. In other words, the CLC concept proposes opening schools to generations not of school age, from toddlers who come to CLCs to build school readiness, to adults who come to schools to share their knowledge with school-aged students and bring their support to the learning environment, but who also come to school to acquire new skills and knowledge for themselves. CLCs are about taking the place called school with school aged students and making it a place where all generations are welcomed into the learning environment. It's an exciting process to watch in action.

The third mandate for CLCs is community development and community vitality. These aspects are not traditionally part of how schools are defined. For this reason, they usually require a bigger step out of the box for all stakeholders. It's a step that many schools and communities in Quebec's English sector seem ready and able to take.

The external evaluation of the CLC Initiative has revealed that schools can indeed become hubs for their communities, places where school-aged students, their families and their communities can come and engage in health-related and social activities look for new services, and simply pull together in new ways. This community aspect is key to the success and vitality of the English school system, a key institution in Canadian official language minority communities, and sometimes the only remaining Anglophone institution in remote and isolated contexts. But quite honestly, CLCs make sense in any context and we feel the model we have developed has much to offer any school and any community.

Quebec's English-speaking communities have been isolated and until very recently, have not pulled together in any organized province-wide network. One of the unexpected outcomes has been the ability of CLCs to provide a new cohesion within Quebec's English speaking communities, both at the local level, as schools become places that draw in energies and pull them together, and at the provincial level, as the partnership relationships emerging around the CLC Initiative breaks down the isolation of organizations and agencies able to serve communities. Another unexpected outcome of the community development aspect of CLCs is that it has built new bridges to Francophone associations and services, as coordinators become more involved in regional networking. Neither outcome figured on anyone's list of expectations. That they are being achieved is excellent news and also provides a reminder for colleagues elsewhere in the world to remain on the look-out for desirable outcomes which were not anticipated at start-up. The ability of CLCs to pull together isolated and at-risk communities is something we feel can be replicated in other contexts in the world.

To reiterate, two main elements contributed to the relatively quick success of CLC implementation. One is the Provincial Resource Team, which lead and supported the initiative. The other is our guided approach to bringing about change—the *Theory of Change* framework and the Framework for Action. Our approach

provided a roadmap, tools and guidelines to keep us on course and engage all stakeholders. We feel strongly that the *Theory of Change* approach has been a big piece of the success and allowed for the flexibility of the CLC model.

Writing this chapter has allowed us to step back and acknowledge our progress and achievements to date. However, our work is not done. Facilitated by our evaluation, we are continuing to take on new challenges as we learn more about what we are. We also are striving to remain strategic. For example, we do not have immediate plans to extend the CLC network in Quebec to new schools. Instead, we are concentrating on how to make existing CLCs sustainable. We are also considering adopting an extended model – in which experienced CLC coordinators become full-time community development agents, working with more than one school. A part-time employee would support each individual CLC.

There is growing confidence and interest in the model for Community Learning Centers which has developed since 2006 in Quebec's official minority school sector. We believe the model can be implemented in a wide range of different contexts in Canada or abroad. Wherever there is an interest and/or need to expand the mandate of schools and build interactive relationships between schools and communities, schools and partners, schools and all of the stakeholders can contribute and benefit from changing the place called school into a Community Learning Center.

Becoming a CLC is, nevertheless, an ambitious undertaking, but one we sincerely consider not only doable but worth doing. We would like to end with a finding from a focus group with our initial CLC principals. After a long discussion on the challenges of turning a school into a CLC, they were asked if they would do it again. Without hesitation, they all answered "yes." They felt strongly that the results from the partnerships were well worth the extra work and that there had been a shift in the culture of the school. In their view, and it is one increasingly shared by others involved in the journey launched in 2006, there simply is no going back to a conventional, stand-alone school after having lived the CLC experience.

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# Chapter 9

## Twenty Years of Community Schools in Groningen: A Dutch Case Study

Jeannette Doornenbal and Joke Kruiter

**Abstract** The community schools in Groningen, the capital city of the province in the north-eastern part of the Netherlands, provide an important advanced exemplar because it dovetails with urban development. The authors reflect on the development and impact of community schools over the last 20 years, and they describe in detail the critical features of the original design, its implementation and scale-up in primary education, as well as the characteristics of the redesign and implementation that currently is underway. This two decade journey clearly demonstrates the importance of, collaborative leadership for complex systems change. Examples of systems change priorities include policy support and innovation; powerful, cross-boundary governance structures; regular assessments (so that services match child and family needs); embedded program evaluations (with a priority for implementation fidelity); and active participation of higher education institutes. This journey features the rationale for the new design; the relationships with the city, universities and other stakeholders; and last but not least, planning for sustainability, continuous improvement and accountability. Together these several developmental milestones and systems change achievements are impressive and nominate this approach as an international exemplar.

**Keywords** Community schools • Urban education • School-community governance systems • Scale-up • Collaborative leadership • Systems change

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## Introduction

The community schools in the municipality of Groningen are not unique within the Netherlands. Although Groningen (together with Rotterdam) was one of the first Dutch cities where these schools appeared in 1995, they have since become a widespread phenomenon. In both primary and secondary education nation-wide, one out of every three schools is a community school. This means that almost every municipality has at least one, especially in primary education.

In 2013 there were some 2000 community schools spread across the country (de Weerd, Paulussen-Hoogenboom, Slotboom, van der Pol, & Krooneman, 2013). The first ones were established in cities with relatively high numbers of disadvantaged children. In these cities, schools alone had not succeeded in tackling the disadvantages associated with children's socioeconomic and sociocultural backgrounds. To tackle disadvantage, school leaders had to involve other parties: childcare, welfare and youth care, and last but not least parents. The assumption was that working together and combining forces would serve to increase children's development opportunities and school performance, while also providing better childrearing support for parents. In the ensuing years, new objectives have been added to community schools. Community schools have also become a job market tool to give parents with young children an opportunity to combine work and childcare.

In this chapter we focus on the origins and development of community schools in Groningen (where they are called *Vensterscholen*),<sup>1</sup> describing the changes they have undergone in the past two decades. We then look at the educational and non-educational outcomes of community schools in the Netherlands on the basis of national and municipal evaluations and impact studies on community schools. The lessons learned have contributed to a practical theory that is currently being tested in Groningen. To illustrate our discussion with a specific example, we use the case study of *Vensterschool Koorenspoor* in the *Korreweg* neighbourhood, where in relative and absolute terms many children and families are living in challenging contexts. We begin with a brief description of the municipal context.

## Nothing Beats Groningen<sup>2</sup>

The city of Groningen is the capital of the province of Groningen, which is located in the north-eastern of the Netherlands and borders on Germany and the Wadden Sea. The city is home to large numbers of young people. Some 100,000 children and young people – from a total population of 200,000 – are engaged in some form of education, from primary to tertiary. Groningen is a very dynamic city, with over

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<sup>1</sup>In this article we use the term community school for the Dutch context in general and 'Vensterschool' or VS for the situation in the city of Groningen.

<sup>2</sup>Promotional slogan for the city of Groningen.

55,000 students coming and going. The two universities and the University Medical Centre are the major employers. The city also has traditional old neighbourhoods where, in both relative and absolute terms, many children are being raised by vulnerable parents and grow up in challenging contexts involving multiple risk factors.

Groningen has a reputation in the Netherlands as the ‘red’ city because of its traditional, predominantly left-wing affiliations. The surrounding area is characterized by wide open spaces on the one hand and by shrinkage (an ageing population), poverty and unemployment on the other. The challenge for the region is to find answers to these problems and to preserve the quality of life. Education has a key role to play here, supported by other support services and sectors. It was in the city of Groningen that the first community schools of the Netherlands were established, inspired in part by community schools that were set up in the US in the early 1990s in order to reduce the achievement gap for disadvantaged children.

### **The Beginning: New Inspiration for Policy on Eliminating Educational Disadvantage (1995–2000)**

The first publication on Groningen’s Vensterscholen (Gemeente Groningen, 1995), as the city’s community schools are called, appeared in March 1995. It succinctly set out how these schools would help to combat educational disadvantage:

- Educational disadvantage has complex causes.
- Schools cannot be held solely responsible for combating disadvantage.
- Schools and health and social service agencies should therefore focus on an integrated approach to combating disadvantage, with teachers primarily accountable for their teaching role.
- To achieve this, it is useful to have the school and social support agencies located on a single site.
- The new city policy needs to focus more closely on the preschool period and the transition to secondary education.
- The school day will be extended, allowing room for extra-curricular activities and extra supervision alongside compulsory school activities.

At that time the Netherlands had been pursuing for about 20 years a policy of eliminating educational disadvantage for some 20 years. This policy aimed to prevent and eliminate disadvantage among pupils wherever possible. In those years both national and local authorities had ploughed considerable money into implementing the policy. Groningen was one such municipality. Despite spending increasing sums on combating educational disadvantage in the period 1975–1995, by the early 1990s almost 50 % of the city’s primary school pupils were identified as educational disadvantaged. The gap between prioritized outcomes and actual results was an inducement for people to start thinking about a new direction for compensatory

policy. The idea of the community school, the Vensterschool (hereafter abbreviated to VS) was seen as the solution.

### *Top-Down Planning and Development*

Following the local elections of 1994 Henk Pijlman became the alderman with the education portfolio. He felt that Groningen's education policy was in need of a boost and subscribed to the notion that 'education can't do it alone' (Tops & Weterings, 1998). Collaboration with parents, links with care agencies and the neighbourhood, and a range of educational and recreational after-school activities were sorely needed.

In the ensuing discussions between leaders representing the municipality and institutions from various sectors that deal with children (including education, the municipal health service, libraries, welfare agencies, playgroups and childcare), it was concluded that while these services worked well individually, there were also gaps that none of them were filling when it came to upbringing, care and education. This conclusion held true, for example, for children in need of additional care, and for parents who needed parenting support, who might receive different, and at times contradictory, advice from the school and child health care. Or these children and parents would fall between gaps between these schools and community agencies because none of the services offered by these institutions met their specific needs.

The situation called for an integrated approach. The thinking was that a community school, in which different agencies concerned with childrearing and education all work together, would provide the right infrastructure for such an approach. The VS concept was further developed by an initiative group chaired by alderman Pijlman.

In Groningen, VS's were seen as a tool to expand opportunities for disadvantaged children, based on the following seven 'pillars':

- continuity in upbringing and education
- an integrated approach and inter-institutional collaboration
- in-school and extra-curricular activities
- parental involvement
- a comprehensive system of care
- social cohesion and urban regeneration
- utilization of buildings.

Once the city council decided to approve and introduce the VS concept in 1994, a municipal project manager was appointed who initiated talks with neighbourhoods and institutions. In 1995 four disadvantaged neighbourhoods were identified where the first VS's would be established. The idea was that all the schools in Groningen would eventually become a VS. The city council recognized that developing these community schools was no short-term matter, and this council agreed to

a development period of 10 years. In terms of funding, the assumption was that after the initial grant, a redeployment of existing budgets would suffice.

The thinking at that time was that the organisations concerned would have to deploy their financial resources differently from before and would therefore not require any additional funding. Now that neighbourhoods were selected where the first VS's would be established, responsibility for implementing the plan shifted from the municipality to the neighbourhoods themselves. A management group was set up at municipality level to monitor progress in the neighbourhoods, to evaluate plans and arrange for buildings and finance.

'There are many children in Groningen who are growing up in disadvantaged circumstances. We had fine projects, programmes for combating educational disadvantage, but these were not making a difference. We then had the idea that it wasn't enough to give children a good education in order to provide them opportunities for the future. This is because the environment they are growing up in works against that. We therefore need to provide good, up-to-date education, as well as after-school activities, such as sport, art and culture, that deepen and broaden their learning. Parents must be given childrearing support. The school can't do it all alone. That's when we came up with the idea of the Vensterschool.' Henk Pijlman, education and youth alderman 1990–2000 speaking about how community schools began in Groningen (Quotation from short film about community schools at the launch of Groningen as National Education City of the year 2014–2015 on 29 September 2014).

### *Adding Bottom-Up Planning and Development*

From the start of the VS, on-site project managers, known as location managers, were appointed in the four selected neighbourhoods. It was their job to instigate cooperation between the school and other parties; both partnerships between organizations and cross-sector interprofessional collaboration. Their main objective was to 'enhance children's upbringing and educational opportunities'. Secondary objectives were to promote equal opportunities, improve the childrearing climate and increase social engagement (Gemeente Groningen, 1995). These goals were deliberately not specified in more detail, as it was up to each individual VS to develop them in ways that tied in with neighbourhood needs.

So, the location managers of the VS's need to ask: What is the composition of the neighbourhood? What services and supports are available? What is missing? What do parents, children and other local residents need?

Thus, VS's started as top-down initiatives (instigated by the municipality), which then had to be further elaborated in bottom-up fashion. This latter work was done by the various organisations who would work together in the school. They met in

‘planning groups’ for each school, to work out on operational plan for the school. The planning groups were chaired by the location manager, and it was consciously decided that the voice of each organisation would carry equal weight, with no single party being more important than another. The planning groups were in any event made up of primary schools, playgroups, creches, libraries and the municipal health service. Each planning group also included representation from recreational, welfare and care agencies of relevance to the neighbourhood.

### ***Quality Buildings Supporting Cross-Sector Collaboration***

The four new VS’s were housed in new buildings. In one instance, this involved renovating an existing school. In three instances new buildings were erected for the schools and some of the other organisations involved. The new buildings were funded by the municipality, which aimed to give the schools an attractive appearance in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods where they were located, and to make them a ‘vibrant neighbourhood hub’.

### ***Extended Services and Multi-Service School Activities***

Just as the participating institutions differed per neighbourhood, the activities introduced by the VS also varied. This was because of the goal of meeting local needs. Each planning group drew up a range of activities aimed at the local community. At the same time, agreements were included in the various neighbourhood plans. The activities for each school could be divided into four categories (Kruijer & Walrecht, 1999), with each of the four schools offering at least one activity from each category.

- In-school activities. These were offered during regular school hours. They could be in the area of music, sport, language and reading development, technology, art and culture.
- Extra-curricular activities. Children took part in these activities on a voluntary basis after school. Once again, this could involve music, sport, technology, art and culture, etc. The VS’s endeavoured to align their after-school activities as closely as possible with the in-school programme, in keeping with the ‘three-stage rocket’ model. Under this model, children are first acquainted with an activity during school hours, after which they may continue the activity in the after-school programme. Children who demonstrate talent in that area are then encouraged to join the relevant sports club or cultural institution.
- Activities for parents. This involved the following range of activities:
  - Parenting support: help with childrearing by means of courses and workshops focusing on childrearing and child development

- Parent participation: parents helped out at school or took part in in-school activities together with their child
- Courses for parents: educational and recreational activities such as cooking, computer skills, Dutch lessons
- Care and prevention. This involved the following three types of activity:
  - Care and prevention activities in the field of learning, physical health and social-emotional functioning
  - Coordination and information sharing and transfer between the agencies within the school
  - Professional development for teachers, playgroup and childcare leaders, and other professionals in the school.

### ***“Growing Pains”: Predictable Developmental Challenges with a Complex Innovation***

As tends to happen with innovations, growing pains – developmental challenges – had to be addressed. For example:

- In financial terms, the municipality assumed that no additional resources were needed to develop the VS. The participating partners had to rely primarily on a reallocation of existing budgets. It quickly emerged, however, that the existing funds were not enough to cover the cost of the schools. The municipality therefore made additional money available on a long-term basis.
- Schools initially thought that the Groningen VS concept would substantially add to their burden of tasks because of the need to work with parents and offer parenting support, additional learning time and a broad range of programmes, et cetera. When it emerged that these tasks could be left to other parties, schools largely became passive partners in the VS concept. Although school representatives took part in the neighbourhood planning groups, in general they did not play an active role in developing the range of programmes. This approach to school-neighbourhood relationships impacted what happened in each school. Teachers were told that the introduction of the VS meant that they would not be given additional duties but could focus on their core task – providing education. Some school principals also felt that they had no say (“the municipality and school boards made decisions without involving the principals”).
- Perhaps because of the limited involvement of principals and teachers it became apparent that they were not looking forward to sharing classrooms with providers of after-school activities. In the words of one educator: “... soon there will be clay all over the curtains”.
- VS’s were clearly presented as a model to address disadvantage. This orientation prompted resistance from both school principals and parents (“we’re not disadvantaged!”). Instead of the anticipated influx of pupils for the new schools, fewer



students than anticipated arrived at some schools initially. One reason for this result was that parents were not convinced that this school design was a good idea, largely as a result of misconceptions (Kruijer & Walrecht, 1999).

### *Early Successes*

Despite the growing pains when the VS's were first implemented, the idea of VS soon took root in Groningen. The following factors contributed to a positive start and early successes:

- The concept was not launched as a project but as a long-term innovation under council direction.
- There was a committed, visionary alderman who offered strong continuous support and served as an advocate.
- The concept was endorsed, supported and promoted by the parties involved.
- There were schools and organisations in the selected neighbourhoods that wanted to participate.
- From the outset, studies were conducted into Vensterschool processes and outcomes (Kruijer, 2002; Tops & Weterings, 1998; Walrecht, 2006) so that adjustments could be made where necessary.
- Some of the schools were housed in multifunctional buildings, tangible examples of a resolute municipality that took education and child development seriously.

### **Ten Years Later: A Change in Strategy and Direction**

The VS concept was gaining ground in the Netherlands. Groningen and Rotterdam were at the forefront of these developments, and interest was building nationwide. Similar initiatives were being developed in other municipalities under the collective term 'community school'. By 2002 there were 450 community schools in the Netherlands. The prognosis at that time was that their numbers would rise to about a thousand by 2010 (Oberon, 2002).<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, on 28 May 2002 the *Dagblad van het Noorden* newspaper ran the following headline: 'Alderman puts stop to new Vensterschools'.

What had happened? Following the local elections, a new alderman held the education portfolio. Having read a recently published dissertation (Kruijer, 2002), he had the impression that VS's failed to deliver on their original promise. He therefore decided to put an immediate stop to all new developments in this area until

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<sup>3</sup>In reality, there were approximately 1600 community schools in 86 % of municipalities in 2010 (Kruijer et al., <CitationRef CitationID="CR13">2011</Citation Ref>).

there was greater clarity about what they offered and their outcomes. Two days later, under immense public and political pressure, he was obliged to moderate his comments (there would be an evaluation study, but in the meantime the VS's could continue working as usual). Nevertheless, the political wind continued to blow from another direction in the years that followed and VS's were no longer as high on the local political agenda.

There were several other changes that made life difficult for the supporters of the new school design. The first was that school boards were becoming increasingly critical of the VS concept. In the Netherlands, public school boards traditionally came under municipal authority, but in the first decade of this century the public school boards were rapidly becoming autonomous. This was also true of public school boards in Groningen. School boards had different priorities, and in terms of content and process they feel less affinity with the VS design, precisely because of the association with municipal policy.

A second development was the appearance of VS's in a growing number of Groningen neighbourhoods. After all, the aim had been to establish such schools in every neighbourhood. However, an adverse effect of this neighbourhood focus was the burgeoning number of different interpretations of the VS. The focus on combating disadvantage was becoming lost as the original design was watered down. At the national level too, community schools were increasingly being employed as a job market tool to enable both parents to work outside the home. This created a drive towards all-day care, in Groningen too, with facilities for children from early morning until late evening. It also led to a dilution of the existing design of community schools. 'Vensterscholen' and 'community schools' eventually became catch-all terms that covered a host of interpretations resulting in, among others, mission drift and different operational models.

Lastly, there was the global financial and economic crisis after 2001. Whereas ample financial resources were still available in the 1990s, from the beginning of this century this was no longer the case, especially after 2008. Municipalities were obliged to make choices. Considerations of effectiveness and efficiency played an ever greater role when it came to allocating budgets. Whereas VS's had been able to develop freely in the first 5 years, without their educational outcomes being known, there were now questions about their results. People wanted to know what the VS's in Groningen, and community schools in general, were delivering to pupils, parents and the neighbourhood; and whether these programme and service offerings were making a positive difference.

## **What Are the Outcomes?**

In the first decade of this century municipalities continued to develop community schools. The same was true of Groningen, where the number of VS's kept rising. However, because there was no clear picture of the outcomes of these schools, the need for evaluation became apparent.

A few studies were conducted at the local level. For example, the 2004 study by Van der Vegt, Studulski, Hoogeveen, Van der Bolt, Knuver and Bleker showed that VS's did not lead to higher academic achievement. In terms of process, the study also highlighted a need to tighten up the vision and goals, to work more systematically, and to strengthen collaboration between the different parties. Walrecht (2006) concluded that even after 10 years there was anything but consensus between the various partners about what exactly they wanted to achieve, how and for whom. Her explanation was that the combined use of two implementation strategies – top-down and bottom-up, which had led to rapid success in the early stage – was not effective in later stages of the process. On the one hand, there was freedom of choice and a high degree of autonomy at the operational level (bottom-up), but responsibility for change, collaboration, problem-solving, control and evaluation rested with the municipality (top-down). Walrecht concluded that this combination stood in the way of targeted and effective operations.

A national impact study for the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science into the effects of community schools (Kruijer et al. 2013) showed that community schools contributed, under certain conditions, to the social-emotional development of pupils. This study monitored 23 community schools over a 3-year period. Although no community schools from the city of Groningen were included in the study, there were many schools with similar populations and problems. The study also showed that community schools are very well able to reach pupils from low socioeconomic backgrounds; in relative terms, these pupils take part in many more school activities than other pupils. But community schools do not necessarily have a positive effect on pupil's social-emotional development and academic achievement, with the exception of pupils who take part in many community school activities. This latter group develop more quickly in social-emotional respects. This correlation was not found for academic achievement.

We see the same findings in other Dutch and German studies (Heers, 2014; Radisch, 2009). In terms of children's academic and social-emotional development, community schools do not outperform schools that are not part of a community school alliance. However, although a review study reported disappointing results for academic and social-emotional development, Heers, Van Klaveren, Groot, & Maassen van den Brink (2011) conclude that community schools may well fulfil another important social and pedagogical function: "Community schools seem to contribute to families and communities in societies where academic performance is increasingly critical and where we witness a growth in required child care. Community schools seems capable to make schools not only a place for learning but for growing up and a place where students and other community members enjoy being" (p. 19).

In order to understand these outcomes, we need to understand the processes. The national impact study referred to above found that the rapid increase in community school numbers has given rise to a vague mix of general objectives: combating disadvantage, ensuring enrichment and providing childcare for the children of working parents. At the school level, it was also observed that people find it difficult to set clear goals and to link activities with them. The goals tend to remain very general

(‘offer opportunities’, ‘develop talent’) and in many cases there is no clear relationship with the activities, programmes and services provided. Lastly, participation in school activities is voluntary and the number of activities on offer varies widely across schools. In some cases there were just a few activities each week, for a limited number of pupils. The study recommended that if community schools wish to promote pupils’ academic achievement, they need to provide a structured, targeted programme with high-quality activities matched to attainable goals.

Thus, the general finding was that community schools operate with insufficient focus. Furthermore, the schools need to become more focused on outcomes, together with logical and empirical links between desired outcomes and each school’s program, service and academic configurations. The situation in Groningen shows similar characteristics, although there are marked differences between schools. Furthermore, it is important to realize that in many cases research designs to capture progress and results, for example for particular groups of students, were not used. With this in mind, leaders perceived the need for more rigor in design and development.

## **After Two Decades: Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses**

In 2012 there were 11 VS’s in the municipality of Groningen, each with neighbourhood-based consultations between the affiliated partners. In all, 34 primary schools participated in the 11 VS’s, with the number of affiliated schools varying per school community. Alongside primary schools, each VS had representation from partners in childcare, child health care, playgroups and libraries. Some schools also included child and adolescent teams, playground associations, secondary schools or community centres. They were expected to work on the seven pillars (identified earlier), with a location manager appointed by the municipality to coordinate the partners.

At that time the municipality decided that the VS concept, created in 1995, was in need of review due to changing circumstances. The city’s governance relations between education, childcare and the municipality had changed. While the municipality was still responsible for the policy on eliminating educational disadvantage, school boards were responsible for the quality of education. To an increasing degree, education was being judged on pupil performance with regard to literacy and numeracy, on delivering suitable programmes for children with a wide range of developmental problems, and on providing full-day childcare if working parents requested it. With the introduction of the Childcare Act in 2005, childcare became privatized, leading to a growing number of childcare providers joining the VS partnerships.

The municipality of Groningen therefore commissioned a policy and consulting firm to advise on a sustainable concept for VS’s in the light of the achievements of the past two decades. Based on a literature review and numerous discussions with participants, they concluded that stakeholders wished to continue investing in

neighbourhood collaboration with respect to children and parents, but “many note the lack of a binding force (...). Many parties, especially the schools, do not identify with what has evolved over time and they feel that the school is simply an add-on, which does not help them achieve their core mandate. The problem relates to both content and governance” (Zunderdorp, 2012, p. 2).

In terms of content, it emerged that not enough had been achieved regarding the seven pillars partly because of a lack of focus on outcomes. In terms of governance, the problem was that while schools are at the heart of the Vensterschool, they do not feel that they have ownership of the concept. Significantly, leaders have not always been able to perceive the relationships between their respective core mandates. Although the achievement of one organisation’s mandate may depend on the achievement of one or more organisational mandates, leaders have not yet arrived at the shared perception that they fundamentally depend on each other. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the location managers’ jobs and roles was questioned.

There were three parts to Zunderdorp’s recommendations (2012):

- Focus on a limited number of substantial themes/priorities:
  - continuity of curriculum content between school and childcare arrangements, and coordinated timetables
  - parental involvement
  - a strong link between education, childcare and care.
- Work on new governance relations. Place the school at the centre and put the school principal in charge of running the Vensterschool. Have the municipality facilitate the partnership process, including the finances. Take the neighbourhood and local issues and needs as the point of departure.
- Ensure new, joint agenda issues, professional development and safeguards.

On the basis of these recommendations, the city council adopted the new policy ambition VS 2.0 (Vensterschool 2.0, Gemeente Groningen, 2013) in 2013, and in the autumn of 2014 the city’s VS’s did indeed embark on a new era. With the previous period as a developmental baseline, several things have changed. For example:

- New neighbourhood partnerships have been created, with the school at the centre. The school is the party that seeks neighbourhood partners that it wishes to work with. There are currently 17 VS’s in Groningen.
- The position of the local manager has been abolished. Management now rests with the school principal.
- A municipal VS steering committee has been established, chaired by the alderman. The other members are the directors of the school boards, the largest childcare provider and the playgroups in the city. The professor of Integrated Youth Policy is attached to the steering committee as an advisor. Three council policy officers provide support for the committee.
- The number of pillars has been reduced from seven to three: continuity, parental involvement and care.

- Lastly, VS's are expected to work on and from a shared vision of development and learning, termed the 'pedagogical base'.

Groningen was a forerunner for community schools in the Netherlands, spearheading their development. But like all schools, VS's have evolved over time. That is why, prompted by new developments in youth policy, we have given a new impetus to the VS concept in 2014. A revamp and a different governance principle, based on co-creative collaboration. We have given the initiative back to the educational and childcare partners, because they are the ones who collectively know what their children need.

We have also added focus. We are concentrating on three content themes. Proceeding from a shared pedagogical base, we are working on development continuity, parental involvement and support/care for children. There is a renewed energy in the VS's, which will allow us to develop them further. My ambition is for all schools in Groningen to become a VS – not in line with a blueprint imposed from above, but tailored to the needs of the neighbourhood, the children and the parents who live there. We are continuing to work on the best development opportunities for the children of Groningen.

Ton Schroor, alderman for youth since 2010.

## Case Study of New Policy Ambitions: Community School Koorenspoor

The new policy ambition builds on Zunderdorp's recommendations. A major source of inspiration was the innovation project *Pedagogische Kracht in de wijk* (Pedagogical Strength in the neighbourhood) which was implemented at VS Koorenspoor in the period 2008–2011. We will therefore examine in more detail the innovations that took place there.

National research into poor neighbourhoods in the Netherlands forecast that unless social, physical and economic investments were made in these neighbourhoods, the problems would be exacerbated, leading to major social disintegration. Forty neighbourhoods in the Netherlands were identified as priority areas on the basis of a fixed set of indicators (VROM, 2007) with the Korreweg neighbourhood being one of the 40. This neighbourhood is made up of two old working-class quarters that were built in the early twentieth century. There are 861 children between the ages of 4 and 12 living there, 31 % of whom have three or more risk factors: growing up in a one-parent family, in poverty, in a family with unemployed and/or

low-skilled parents and/or an ethnic minority background. Although the achievement levels of the Korreweg children in 2008 were around the municipal average, the neighbourhood had more disadvantaged children, higher repeater and poverty rates, higher truancy rates and fewer children enjoying school than the city average. It was with good reason that VS Koorenspoor had been established there in 2000. The question in 2008 was: can Koorenspoor create more opportunities for the neighbourhood children than it is currently doing?

The situation in 2008 was as follows:

- Many school activities were not linked solidly educational outcomes. The activities did not reach all the children who appeared to need them.
- Although there was a planning group involving many parties, there was an absence of a targeted, systematic approach based on a vision and shared values.
- There was a part-time location manager with many coordinating responsibilities but no powers. This led to a lack of clear management.
- The educational partners did not play an active role. Parents and staff did not feel that the VS belonged to them.

At the same time, the partners – public and Christian schools, childcare, playgroups, welfare work and child health care – did share the ambition to increase opportunities for the neighbourhood children and to use the VS as an instrument to this end. It is against this background that a neighbourhood consortium was formed under the name Pedagogical Strength in the Neighbourhood (*Pedagogische Kracht in de wijk*) to develop the Koorenspoor School into a permanent and effective partnership. The consortium was made up of the various parties involved in Koorenspoor (primary education, childcare, playgroups and the municipal health service), the Integrated Youth Policy lectorate at Hanze University of Applied Sciences and local policymakers. The lessons we have learned from Pedagogical Strength are outlined below (Doornenbal, 2010).

### ***Start Small: Small-Scale Organisation***

Like all VS's in the city, VS Koorenspoor is a complex organisation involving many agencies and institutions (24 in all), including two primary schools across three locations, four childcare providers, two playgroups, a library, child health care, social work and legal services, women's health care, playground associations, police and community groups. They all have their own cultures, legislative and regulatory frameworks, financial flows and performance indicators. The person coordinating the network is the location manager. She has no powers (although she does have responsibilities) and a number of participating parties do not perceive her as manager. The various organisations and agencies are spread across the neighbourhood. They do not have one building with one staff room that would encourage encounters between the people involved. People have to consciously seek one another out, which does not happen because they do not know one another and see

little reason to change this. On top of this, there is a high staff turnover, which means that continuity is not maintained. Constructive collaboration, which relies on familiarity and knowing one another, is constantly being disrupted. The large number of agencies, the lack of physical infrastructure, and the lack of continuity, leadership and ambition all work hand in hand here.

The lesson learned is to keep the organisation small. Complexity needs to be reduced so that community schools can develop into a coherent community that is willing and able to bear responsibility for the children growing up in the neighbourhood. VS Koorenspoor has opted to:

- Work with fewer agencies and to identify the core neighbourhood partners in the area of childrearing and teaching: education, childcare, playgroups and child health care.
- Work with a protocol and a buddy system so that new staff can be integrated quickly.
- Work together step by step in small multidisciplinary teams that are responsible for outcomes. It worked well when professionals collaborated on concrete solutions to authentic problems that they came across in practice. This was something professionals were enthusiastic about. Professionals who have worked together in subprojects on, say, early childhood education, linking in-school and extra-curricular learning, and parental involvement, learned to trust one another, were satisfied with the collaboration and wished to continue and consolidate it.
- Appoint a small management team. Although having small interprofessional teams means that more can be left to the self-management of professionals, it was clear that management is indispensable in a complex partnership. New forms of behaviour have to be elicited, which requires leadership and direction. At VS Koorenspoor the principal of the largest primary school became chair of a small management team comprising the core partners. An important argument for vesting managerial control with an education partner is that children are required to attend school from the age of five, which means that all children will at least be at a school. But there was also a personal factor involved. The school principal in question is perceived by everyone as a bridge builder and all parties were happy for her to fulfil this role.

### ***Work Smart: Work on the Quality of Implementation***

Talent development is high on the agenda of community schools, including VS Koorenspoor. All children possess the inclination and curiosity to learn, and it is this initial curiosity that the VS wishes to harness and encourage – not only in cognitive terms, but also in other areas, such as sport, art and culture, and in the field of social-emotional learning and citizenship education. What can professionals do, working in interdisciplinary teams, to develop, maintain and further develop children's talents?



Educational Force therefore opted, based on a number of problems that the professionals themselves raised, to work in interdisciplinary working groups. Groups were encouraged to work on small steps designed to boost the quality of implementation. The problems were in the areas of early childhood education, in-school and extra-curricular learning, and parental involvement. We will take a brief look at the lessons we have learned in these working groups.

### ***Early Childhood Education Is Important***

Sound preparation for secondary education is not enough to ensure continuity development. The transition from childcare or playgroup to year one of primary school is also a sensitive time. The professionals wished to work actively in this area (Geveke & Reinders, 2010). The large number of children with language delay because of the low educational level of one or both parents meant that much was already being done on early childhood education in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the professionals observed that cooperation between child health care, playgroups, childcare and primary schools was still less than ideal.

At some stage the working group realized that the professionals were still working within their own conceptual frameworks and respective language systems, which they learned during their professional education programmes. One result was that some members always were confused as specialized terms such as target-group children, care plans, children at risk, pupils with a weighting, et cetera were introduced by individuals. In other words, terms that were well established for some professionals were a source of confusion for others. If people do not take the time to explain what they mean by certain terms and what their aims and expectations are, collaboration can go awry.

The early childhood education working group has therefore worked on shared language, joint products, such as a concept map for early childhood education and a transfer protocol to make sure that the constructive experiences in the preschool period are not lost. These small, workable, jointly created products can make all the difference to the quality of implementation. This was the idea behind the initiative and it later proved to be correct.

### ***Planning for Connections between In-School and Extra-Curricular Learning***

A third intervention to encourage children's talents was tackled in the working group on in-school and extra-curricular learning (Blok, Hollewand, & Luttk, 2010). In addition to the compulsory school curriculum, VS Koorenspoor provides a rich range of after-school activities. The consortium observed that activities often failed

to reach the children who would derive most benefit and that they had not been developed in conjunction with the teaching programme. Moreover, a wide range of activities were offered each month and it was not always clear why they were chosen. As a result, the after-school activities had more the flavour of ‘add-on services’ were not aligned with or developed in conjunction with the school curriculum, let alone adding depth to the curriculum.

Professionals reported a need for greater coherence between the school curriculum and after-school activities. They also identified the need for a joint vision that would serve as a basis on which to justify choices. It is important to know why one activity is selected over another or, for example, why there are lots of sports activities but no music. In the working group on in-school and extra-curricular learning, researchers from the Integrated Youth Policy lectorate, together with teachers and staff delivering after-school activities, worked on boosting quality by programming education in a different way. The working group set up a number of activities based on the principle of ‘learning through doing, tomorrow we’ll do it better’. An example is the theme of spring, around which both in-school and extra-curricular activities were organized. Teachers and staff at after-school care jointly set the objectives and developed and implemented the activities. Based on this collaboration between in-school and extra-curricular staff, we have been able to identify a number of success factors for collaborating on in-school and extra-curricular programmes. The most important are:

- Start by getting to know one another, both personally and professionally. This makes it easier for people to let go of rivalries and past grudges, especially when a shared perception develops that they fundamentally depend on each other.
- It is important for people working together to be motivated to do so and to enjoy it. They should perceive the community school as part of their work, not as something extra.
- It is important for professionals to jointly define their interests. They should ask: What do we want to achieve, with and for whom, and how can we demonstrate this? Staff need to appreciate that it is not the development of the activity that matters most, but the purpose. The goal must be clear to everyone: how will it benefit the children?
- Make agreements based on these objectives, at the level of both processes and outcomes. Apply the principle of ‘less is more’. It is better to do one thing well than ten things by halves.
- Lastly, the support of the community school’s management team has proven an essential condition for achieving this targeted collaboration. This involves both a robust organisation and structuring of work processes and professionalization based on a collective vision and objective.

## Social Relationships Matter: Work on Relational Trust

So far we have looked at two quality levels – organisation and implementation. However, the level of social relationships is at least as important, certainly at VS Koorenspoor with its diverse social relationships between the various organisations and between professionals from different disciplines. Trust matters, recommending strategies to develop relational trust.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) conducted research into school development in urban areas of Chicago. Based on their data they concluded that there was a correlation between children's development opportunities and interpersonal dynamics at all levels – between professionals and children, between professionals and parents, between professionals and their managers, and among professionals themselves and with the local authority. They coined the term “relational trust” to describe one aspect of these relationships. For Bryk and Schneider, the core values of relational trust are respect (don't judge and condemn: treat others respectfully despite differences of opinion), competence (a child/parent should assume that they are dealing with a professional), personal attention to others (look at the other person; make everyone feel welcome and invite them to take part) and integrity (carry through on your promises). Bryk and Schneider found that a growth in relational trust was matched by an increase in children's performance and wellbeing. They conclude on this basis that relational trust is the glue, the tissue that bonds individuals together, enabling them to improve children's education and welfare. Our work has emphasized this same phenomenon.

Pre- and post-measures (2008 and 2010) were conducted among professionals at VS Koorenspoor to gauge their satisfaction with and ambitions regarding interprofessional cooperation (Wiekens, 2010); the results showed a lack of relational trust between professionals. They were poorly satisfied with the collaboration (satisfaction scored between 4.1 and 6.5 on a 10-point scale). Their need for more collaboration did not score much higher (4.4–7.7).

The comments from focus groups showed that people did not know one another and were not aware of the added value of cooperation. People were also suspicious of managers and policymakers, who were once again ‘imposing’ something on them. There was also mistrust and sometimes even cynicism about parents. Comments like ‘Those parents don't look after their children properly; if you grow up there, it's no wonder the child doesn't turn out well’ and ‘Everything I manage to build up here gets destroyed at home’ attest to a lack of respect. Similarly, there were many parents who did not trust the school. In team discussions about parental involvement, the view was raised that the lack of parent trust in the school made the teachers' work difficult. Parents of children who, in the school's view, were in need

of help often reacted defensively. They sometimes refused to open the door for fear that their child would be taken away. Some parents would go out shopping when the school paid a visit. If parents feel too much pressure, they take their child to another school.

This need prompted the establishment of a working group on parental involvement (Landman, 2010). The central question for the working group was: How can we strengthen the relational trust between parents and professionals? And in particular: What does this demand from professionals and from the organisation? *Communicating with parents*, a training course for professionals, was therefore developed and delivered. This course is based on the principle of ‘don’t judge but show respect and understanding’. Professionals need to ask: Why is the mother angry? What is the background? Where is she coming from? By understanding the background and taking the time to talk things through with the mother, they can respond more professionally (in other words, not based on their own emotions).

In addition, various teams led by a researcher held discussions about the instruments they use to boost parental involvement. This revealed that VS Koorenspeer did not have a vision of parental involvement and there was no collective parent policy. Nevertheless, the experiences of partners in the community school network when it came to reaching out to parents were very similar. All teams had difficulty reaching two groups: ‘multiproblem families’ and highly educated, demanding parents. In some areas there were also various positive initiatives that parents rated highly. We are referring to the home visits that teachers from De kleine wereld Christian primary school make to parents and children. We also know from another study that an individual approach often works better (van der Schaaf & van den Berg, 2009, p. 45). Moreover, all partners acknowledged that parental involvement is an essential part of their work and an important pillar in enhancing children’s opportunities.

In summary: the ingredients that make up a promising community school can be summarized in the name “Triple S” (Doornenbal, 2011). It stands for: Small, Smart and Social. We have learned that it is essential to work on three quality levels simultaneously: a clear, simple organisation where management rests with the educational partners and where improvements and innovations are made on a step-by-step basis; a well-considered implementation based on a shared vision, using a targeted, outcomes-based approach and harnessing knowledge and experience; and respectful, honest social relationships between the professionals themselves and with parents.

## The Current Situation

As stated earlier, the city council adopted Ambitions for VS 2.0 in 2013 (Gemeente Groningen, 2013). Based on this document, the city’s VS’s have once again organized themselves into smaller communities. The school boards and their school principals take on the leadership role. At the end of 2014 there were 17 VS’s spread across all parts of Groningen. A small percentage of these involve existing

partnerships; more commonly, there have been further divisions into smaller VS communities. Each VS comprises at the very least one or more schools, a childcare institution and/or preschool services. There is frequently also a partner from the youth care or youth health care sector. The school principal is in charge and as such has responsibility for developing the VS. Some VS's are housed in a single building; for others it is a question of working with neighbourhood agencies in close physical proximity.

Now, at the end of 2014, Groningen is at the inception of VS 2.0. The municipality has adopted a budget to achieve these ambitions. A municipal VS board has been established, made up of school and childcare managers and chaired by the alderman. This board has invited VS's, based on a description of the initial situation and problems in the neighbourhood, to develop a targeted plan for the next 2 years in line with the 'pedagogical base' and the pillars: continuity, care and parental involvement. It is no longer the case that every VS will automatically receive funding. The VS's have ownership of their own development and formulate their own policy within the framework set by municipal policy. Principals have presented their plans in plenary to the municipal VS board in the presence of and with the support of their immediate childcare partners. The enthusiasm and commitment to the children in the neighbourhood was very much in evidence. The board has agreed to all the submitted plans in order to maintain and further stimulate the current enthusiasm and momentum.

One consequence, however, has been that some of the plans require improvements with respect to their targeted, outcomes-based approach. Despite a specific request to outline concrete goals and educational outcomes based on an analysis of the baseline situation, this did not always happen. Hence the steering committee's decision to task the Integrated Youth Policy lectorate with developing a self-evaluation tool for systematic use by VS principals. The municipality has also commissioned the Lectorate to examine VS 2.0 in terms of its educational outcomes and processes. This has given rise to systematic cooperation between community-school practice, policy and knowledge.

## **Key Lessons Learned for Others**

What are the most important lessons that 20 years of VS's in Groningen have produced? Eight such lessons are especially important for other leaders to consider.

1. It takes time to develop a successful community school. Collaboration and intrinsic innovation is not something that can be achieved overnight. The fact that this innovation has been implemented in Groningen in a sustainable way is due to the decision by local authorities to employ the VS as a long-term innovation rather than a short-term project. This meant that the schools, in the initial stage at least, could be certain that their efforts would not be cancelled out in a year's time through changes in local policy, thus giving them the confidence to invest in making VS's a reality.

2. It costs money to develop and maintain a community school. While the initial idea was that VS's could be funded from existing financial resources, this proved unrealistic. The municipality of Groningen continues to set aside a specific budget for the VS's, alongside the budgets already received by the collaboration partners themselves. Given the way the VS's in Groningen currently operate, they will continue to require additional investment. We see this same picture reflected in many community schools nationwide. The national community schools survey, carried out every 2 years since 2001, reveals that community schools cost more across all measures than stand-alone schools (de Weerd, Paulussen-Hoogenboom, Slotboom, van der Pol, & Krooneman, 2013; Kruiter et al., 2011; Kruiter, Oomen, van der Grinten, Dubbelman, & Zuidam, 2007; Oberon, 2001, 2002, 2003; Oomen, Kruiter, van der Grinten, van der Linden, & Dubbelman, 2009; Van der Grinten, Kruiter, Oomen, & Hoogeveen, 2005). It goes without saying that this extra money provides additional activities and services that are not on offer at stand-alone schools. In Dutch community schools, it would not currently be possible to provide these additional programmes by simply redeploying staff and resources.
3. The community school demands of all parties and staff, and certainly of the school as the central party, a willingness to go about their work in a different way. The VS was initially 'sold' to primary schools as a time-saver. This would allow the school to focus on its core tasks as it could leave the other pedagogical and social tasks to the other parties. Firstly, the time-saving argument proved incorrect. It takes time to work as part of a partnership, not only for managers but also for teachers. Secondly, teachers no longer felt involved in the VS, which led to schools being only indirectly involved in the VS. Now that the VS's in Groningen have set to work in a different way, 'education' is in the driver's seat. This has made the school the central player in the network.
4. A successful approach is both top-down and bottom-up. This is certainly true in the pioneering phase: a combination of management and direction from above and room for initiatives from below. In the longer term there needs to be less direction from above and more scope for input from the neighbourhood of the VS's. Management needs to be left to the schools, as is happening now in Groningen.
5. It is vital for local authorities to explain clearly from the outset what they want. It is important to avoid misconceptions and to invest in support. This calls for operating and communicating strategically. It may simply boil down to the terminology used. For example, the term 'disadvantage' meets with immediate resistance from parents, who do not wish to send their children to a 'disadvantaged' school.
6. The neighbourhood VS's cannot succeed without management and direction at the implementation level. A municipal project manager with a coordinating role cannot fulfil that function as he or she is too far removed. Nor can a location manager, who primarily coordinates activities, provide clear direction because he/she does not have a mandate from the organisations concerned. In addition to a municipal project manager who is responsible for monitoring in broad terms,

there needs to be a project manager at neighbourhood or school level who is in charge of implementation and whose role is recognized by the participating parties.

7. A successful VS in Groningen has the ‘triple S’ attributes: Small, Smart and Social. This means that the quality of the following aspects is addressed simultaneously: (a) the organisation, (b) implementation, involving a development and learning vision, as well as goals and activities that align with one another, and c) social relationships.
8. The community school calls for leadership that both unites and learns so that all those involved – the alderman, the principal, the professionals – succeed in implementing meaningful interactions with children and parents.

## Promise for the Future

Community schools are not an end in themselves. They are a means by which every child in a complex society is offered every opportunity to prepare themselves for a future that we do not yet know. This means that community schools must give children the time and space to gain qualifications, to become socialized (citizenship education) and to develop as individuals (personal development).

The promise made by community schools is that a close community involving education, childcare, leisure time, support and care is better able to realize that ambition. It is a community supported by moral values and a shared vision of development and learning. It is a community that invites children to participate and to take and bear responsibility. It is a community characterized by newly developed partnerships with parents and by interprofessional cooperation within an enquiring and learning culture in which professionals too are challenged to learn and to continue to develop.

All of this calls for shared ownership. Although community schools as a network must be owners of their own professional learning community and quality development, they do not operate in isolation. The Groningen experience suggests that things work best if community schools are part of a local infrastructure that systematically brings together practice, policy and knowledge for the longer term.

Three principles provide a fitting conclusion. Keep what works well. At the same time, on the basis of sound arguments, dare to experiment with new forms and content. Third, allocate resources for evaluations that focus on outcomes and also provide lessons learned for community school design, implementation and scale-up.

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# Chapter 10

## The Children's Aid Society Community Schools: Research-Based, Results-Oriented

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**Abstract** The Children's Aid Society of New York City arguably is the worldwide leader in the development and advancement of community schools. Today their leaders provide technical assistance and capacity-building supports to colleagues in many nations, and they merit the lion's share of the credit for the growing popularity of community school models. Instead of resting on their laurels, these visionary leaders have continued to pioneer important innovations at the same time that their local work in New York City has continued. This chapter provides important details, including commitment to and programs for early childhood education; special arrangements for place-based designs with shared decision-making opportunities for local residents, especially parents; new imperatives for getting young people ready for postsecondary education and careers; and a more expansive conceptual and operational framework for twenty-first century community schools – which they call Community Schools 2.0. The authors conclude with an overview of the work that lies ahead as they move the community school idea into a more advanced phase, an analysis that reaffirms their international leadership.

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The Children's Aid Society is a recognized national and international leader around the development of community schools, including ones called "full-service community schools." One reason for this acknowledged leadership is that the agency began its design and development work in 1987. In other words, Children's Aid has gained over 20 years of experience with these comprehensive schools, both in New York City and elsewhere. Importantly, Children's Aid is committed to evaluation-driven, continuous quality improvement to achieve desirable results and has invested resources accordingly.

Although no single, short chapter can tell the entire story, this one is structured to provide readers with an overview of the work over two decades. This overview begins with the overall vision for these exceptional schools. Because this vision developed over time in particular contexts as the agency's experience broadened and deepened, we provide a short history of the process. After emphasizing the four main developmental phases for a community school, the analysis turns to several essential community school components (e.g., early childhood programs; expanded learning). Key lessons learned provide a suitable conclusion, enabling readers to learn from this robust experience and also to improve their own designs.

## **Vision and Origins of the Children's Aid Society Model**

The Children's Aid Society defines community schools as a strategy for organizing school and community resources to help students succeed and thrive. This definition, offered by Patricia Harvey while she was Superintendent of the St. Paul (MN) Public Schools, calls attention to several factors: the centrality of school-community partnerships; the intentionality of the partners in organizing their human and financial resources; and a clear orientation toward a shared set of results. In this vision, partners are an important resource in promoting school and student success.

### ***In the Beginning***

Following a 5-year strategic planning process that included an extensive community assessment of Washington Heights, a low-income New York City neighborhood, The Children's Aid Society opened its first community schools in 1992 and 1993. This northern Manhattan neighborhood had a burgeoning immigrant population, one that the agency had identified as critically lacking in social supports and quality public education.

Over the next 22 years, new schools were added in this same neighborhood and also in other underserved areas of the City. As of the 2014–2015 school year there are 22 Children's Aid community schools in Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island.

The concept of the full-service community school was developed as a strategy to respond to dual challenges: the need for additional public schools in a neighborhood with an increasing number of young, immigrant families, and their need for an array of support services. At that time, Children's Aid's leaders envisioned "clustering services and education in one place, right where the students and parents are," to help level the playing field for these new immigrants and facilitate their acclimation to the American culture.

### ***Rationale: Core Values and Main Strategy***

The full-service community school initiative is not just a technical innovation. It is driven by core values. Specifically, equity and bridging the opportunity gap continue to be the base of the Children's Aid community schools. The strategy for developing them has demonstrated positive outcomes in strengthening education and improving the wellbeing of underserved children, families and communities.

In recent years, this strategy has changed in response to new policies and important social responsibilities towards the mentioned population. An illustration of this evolution is the shift from the single-school success model to a cradle-to-career orientation. This new direction requires several schools and other partners to work together so that vulnerable children have opportunities for college and twenty-first century careers.

### **Getting Started with the Development of a Community School**

The startup process can be described as a three-phase strategy (Méndez, 2011). First, identify assets and needs. Next, organize for collective action. Then make it happen by mobilizing partners.

The idea of a lead agency is central to the Children's Aid strategy. Our organization has played this role (described more fully in a subsequent section) in New York City, and it has helped others across the United States and in diverse parts of the world to appreciate the advantages of having a lead partner, who can be a supportive and/or critical friend as needed. The following description of the development of Children's Aid's first community schools provides details.

### **Pioneering the Community School Model and Strategy**

The partnership between the Department of Education and Children's Aid as lead agency began in 1992 at the Salomé Ureña de Henríquez Middle Academies (I.S. 218). It was followed in 1993 by the Ellen Lurie School (P.S. 5). A 5-year planning

process preceded the development of these schools. Much of the groundwork was devoted to thorough assessment and cultivating wide and deep support for this new idea.

In the mid-1980s, Children's Aid top leaders decided that the agency's historic commitment to public education had to change from that of contracted health provider to a partner that would offer comprehensive services and programs to address the needs of the whole child (Dryfoos, Quinn, & Barkin, 2005). An initial priority was sharing the vision with our agency's board of trustees, raising funds and communicating this vision to the City's central Board of Education. With both boards' blessing, Children's Aid leaders then approached the local community. Leaders shared the message with the school district, parent and community leaders, students, elected officers, the teachers' and principals' unions, other area non-profit organizations and the local police precinct, to ensure that all understood the multi-service concept. Major goals included conducting a respectful and inclusive process and dispelling the image of this "big white agency" coming to compete for funding and displace grassroots area organizations, and that of a messianic entity promising "to save this poor community." In essence, the agency marketed the community schools concept as a collaboration emphasizing that all stakeholders had a major role to play. Children's Aid leaders wanted to ensure the strategy was not only understood but welcomed by local residents.

Also at this early stage, Children's Aid reached out to funders. Many were receptive to the idea and later became long-term champions of the strategy.

During the first decade, Children's Aid's leadership took a hands-on approach. They were constantly visible. They aimed to ensure that the model they had in mind was being faithfully implemented, while sending a clear message to all stakeholders, including their own staff, that the community school strategy was a central, long-term undertaking for the agency. We still believe that showing strong organizational commitment, particularly at the beginning stage, is essential for this type of partnership to prosper and last.

One early and fundamental step was the community assessment. This assessment included an examination of demographic and economic data as well as focus groups with several constituents. Analysis of the data and the results of the focus groups became the blueprint for the development of improvement targets prioritized by the participants.

Next, local leaders developed measurable short-and longer-term outcomes. This goal-setting process was also used to help build momentum. Because local constituents are involved in decision-making, this process demonstrates that the development of community school involves working with, not "doing to" local residents. Truly engaging stakeholders in the process early on builds shared commitments and joint ownership, and it sets the stage for compromise when needed.

Put another way, assessment is not merely about obtaining and interpreting data. The assessment period also is an opportunity to build rapport, gain commitments,

and establish momentum. Identifying quick wins, for instance, helps build momentum and credibility. One of the lessons learned is that solid participatory planning definitely pays off.

## **CAS Community Schools: A Strategy, Not a Program**

Co-located and linked community services are standard fare in a growing number of places. What is innovative and special about the Children's Aid strategy?

From the outset, the agency's leaders envisioned a community school as a coherent, learner-centered institution, rather than as a regular school with add-on programs. Put differently, the aim was not to prop up an industrial age school. The aim was to design, implement, test, and disseminate a new institutional design, one flexible enough that would allow tailoring for particular people and places. In other words, the old school would not achieve desired results, so a different kind of school was the best alternative. This alternative design was facilitated by shared leadership.

Thus, shared leadership and shared accountability for results are the keys to this transformation. "Partners, not tenants" was and still is an essential principle.

*Children's Aid community schools are a strategy, not a program.* Everyone involved must work in coordination toward a set of results identified by the school and community together. To be effective the strategy must be comprehensive, coherent and coordinated; last, but not least, the partners must have a long-term commitment to the initiative.

The new type of school we envisioned took to a whole different level the notion of maximizing time and optimizing resources for children and families. More than just a place for students to have something stimulating to do in the afternoons, or have their health needs met, our community schools are a strength-based strategy that integrates services and opportunities for entire families. Oftentimes parents learn alongside their children, thus improving the odds for both. What is more, our agency also provides employment opportunities for parents and former students, a unique feature that has changed the lives of hundreds of residents in our target communities during the last two decades.

A Children's Aid community school is characterized by four main features. These features are extended services, extended hours, extended relationships, and a coherent strategy for having these three features come together in support of children's academic learning and overall school success. Several partners are needed to implement these structures. Like members of an orchestra, these partners need guidance and direction to achieve harmony. Children's Aid has provided this kind of orchestration, essentially pioneering the idea of a lead agency, as a provider and broker.

## ***Lead Agency Structure***

A full-service model encompasses school-based or school-linked comprehensive health services and social services; expanded learning opportunities (during regular school, afterschool, summer, holidays and weekends); early education programs; parent programs; and adult education (Méndez, 2011).

Children's Aid role as a lead agency is essential to our model's success and includes the following important functions.

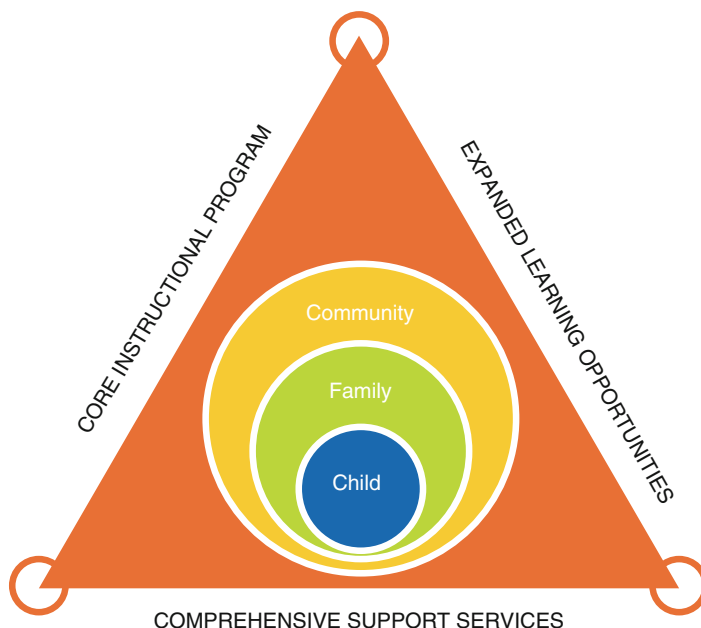
- Broker and coordinator (we consistently promote the need for an integrated approach independently of who is funding specific programs)
- Service provider (because of historical commitments and capacity, but keep in mind that the lead agency need not be a direct service provider)
- Employer and supervisor of the Community School director (to ensure a strong working partnership that allows for the functioning as a team with the common goal of addressing needs/ developing potential of students and families)
- Contributor to whole school change (climate, culture, wellness, attendance, parent/family engagement)
- Resource developer and fiscal agent
- Community schools advocate.

As the lead partner agency, Children's Aid also facilitates the overall process for the school leadership. For example, our agency's administrators at the local level facilitate the assessment, help to identify and assemble partners, spearhead fundraising, and analyze data to prevent redundancy and maximize results. As mentioned, Children's Aid also is the school's "critical and supportive friend" when opportunities, needs and challenges arise.

## ***Core Design Features: A Developmental Triangle***

The foundation for the CAS community schools can be conceptualized as a Developmental Triangle. In this configuration, children are at the center, and they are surrounded by families and communities. The three priorities are a strong core instructional program designed to help all students meet high academic standards; expanded learning opportunities designed to enrich the learning environment for students and their families; and a full range of health, mental health and social services designed to promote children's well-being and remove barriers to learning. Figure 10.1 provides a basic picture.

Note that the three support systems align and connect education and support services. While each is important, their interactions and integration matter most. Managing the corners of the Triangle is the critical piece of coordination – at these junctures the community school ensures a coherent and integrated set of services for children and their families.



**Fig. 10.1** The CAS developmental triangle

A community school coordinator shares lead responsibility for this connective-integrated function, along with the principal. Children's Aid has been a pioneer in envisioning the need for and important responsibilities of one or more coordinators (Dryfoos et al., 2005; Méndez, 2011). Principals simply cannot assume sole leadership for all of a community school's programs and services on top of their regular duties as academic leaders. Working closely together, the coordinator and the principal synchronize the programs and services for the three parts of the triangle.

### *Operational Structure*

Because community schools require unprecedented levels of collaboration, school staff and community partners need significant preparation to function as an effective team. Resource and needs assessment, sharing of data, and developing and scheduling of the range of support services and programs are among the issues that the partners have to address early on. Preventable problems arise when these priorities are by-passed.

The lead agency (Children's Aid) facilitates this process by serving as a convener and resource broker or provider. This agency takes charge of joint planning, daily consultation, coordination and collaboration among the many teams and partners,



as well as ongoing advocacy, fundraising and outreach in order to ensure that we achieve the goal of helping children, families and communities to thrive.

Beyond this basic framework, the lead agency emphasizes several specific developmental priorities. The most important ones follow, albeit not in rank order because all are essential (Méndez, 2011).

**Assess Your Core Competencies** In moving from vision to initial implementation, it is important to assess and articulate the skills and expertise that each partner should bring to the work. This will enable the team to identify gaps, manage expectations and gauge everyone's capacity for the different aspects of the work at hand.

**Start Small and Build Gradually** You needn't open a full-scale community school or launch a multi-school system. Partners should consider starting small. For example, start with an after-school program or a family resource center. Later, add counseling and maybe parenting workshops and, eventually, a health clinic.

**Plan Programs and Negotiate Space** Your needs and resource assessment should be the blueprint for designing program, services and operations. Space is usually a luxury in any school and is likely to become one of the biggest points of tension. Principals and their partners ought to keep in mind that space allocation should respond to programmatic needs. For instance, if a Family Room (or Family Resource Center) is a priority, the dedicated space for it should be accessible and clearly visible. This sends a welcoming message to parents and families. Such a family room or center won't have the desired effect if it's hidden in the basement.

**Keep Building Your Team's Capacity** It is a challenge for busy practitioners to keep up with daily advances in knowledge about education and youth development, but this is a necessity. Building in time for staff development is essential. Also, working in partnership requires ongoing attention to the refinement of relationship-building and group problem-solving.

**Create the Infrastructure You Need as the Work Develops** As you develop one, and then several, community schools, you will find that you need to develop supportive infrastructure. Our advice is to let form follow function. In other words, let the needs of your community schools and the specific strengths of your local circumstances inform your decisions. Children's Aid built its portfolio of community schools gradually and created its supportive infrastructure over time.

**Assess Your Results** Even at the early stages of developing community schools, many initiatives start this work by thinking through their logic model or theory of change – that is, their planning team comes to an agreement about why and how particular inputs (new supports, services and opportunities) will result in specific outcomes for students and families. Coming to a consensus about these causal links will help you decide what data you will need to collect and whether or not you want to hire a third-party evaluator to assist in the processes of assessing your results.

## Community Schools' Developmental Stages

Children's Aid has identified four stages in the development of community schools: Exploring, emerging, maturing, and excelling (Méndez, 2011). Each is defined next.

The **Exploring** stage begins with discontent about the current way a school operates and desires to improve or change it. This stage is marked by creative large-scale thinking, high energy, optimism and a perhaps a certain amount of "if only" dreaming. Ultimately these explorations will yield the school's vision.

The **Emerging** stage typically takes 2 years. It is characterized by a commitment to jump in and do something. An assessment helps determine initial program design. As a shared vision and clearly defined goals emerge, some of the groundwork is laid. A decision is made to start the transformation of a school or schools by introducing some services, securing initial funding and establishing partnerships. The success of this stage is based on a shared commitment to the vision and goals, clear communication around roles and responsibilities, dynamic responsiveness to documented needs – and taking time for recognition and celebration.

The **Maturing** stage is a steady, intentional progress toward the school's goals and the achievement of your guiding vision. The community school begins functioning better: service utilization increases and improves, relationships between the school and its community partners deepen, and the working relationship becomes more natural as all partners come to realize that this work requires continuous and significant effort. At the same time, the vision becomes progressively clearer and it is easier to garner greater internal and external support for it.

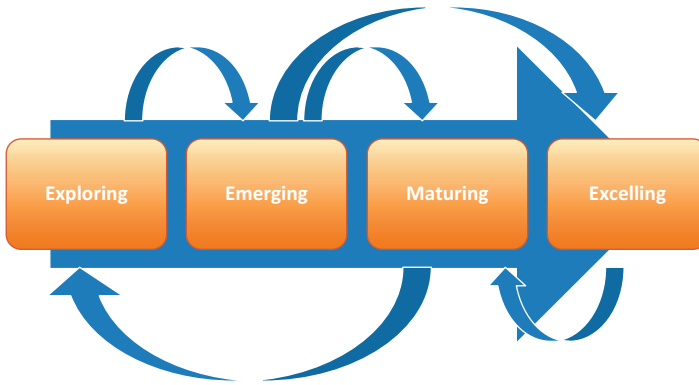
At the **Excelling** stage, quality programs are being implemented and fully integrated into the fabric of the school. Ideally, a school culture has developed that focuses on addressing the needs of the whole child, has increased parent involvement and has established strong relationships within the school, community and school district. The entire school staff values the partnerships that have helped transform the school.

It is important to emphasize that this four-phase process is non-linear. That is, each phase influences and is influenced by the others. Figure 10.2 illustrates this developmental process.

As this figure indicates, a simple checklist does not drive the work of developing, implementing and continuously improving a community school. This work is an organic process structured by developmental milestones and described with the four phases above.

Put differently, the formative period of a community school is an adaptive strategy because outside circumstances and actors may often alter this process. One key to success is to remain committed to the overall vision, while not running away when the first, or second, or third challenge comes by.

Another key to success is to maintain integrity of what a community school is, prioritizes, offers and does. Granting variability among community schools, in the Children's Aid model there are core priorities. While each is important, it is crucial



**Fig. 10.2** Developmental stages for a new community school

to emphasize their relationships, aiming for a mutually beneficial synergy that leads to desired results. These core priorities are described in the several sections that follow.

## A Core Priority for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschool Children

Children's Aid has implemented school-based Early Childhood Programs in five of our New York City community schools, four in Manhattan and one in the South Bronx. Designed as a partnership between the city's Department of Education and Children's Aid, this collaboration targets low-income expectant families, families with newborns and families with children up to 5 years of age. The population is comprised of mostly Latino immigrants, with a growing number of recent arrivals from Africa.

The initiative began in 1994. Since then, the need for such a project has been confirmed through experience and evaluation. For example, Children's Aid leaders have gained deep insights into how a program for pregnant women and children through age five, often called a Zero to Five Program (0–5), can be effectively implemented within a public school. Today there is an extensive waiting list because of the excellent reputation of the program.

The Children's Aid 0–5 model connects two federally funded programs – Early Head Start (expectant families to age three) and Head Start (ages 3–5). In turn, these two connected initiatives are joined with privately funded initiatives to provide quality comprehensive educational, health and social services to families and their children. The program also includes on-site intensive intervention for children with special needs. We assess all children within 45 days of entering the program.

Parents enrolling during pregnancy know they are making a 5-year commitment within a public school before their children enter kindergarten. The Zero to Three

(0–3) and the Three to Five (3–5) programs include home visits, classroom visits, family orientations and individual teacher meetings. Because of this early engagement with the school, the children and their families seamlessly transition from 0–3 to 3–5 programs and from there to kindergarten, which is often right across the hallway. Another benefit is that parents are known to become leaders during elementary school and beyond.

During the first 3 years, families participate in an intensive home-based intervention model. They receive a minimum of three 90-min home visits a month, and attend weekly 2-h, age-specific small groups held in the school. The teachers who conduct home visits lead their particular parent-child groups. There are a minimum of 32 home visits and 45 interactions within a year; thus, over the 3 years of Early Head Start, families participate in a minimum of 96 home visits and 135 parent-child group interactions.

Services for expectant families are a major component. Pregnant women receive home visits and participate in parent-child interactions to expose them to best practices, child development and finding peer support. During the eighth month, they are assigned a doula, trained to provide continuous emotional support during labor and childbirth; doulas also conduct prenatal home visits during the eighth month, to help plan for the delivery and to schedule supportive post-partum visits. The program provides mental health, parent involvement and health services.

Over the last 10 years, the Early Childhood Department has conducted and been involved in multiple research studies to evaluate the influence of our programs; results have been consistently positive. For example: The Children's Aids relationship-based Early Head Start program improves children's developmental outcomes, decreases maternal levels of depression and bolsters interactive mother-child play. Talk & Play (a Children's Aid Early Head Start enhancement program in which parent-child pairs in need of extra support meet individually with program instructors) has a positive impact on children's language growth and parents' confidence. Parent involvement in a Head Start program located in a Children's Aid community school was positively associated with parents' later involvement in their children's learning in the elementary school years and beyond. Children's Aid's Head Start programming that builds on parents' strengths is associated with positive literacy outcomes for children. Our family literacy activities support parents' ability to track their children's learning and set the foundation for future home literacy routines.

## **Core Component 2: Expanded Learning Opportunities**

Children's Aid schools expanded learning (ELOs) programs provide students with a spectrum of life-enriching experiences that they would not otherwise have. Early exposure to the arts, athletics, civic engagement, career exploration, social justice and mentoring opportunities brings awareness and expands their possibilities. We want young people and their families to know the prospects available to them,

including careers as engineers, anesthesiologists, pharmacists, community developers, architects, artists, politicians and myriad other possibilities. In some ways, this is a constant work in progress. It requires a long-term commitment oriented toward getting young people ready for life. Key priorities include offering early, solid college preparation and career-focused, real world learning opportunities as well as by identifying pathways from secondary school into certificate or college programs.

We pay attention to student engagement and to making the best use of community resources in the process. Both equity and excellence demand this approach.

ELOs provide young people with the breadth and depth of rich learning experiences they need to be well-rounded and hopeful about their futures.

Programs are available during-school, after school, summers, weekends, and on holidays. Currently the typical school day is designed with a focus on helping youth acquire grade level concepts and skills in the core academic subjects- reading, writing, math, science and social studies. We strive to provide experiences to bridge in-school and out-of-school learning. Figure 10.3 provides an overview of our comprehensive approach.

Our vision for ELOs involves more than delivering after-school or summer enrichment programming. Two related themes capture this work: *Enrichment* and *exploration*. While the regular school day focus on ensuring youth have mastered the skills and concepts of their grade level standards, our task is finding opportunities to deepen learning during those hours. Expanding learning beyond those core skills and concepts during the out-of-school hours in order to provide youth with more time engaged in learning. Identifying and leveraging the additional time and designing meaningful and potentially transformational experiences for young

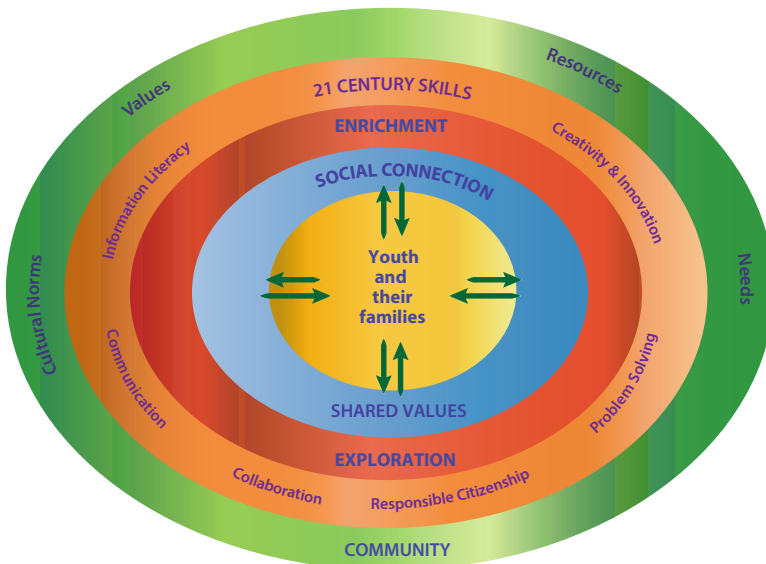


Fig. 10.3 An overview of the Children's Aid ELOs framework

people during that time is the exciting work we take on every day in our schools. We dedicate significant time to planning and implementing ELOs and reflecting on the impact these experiences have on young people's development.

The pressure on teachers and school administrators to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of the students requires us, the partners, to be thoughtful about how we use the time. We are accountable for what impact these experiences have on youth's acquisition and maintenance of academic skills as well as what impact we are having on their development across the cognitive, social, emotional, physical and moral developmental domains.

Young people enroll in our programs in a variety of ways. One alternative is targeted enrollment for specific types of programs based on needs, talents or interests; and often on a first-come-first-served basis. Children's Aid has begun to more closely track our impact on individual youth (particularly our highest need youth). Increasingly, we use academic and anecdotal data from school staff and parents to identify particular students for enrollment in our programs. An example of this is in concerted efforts to ensure that those students who are identified as chronically absent are enrolled in our after school, summer, holiday and weekend programs to build stronger relationships with them and to ensure a connection to the range of services and supports we can make available to them and their families.

Children's Aid extended learning opportunities cover activities from five areas of enrichment and exploration: literacy, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), social emotional learning (e.g. girl power groups, group adventure training, etc.), fitness and nutrition (e.g. group and individual sports, cooking competition, etc.), arts and self-expression (e.g. visual art, music, dance, public speaking/debate, etc.). Youth workers or specialists plan and deliver these kinds of experiences with youth when possible. We often partner with outside organizations to plan and deliver these experiences. For example, some of our most productive partnerships over the years have been with arts organizations, museums and libraries, all of which have educational missions.

### **Component 3: Genuine Parent and Family Engagement and Leadership**

Parents and families were pivotal when the Children's Aid schools began operating in 1992 and still play a central role today. "No parent is expendable" and "Parent engagement is everybody's job" are two mantras that are part of our "blood stream." Programmatic aspects may change but we have used the philosophy behind the strategy consistently. Evaluations and anecdotal evidence show that through the years Children's Aid has been successful in engaging parents and families. This developmental journey has paved the way for the current approach described next.

The Children's Aid Society has long been aware of the importance of engaging parents and caregivers to support positive outcomes for children; parents are their

children's first and most important teacher. The current parent engagement model at our schools is through Education, Communication, and College Awareness. With this model, parents will learn the strategies to support their children's education from cradle to college to career readiness.

With **the education component**, Children's Aid provides parent education on topics such as literacy, brain development (focusing on the executive functions of the brain), and lastly, how to create a college-going environment in the home. The second component of our parent model, **Communication**, refers to intentional structures put in place to promote our programs. This is done through informative brochures, presentations at Parent Teacher Associations/Parent Associations, and program-specific parent orientations to ensure all of our constituents are familiar with and have access to parent classes, workshops, and concrete services. Finally, **College Awareness** engages our parents in what is necessary to prepare their child (from preschool through high school) for college.

Children's Aid partners with parents in a variety of ways: as volunteers, instructors of parent classes, presidents of PTA/PA, and as leaders in their schools and communities. As volunteers, parents assist with parent and adult classes by managing the technology/videography needs of each class, support the school day with supervision of children during lunch and recess, provide hallway monitoring of the middle schools, and assistance with special events that may include setup, decorations, and catering. We also have contracted with parents whose entrepreneurial track resulted in a catering business for special events and educational symposiums.

Parent leaders participate on the School Leadership Teams, safety committees, and meet regularly with the principal to respond to families' needs for knowledge and support of their children's education. They are advocates who travel to Albany (the state capitol) and City Hall to lobby for funding for School Based Health Centers, afterschool, and early childhood programs. Our parent leaders are active in their local school and district government councils to ensure their voices are heard and responded to when they advocate on behalf of educationally sound practices to support their children's academic, social, and emotional learning. Parent leaders advocate for all children in their communities. When parents speak, partners listen. Together parents and professional partners create the environment that is conducive and supportive to children's learning.

Parent and family leadership is important because it creates ownership, accountability and mutual responsibility. For example, if we look at a home as a business, and the parent as the manager/leader of that business, then the structure, routines, norms and values established in that business transcend into a community. The community is the school, church, parks, and neighborhood in general. Parent ownership of their home, community and neighborhood solicits greater expectations from the members of the home to respond similarly to their environment and thus creates an investment in what is deemed "ours."

Significantly, the idea of shared ownership is where the accountability factor comes into play. In our model, we are all responsible for taking care of our home, community, and neighborhood. Parent leadership is central to this idea, and it paves

the way for real positive change to occur one family at a time and neighborhood by neighborhood.

The community and its political leaders play a vital role in supporting parental engagement in Children's Aid schools. In Washington Heights, for example, on a regular basis elected officials declare education as one of their greatest priorities. They consistently attend school graduations, celebrations, and special ceremonies for children and adults to promote higher education and career development for community members.

In the same vein, an area state senator has contributed funding toward the creation of the Children's Aid Ercilia Pepin Parent Leadership Institute (EPPLI) to support parent education and build entrepreneurial skills that lead to self-employment, advocacy and parent leadership. Since its inception in 2007, EPPLI has graduated over 3000 parents. Approximately 400 parents graduated from the program across five schools in Washington Heights and one in East Harlem in 2013.

Children's Aid supports the schools' parent/family engagement by co-constructing goals and plans of action to achieve them. Our agency's representatives help all stakeholders with two important priorities. One is combining (i.e., "braiding" and "blending") funds so that programs and services are adequately resourced. The other is bringing in other partners, which allows us to develop additional activities that respond to the needs of each school.

We measure parent and family engagement in a number of ways. Some are specifically related to parents' support of their children's educational goals – such as attending parent/teacher conferences. Another measure has been the countless parents who assumed leadership positions in our Early Childhood program's Policy Council and then assumed leadership positions in the schools' PTA and District Community Education Council (CEC). As Members of the CEC, parents are at the table with district-wide school leaders not only voicing their concerns, but more importantly making recommendations for the type of educational reform that will improve the school environment and encourage greater parental engagement and participation in school-wide decisions. They also actively participate in schools' leadership teams as the voice of their peers. Parents who attend Children's Aid classes received pre-and post-tests to gauge the level of learning attained. In the last 2 years, approximately 25 parents have gone on to pursue higher education.

Additionally, there are unexpected and intangible measures of success. For example, groups of our parents have traveled to India, China, Japan and several European countries (something that perhaps many of them never dared to dream before) after learning to manage their budget at our financial literacy programs.



## **Core Component 4: Services for Students and Families to Address Barriers to Learning and Healthy Development**

Healthier children make better students, experts agree (Basch, 2010). However, several barriers prevent children from being the healthiest they can be, particularly in underserved communities. Low health literacy, language barriers, a complex health care system, lack of health insurance, lack of financial resources – along with the inability to schedule appointments quickly, or during convenient hours, and long waiting times – affect parents' ability, and sometimes willingness, to seek care for their children.

### ***School-Based Health Centers***

School-based health centers (SBHC) address all of these hurdles by bringing comprehensive primary health care to children where they are and when they need it. SBHCs are considered as one of the most effective ways to provide primary and preventive health care to children and youth. For hundreds of underserved children in New York City, our SBHCs are their first and only access to health care. School health services are central to our community schools strategy. Some are school-based, while others are housed in the community and are linked to schools.

Children's Aid operates four SBHCs in Manhattan and one in Staten Island as well as two mental health clinics in our schools in the Bronx. The Bronx location includes a school-linked model for medical and dental care at our Bronx Family Center, which is strategically located nearby all the schools. Among the services delivered in our school-based health centers are: complete physical exams, immunizations, laboratory tests, acute care (asthma, diabetes, etc.), first aid, reproductive health, counseling and mental health services and dental care.

By connecting a caring team of nurse practitioners, physicians, medical and office assistants, social workers, psychiatrists, dentists, dental assistants, dental hygienists, health educators, and health escorts to the school building, we not only help eliminate the above-mentioned barriers, but also promote an environment where students and their parents can become better health care consumers, by accessing preventive, rather than emergency, care. This proactive approach prevents health issues from becoming acute concerns in the home, emergency room or community. As a result, youngsters miss fewer school days, parents miss fewer days at work and the public health care system saves money.

Also, easy access to providers allows parents and children to develop a different type of relationship with the health care establishment, becoming comfortable enough to ask questions of their physicians, and less apprehensive about medical, mental and dental health care.

The communities we support struggle with a lack of access to health care, so through Children's Aid Health Care Access Program, the SBHCs connect parents of

uninsured children to enrollment counselors who assist them in applying for public health insurance and help them navigate the system outside of the school building, once they obtain insurance.

### ***Emphasizing Prevention***

Prevention is another key role of SBHCs. The statistics about obesity, for instance, are disturbing – in NYC, nearly half of public elementary school students are overweight and 1 in 5 is obese. In the Washington Heights section of Upper Manhattan, where many of our schools are located, 47 % of children are overweight or obese. For us these statistics are more than numbers – they represent the children we know and serve, just like their families and teachers, we want to see them succeed and thrive.

Go!Healthy is an agency-wide nutrition program. It starts by enrolling 0–5 old children and their parents in GoKids, a childhood anti-obesity program, and goes up to high school when older students become part of GoChefs, a healthy cooking, culturally sensitive program, that culminates with Children's Aid version of the Iron Chef.

Across our schools, the SBHCs serve over 90 % of students, generating over 30,000 visits a year, preventing costly hospitalizations and hundreds of visits to the emergency room. Our SBHCs also play a central role in fighting health emergency threats such as the H1N1 epidemic a few years ago by providing accurate information and administering hundreds of vaccines.

### **Results to Date from Children's Aid Community Schools**

Over the past 20 years, the community schools field has produced important evidence of success through a variety of studies that have examined both academic and non-academic results. The Children's Aid Society commissioned one of the earliest and longest-term studies in 1993 – a 6-year study conducted by a collaborative team from Fordham University's Schools of Education and Social Services.

Since then, we have commissioned additional third-party evaluations conducted by the Education Development Center, ActKnowledge and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Our intent has been to document multiple results for youth, families and schools – results that emanate directly from our efforts to align our resources with the schools' core instructional programs, to enrich the learning environment of the school and to reduce barriers to student learning and family well-being. The following outcomes are the results of studies conducted from 1993 to 2013:

- Higher academic performance
- Higher student attendance

- Higher teacher attendance
- Better school climate
- Higher levels of parent involvement across grades
- Improved mental and physical health of students
- Positive youth development (Martinez & Hayes, 2013).

## **Measuring Success, Monitoring Progress and Planning Improvements**

Like lead agencies and school systems worldwide, Children's Aid has had to address two kinds of questions. How do you monitor a complex, pioneering innovation and produce data that enable continuous improvement and knowledge generation? And, how do you define success for a strategy as complex as the one we have described?

We are currently taking into account four priorities: (1) the success of our partner schools; (2) evaluations of program quality; (3) determining our impact by tracking specific indicators of positive outcomes; and (4) measuring our total impact on the fields of community schools and youth development in the United States and elsewhere.

### ***Success of the Partner Schools***

Children's Aid decided to hold ourselves accountable for the success of our partner schools based on what in the United States is known as a "bottom-line indicator." Three are especially important: Student academic achievement, parent engagement, and school climate.

### ***Evaluating Quality***

Children's Aid Society uses traditional measures of program quality including program observations and youth and parent surveys. In addition to tools we've created or selected on our own to assess program quality, like our Supervisory "look for" and the Out-of-school time (OST) Observation Instrument created by Policy Studies Associates, our funders very often use their own tools for evaluating program quality which we also try align our tools with for consistency. All of these tools together provide the opportunity for a deeper look at the quality of program implementation and delivery.

## ***Determining Impact***

As an agency, we have committed to using a range of measures to track youth and family outcomes across our organization in four main areas: Education, Social Emotional Development, Family and Home, and Health. For example, this year (2014) we are tracking the following types of indicators:

- Number of students who achieve 95 % or better attendance
- Number of students at grade level standards in literacy
- Number of students at grade level standards in numeracy
- Number of students improving in identified intervention areas
- Number of students who successfully complete first year of high school
- Number of students promoted at the end of the year
- Number of students who demonstrate appropriate social emotional skills.

## ***Impact on the Large Field of Community Schools and Youth Development***

While CAS always has been an innovator and a local public policy voice for the communities we serve, increasingly we are influencing state, national, and international policy.

Documenting our work and showing our schools to thousands of colleagues, policy-makers, education and social service leaders, funders, the media and other professionals, has helped expand and solidify the community school field in the United States and abroad.

## ***Social Return on Investment (SROI) of Community Schools***

A study of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of Community Schools (Martinez & Hayes, 2013), offers strong evidence of the strategy's impact on children, families and communities. Children's Aid National Center for Community Schools and The Finance Project supported by the W. Kellogg Foundation conducted the study to determine the SROI of two of our full-service community schools, P. S. 5 and the Salomé Ureña de Henríquez Campus in Washington Heights. The study showed that every dollar invested in the schools produced a \$10.30 (P.S. 5) and \$14.80 (Salomé Ureña) return in social value.

## What’s Next? Community Schools 2.0

Given our decision to hold ourselves even more accountable for the impact of our integrated services and supports on the schools, we engaged in a strategic planning process with a focus on strengthening our current community schools work through five “strategic shifts”:

Shift	Descriptors of shift
<b><i>Whole school transformations</i></b>	Partnerships oriented around required conditions and commitments, formalized with partnership agreements
	Consistent focus on whole school issues where partners can really make a difference (e.g. attendance, wellness, school climate)
	Moving from program-centered to child-centered designs
	Support overall school progress over time versus stand-alone or “one-shot programs”
	Prioritize measurable and observable positive impact on school culture and climate
<b><i>Teacher and support staff collaborations</i></b>	Support staff capacity to positively impact outcomes with historically under-served students – e.g. English language learners; students with special needs; ones whose promotion to the next grade level is in doubt; disconnected students; child welfare involved students; and chronically absent students
	Develop specific school-based practices and processes in support of these different kinds of students
<b><i>Partnership coordination</i></b>	Clarify and specify more the Community School Director’s role as conductor of orchestra
	Drive agency expertise, tools and resources deeper into schools to impact results all way to child level – e.g. early childhood, health services, child welfare, NCCS, Carrera Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program
	Leverage community resources to support students’ needs – e.g. (neighborhood advocacy AND service delivery); right partners, doing right work with the right students at the right time
<b><i>Shared governance/leadership</i></b>	Partnership agreements with role on school leadership teams (e.g. cabinets) and governance bodies (e.g. school-community boards)
	Deputy Directors, Division Director, Executive Team relationship building with network leaders, superintendents, parent, teacher union leaders, and city education department stakeholders in support of strategy in individual schools

(continued)

Shift	Descriptors of shift
<b><i>Data-driven decision-making</i></b>	From quantity of programs and services to quality and impact
	School-based staff, services and other resources based on students’ needs and school strategy
	Tools and processes to support tracking of outcomes at child, cohort and school-wide levels
	Build all staff capacity to interpret data and use them; and make adjustments as needed based on results

These five shifts derive in part from some powerful lessons we have learned over 23 years.

This chapter concludes with 10 examples, together with twin reminders: First, our learning is not done. Second, needs for adaptive learning and lesson drawing are integral in the development of community schools.

## **Leadership for Replication and Scale-Up**

### ***International Technical Assistance and Dissemination***

In response to widespread interest in its schools, in 1994 Children’s Aid founded the National Technical Assistance Center for Community Schools [now the [National Center for Community Schools \(NCCS\)](#)], to help others implement the strategy. Delegations of leaders, practitioners and government representatives from across the United States and 76 countries have participated in study visits to the Center and have seen the community schools in action. Children’s Aid is also an active member of the International Centre of Excellence for Community Schools, based in England. In all such initiatives, the agency leaders work to unify efforts across the globe and to promulgate standards of best practice in community schools, regardless of locale.

### ***A National Organization for Advocacy, Networking, and Dissemination: The Coalition for Community Schools in the USA***

In 1997, Children’s Aid became one of the three founding partners of [the Coalition for Community Schools](#). The Coalition is an alliance of national, state and local organizations. It helps build awareness and understanding of community schools, advocates for supportive public policies and helps promote research and disseminate knowledge among its members and other organizations.

Children's Aid remains one of the most active and strongest supporters of this coalition. Advocacy is essential to the sustainability of the strategy; at the local, state and national levels, community schools are experiencing growing momentum.

## **In Conclusion: Key Lessons Learned**

1. A solid, inclusive and respectful planning process pays off. There is no substitute for joint planning and conducting a thorough assessment.
2. It's all about relationships; everything has to be negotiated all the time.
3. Set realistic expectations and do not over-promise. It is better to under-promise and over-deliver.
4. Shared leadership, shared responsibility, and shared accountability are essential – all partners must be on board, if, for instance, the principal is not, the effort may collapse.
5. Lead agencies and other school partners must be ready to demonstrate their value. Being a lead partner enriches your practice: community-based organizations often have competencies and relationships that can add value to the schools, and there's also a great deal to learn from other professionals who work with the school's children and families.
6. Community schools involve getting the right partners doing the right thing with the right students and employing systems thinking so that everyone can see how the parts fit together.
7. Advocacy and lobbying must be ongoing (not only about Community schools per se but about key components – because these may be excellent entry points to these schools).
8. Be system-minded from the start, i.e., rely on systems change frameworks.
9. Visibility gained through deliberate social marketing and promotion is key because it helps sustainability. In other words, show your work, keep evaluating it, and market good results.
10. Technical assistance is often helpful and even essential because typically community schools tend to be new to everyone.

The last lesson that we like to share is a phrase popularized by Martin Blank, Director of the Coalition for Community Schools and the Institute for educational leadership. It is not an empty slogan; it should be a job requirement. For community schools to work, the partners have to have the word “yes” written in their hearts!

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# Chapter 11

## From School to Children's Community: The Development of Manchester Communication Academy, England

Alan Dyson, Kirstin Kerr, Lynne Heath, and Patsy Hodson

**Abstract** This chapter describes a collaborative initiative undertaken by the authors and other local leaders to develop a new design for a secondary school. The Manchester Communication Academy (MCA) has been designed to improve outcomes for children, families and community groups in one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city of Manchester, England. The authors capture the distinctive features of what they call a work in progress. They illuminate both the underlying vision about how schools can become involved in tackling the interconnected problems of social and educational disadvantage as well as the architecture and more operational characteristics of this approach. Although young in its implementation and demonstration of impacts, MCA already provides an advanced exemplar for new institutional designs. MCA provides a coherent and comprehensive strategy for tackling disadvantage as part of a wide-ranging set of partnerships with community agencies and representatives. Significantly, MCA represents a private sector investment in the development of new school designs, and it may be a harbinger for future developments in England and other nations because of the manifest needs of businesses and corporations for a better prepared, healthy workforce. Overall MCA moves the international field beyond the additive model of earlier community schools, i.e., a model characterized by what can be called “one at a time program and service development.” Because MCA also is charged with teacher education responsibilities, it implicitly sends a strong message to higher education institutes about needs for innovation in preservice education. Last, but not least, MCA is an exemplar for area-based initiatives – complex designs that are tailor-made for particular populations in special, challenging locales. These new area-based initiatives provide important reminders about the importance of the local

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context and the manifest dangers of scripted implementation of exemplars developed elsewhere.

**Keywords** Area-based initiative • Community school • Urban renewal • Theory of change • Cradle-to-career pipelines • Institutional design • Educational equity

## Introduction

This chapter explores the innovative approach taken by one school – Manchester Communication Academy (MCA) – to improving outcomes for children, families and community groups in one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city of Manchester, and indeed, in England. It argues that MCA embodies new thinking about how schools can become involved in tackling the interlinked problems of social and educational disadvantage. MCA is a ‘community’ school in that it is concerned not only with the academic needs of its students but with their personal and social development and with the development of the families and communities within which they live. However, unlike many community schools in the past, it does not seek simply to surround its traditional academic work with a few additional activities and services. Instead, it seeks to develop a coherent and comprehensive strategy for tackling disadvantage, and to do so as part of a wide-ranging partnership of community agencies and representatives. MCA’s efforts in this direction raise fundamental questions about the role of schools and the purposes of schooling in areas of social disadvantage – questions that have resonance well beyond the boundaries of the city where it is located.

In this chapter, we try to capture the distinctive features of what is being attempted at MCA. The evidence on which the chapter draws has been generated in the course of a research partnership between the academy and researchers in the Centre for Equity in Education at the University of Manchester. This partnership was established shortly after the academy opened in 2010 and has taken a number of forms since then. University researchers have worked with the academy on the development of its community strategy, the vice principal has undertaken doctoral research at the university, a second doctoral researcher has been ‘embedded’ in the academy and, latterly, there has been substantial collaboration on the development and evaluation – described below – of a ‘Children’s Community’ based around the academy. During the course of these activities, the university team has had access to documentation from the academy, to field notes from meetings and events, to interview data with academy staff, students, community agency representatives and local residents, and to the data and findings from the doctoral studies. However, the relationship between the university and academy is more than that of researcher and researched. Rather, it is a ‘critical friendship’ in which both parties seek to support each other’s work, but believe that they do so best by offering an independent and – where necessary – critical perspective. This chapter, therefore, offers a distinctive

'insider' perspective on the academy, but sets this in a wider perspective of critical scholarship. It is in this spirit that the chapter is co-authored by the leaders of the academy and the leaders of the university team.

With this critical perspective in mind, we avoid here any claims that MCA's story is one of unqualified success. What is being attempted there is still very much a work in progress. While there have been important impacts and achievements, much remains to develop, and the thorough evaluation of its efforts is only just beginning. What matters about the academy, however, is the thinking about schooling and disadvantage – the 'vision' – which its efforts embody and the possibilities which that vision illuminates.

## The Vision

Located in Collyhurst, an inner suburb of one of the largest cities in the UK, MCA opened in September 2010, following a 2 year planning period, as a new school for students aged 11–19. Its status as an 'academy' is integral to its story. Academies in England operate as independent state-funded schools, sitting outside local government arrangements and, often led instead by a sponsoring organisation. In MCA's case, the lead sponsor is British Telecom (BT), one of the biggest employers in Manchester and a major force in the telecommunications industry in the UK (British Telecom, 2013). Academies have greater control than most other schools over their finances, curriculum and admissions processes, and over pay and conditions for teachers. This high level of control means that decisions which might in many countries – and even in the case of many English schools – be made by the national ministry of education or by local administrations are made instead at school level.

At MCA, multiple stakeholders are involved in this school-level decision-making. Overall responsibility rests with the academy's governing body, made up of representatives of BT, other sponsors (including the city council), parents and others who are able to support the academy's development. Their deliberations are informed by widespread consultation with students, teachers, community members and community agencies. Moreover, although the national ministry of education (currently known as the Department for Education) allows schools considerable autonomy, it monitors them closely through Ofsted, the national schools inspectorate, and can intervene directly where it judges this to be necessary (DfEE, 1997, 2000). In the set-up phase of new academies in particular, the national ministry tends to be heavily involved. Added to this, there is a long tradition in English schools that principals play a key role in both shaping and delivering overall strategy. In academies particularly, where sponsors may lack educational experience, they and their senior staff supply the detailed educational knowledge on which governors depend.

All of this creates a complex decision-making system in which different interests and levels of experience are represented. The potential for confusion and conflict is, of course, ever-present. In schools serving disadvantaged areas generally, there is a

risk that governors may seek to override the professional judgment of principals, while principals in their turn may use their monopoly of professional knowledge to mislead governors (Dean, Dyson, Gallannaugh, Howes, & Raffo, 2007). These risks are potentially even greater in academies where sponsors' reputations are at stake yet their expertise lies outside the field of education. However, there is also potential for there to be an extremely productive synergy between the different interests and kinds of expertise represented in the decision-making process. This does indeed appear to have been the case at MCA. The lead sponsor has been able to bring to bear a combination of business expertise with an established commitment to social responsibility, and this has interacted positively with the educational expertise of the local authority as co-sponsor and, above all, the leadership of an experienced principal and a dynamic school staff. Although in general terms, the principal and her team are responsible for operational matters and the governors for strategy and oversight, this simplifies the interactions amongst the multiple stakeholders in the academy. For this reason, we tend to refer in this chapter to 'MCA' as a single decision-making entity, though readers would do well to remember the complex processes which this shorthand conceals.

MCA, acting as a single entity in this sense, has deliberately chosen to use its freedoms to move beyond the immediate focus on raising children's levels of measured attainment which, as in many other countries, schools in England are required to prioritise (Burgess, 2013). Instead, it has explicitly positioned itself as:

- being *with* and *for* the community, as encapsulated in its motto 'with you... for you... about you...'. Rather than setting out from a professional perspective to 'fix' the community's 'deficits', MCA has explicitly set out to champion its local neighbourhood. It has taken the view that Collyhurst has a wide range of assets and that MCA's role is to support the community to build on these assets and to enable others outside the community to view it positively.
- acting on a broad and lifelong understanding of education and wellbeing for students, their families and the community as a whole. While MCA sees educational attainment as essential, it does not treat this as an end in itself. Rather, it sees attainment as one element in a wider programme of activity to promote resilience, healthy lifestyles and workplace skills, and ultimately improve life chances.
- working in partnership with other schools, services and voluntary and community sector organisations to realise this broad vision of education and wellbeing. Instead of being motivated primarily by an instrumental concern on the part of any sector or organisation to meet its own performance targets, MCA's partnerships have been developed by identifying and acting on shared priorities for the community.

In the following sections, we discuss the circumstances which have enabled MCA to pursue this vision, and detail how this is being operationalised through developments including a thematic curriculum structure, an extensive programme of out-of-hours activities for students and community members, and wide ranging partnerships with other organisations. In particular, we argue that MCA is going

beyond not only a narrowly attainment-focused model of what schools are and are for, but also beyond the various forms of 'full service' and 'community' schools which rely on adding child, family and community services to their core academic functions (Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011). Instead, it is trying to create an entirely new model of how schools can contribute to the well-being of the areas and populations they serve. As such, it has implications which go beyond its immediate locality and which may offer a way forward for schools serving disadvantaged communities in many parts of the world.

## **In the Beginning**

MCA's origins lie in the distinctive national policy context of the years leading up to its opening in September 2010. From 1997 to 2010, a series of (broadly centre-left) Labour governments became particularly concerned that England, although affluent by international standards, is also beset by multiple inequalities, many of which are associated with poverty and other forms of economically-related disadvantage (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010). These inequalities are apparent in the experiences, opportunities and outcomes available to different social groups and also often have a significant spatial dimension. Put simply, people who live in some places – and particularly in poor, de-industrialised towns and inner city neighbourhoods – do worse than their peers who live elsewhere, and these patterns of disadvantage remain remarkably stable over time (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008; Dorling & Pritchard, 2010). Collyhurst is one such place. For instance:

- The proportion of Collyhurst residents who are of retirement age is above the city of Manchester average and levels of economic activity are lower than the city average.
- The area suffers from high levels of unemployment, particularly amongst the 16–24 year old age group. In some [parts of Collyhurst] less than 40 % of residents of working age are in employment.
- 54 % of the working population are currently claiming a key benefit, compared with 20 % in Greater Manchester and 15 % nationally.
- There are high rates of limiting long-term illness – 34 % which is double the national average – and high rates of teenage pregnancy.
- The All-Age All-Cause Mortality rate is almost twice the England average. (Data from the English Indices of Deprivation 2010, cited in MCA school documentation)

The Labour governments were also particularly concerned that patterns of social inequality tend to be reflected in, and compounded by, educational inequalities (Lupton, 2006). This relationship continues to the present. For instance, a recent report from an inequalities monitoring programme in England shows substantial gaps, of around 15–20 %, between the proportion of children from poorer homes

doing well on entry to school and at the end of statutory schooling and their peers from less disadvantaged homes (Institute of Health Equity Strategic Review of Health Inequalities Post 2010, 2014). Again, these trends are reflected in data for Collyhurst. For example, in the 2012–2013 academic year – before, therefore, MCA had begun to have an impact – the percentage of students from the area who achieved at or above national benchmarks in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exam in the 2012–2013 academic year – was 36 %, compared to 53 % in Manchester and 61 % nationally (ONS, 2014).

In response to persistent problems of this kind, the Labour governments launched a wide range of strategies to tackle interrelated economic, educational and social disadvantages. Many different kinds of interventions were introduced to address different aspects of disadvantage, with an understanding that these needed to be brought together in some coherent form to be maximally effective. In addition, the poorest places – such as Collyhurst – were seen to need special attention in order to improve neighbourhood outcomes, leading to the launch of a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Social Exclusion Unit 1998). This called for services to be ‘joined-up’ at a local level so they could mirror the complexity of the problems to be tackled (National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, 2000). This emphasis on joining-up was carried through to child- and family-focused services, through the development of the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2003). This strengthened the organisational links between services and created a shared outcomes framework which focused on five domains of child well-being: staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, being healthy, and achieving economic well-being.

In line with these shifts, Labour also recognised that schools in the poorest areas were at risk of being overwhelmed by challenges stemming from their students’ family and neighbourhood contexts. Schools were therefore also expected to offer a wide range of educational and non-educational services to students, families and local residents. The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal proposed that schools in poorer areas should develop into ‘schools plus’ (DfEE, 1999), offering family support services, out-of-hours learning, adult education, family learning and health services. This was followed by a number of pilot schemes which led to a government requirement for all schools to offer access to a full range of ‘extended services’ by 2010 (DfES, 2005).

In parallel with these moves to broaden schools’ roles, the Labour governments were also greatly concerned with the role of education in developing human capital and driving economic growth, seeing this as essential to tackling poverty and economic disadvantage. Accordingly, they invested heavily in a raft of measures to improve school performance and drive up children’s attainments, with a punitive inspection regime being used to ensure progress. Among the improvement measures introduced were a wide range of (often short-term, single-issue) interventions, targeting children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Antoniou, Dyson, & Raffo, 2012). In 2003, Labour also opened the first academies as a response to its concern that ineffective local governance arrangements were contributing to the poor performance of schools in disadvantaged areas. The academies programme marked a radical structural change in English education, because it

allowed schools to be taken out of local authority (LA) control and placed in the hands of a 'sponsor'. These sponsors might be businesses, or philanthropic, faith, or voluntary organisations, which were seen as able to bring new ideas, and leverage new resources, for tackling educational disadvantage.

Academies had favourable resourcing, with government expecting sponsors to make an initial £2million, not-for-profit, investment. In many cases, academies also benefitted from substantial rebuilding or, as at MCA, from completely new state-of-the-art buildings designed to promote innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The potential for innovation was further increased by allowing academies the greater freedoms over curriculum, admissions processes, and conditions for teachers to which we referred above – though they were still subject to inspection, and where they replaced 'failing' schools, were expected to make rapid gains in attainment.

As this brief overview indicates, the context in which MCA was planned and launched was both rich in possibilities, but also turbulent and oftentimes contradictory. For instance, the recognition of the need to join-up services and to support schools to develop extended practices, created new possibilities for co-ordinated action to address disadvantage. However, the emphasis on the performance of *individual* schools and services cut across this. Similarly, the removal of academies from local control made it difficult to ensure they would act in the local interest, rather than their own institutional interest – a situation which has since proved highly controversial (Gunter, 2011; Husbands, Gilbert, Francis, & Wigdortz, 2013).

During its early development MCA had, therefore, not only to find ways to capitalise on the opportunities available, but also to navigate the tensions and challenges inherent in this complex environment. Not least, it had quickly to establish that it was not operating as a 'lone wolf' seeking to further its institutional interests, but was seeking to work with and for Collyhurst community and to develop partnerships to that end.

## Early Development

### *Background*

Greater Manchester is a large industrial (some would say, post-industrial) conurbation with a population of some 2.6 million (Greater Manchester Combined Authority, 2013). The administrative district of the city of Manchester, sitting at its heart, is itself relatively small, with a population of just half a million. However, it encompasses some of the poorest parts of the conurbation, with one of the highest rates of child poverty in the country, and higher levels of in and out of work poverty than many comparable English cities – problems that are reflected in a history of poor educational attainment and poor school performance (Manchester City Council, 2014, p 66). This meant that the academies programme posed a significant threat to

Manchester City Council since the poor performance of its schools made them likely candidates for being turned into academies. Indeed, the Council had already 'lost' one of its low performing schools to academy status in 2003.

In this situation, instead of waiting for its schools to be removed from its control one-by-one, the LA decided to establish six new academies on terms which would embed them in a strategy to improve a broad range of outcomes city-wide. The academies would open at strategic locations across the city – including Collyhurst – and the LA would retain a role as co-sponsor, sitting on each academy's governing board. The academies' other sponsors would be drawn from the economic growth areas of the city and selected for their ethical stance, commitment to corporate social responsibility, and their willingness to take on a long-term investment in developing employability in disadvantaged communities. These sponsors would therefore be ideally placed to develop the skills sectors needed to benefit the local, regional and national economy, whilst also combatting unemployment and poverty in the city. British Telecom was appointed as MCA's lead sponsor, and the Manchester College, a major provider of further (largely vocational) education in the city, as co-sponsor alongside the City Council.

The LA also sought to address some of the more controversial aspects of the academies programme from the outset, taking steps to ensure that the new academies would operate fairly and in local interests. It insisted that they sign-up to city-wide policies on admissions, exclusions and attendance, in order to prevent them using their freedoms to adopt selective processes – for instance, by using entry tests to allocate places and so exclude lower attaining students. Further to this, by embedding the new academies in a city-wide improvement strategy, the LA was able to attract capital investment and to rebuild or refurbish Manchester's other high schools, helping to further 'level the playing field' between them.

From the initiation of the city's academies programme, MCA had the benefit of a 2-year planning phase, during which the sponsors and the principal designate – with advice from the national ministry (then the Department for Children, Schools and Families) – began to develop a distinctive vision for working in Collyhurst. To inform this process, MCA undertook an intensive programme of listening to the local community to find out what it wanted from the new school. Young people, parents, community organisations, councillors, and local residents more widely, were invited to participate. Meetings took place in residents' homes, in different community venues, in local primary schools, and even the local supermarket. The staff recruitment process also actively sought to appoint people who were committed to MCA's emerging vision of working with and for the Collyhurst community, and this was built into the personal specification for staff.

It was also during this lead-in period that MCA's building was constructed at a cost of £32 million. The building was designed in consultation with the principal, the Collyhurst community, and the sponsors. Whereas English schools are often gated and fenced off, or otherwise physically set apart from the surrounding community, MCA is highly visible, sitting more-or-less on the street, at the junction of two main roads. Community members can literally walk up and ring the doorbell. MCA is, nonetheless a safe space; there is a large secure reception area for visitors,



and the building has been designed with four connected wings surrounding a central court yard, which forms a secure outdoor space for students. The building has a range of community facilities, including accessible community meeting places, and sports and catering facilities, which have a separate entrance and reception area. This means that these facilities can easily be accessed even outside the standard school day. Through its design, MCA has therefore been able to establish itself as being physically part of the community and open to the community, whilst also offering a safe environment for students and community members alike.

The building also reflects something of MCA's vision for educational excellence. Drawing on international research into school design, flexible spaces were created to promote easy flows between whole class work, individual work and group work. This contrasts markedly with the typical English school design which is still based on a model from the 1800s of isolated teachers working in separate classrooms that are designed to accommodate 'instruction from the front'. The signing of a 125 year lease on the building has also been important in showing that MCA and its sponsors are making a sustained, long-term commitment to the Collyhurst community. It is not simply another short-term intervention, subject to the vagaries of central government and likely to vanish before it can make a difference. In a place like Collyhurst which, during the 2000s experienced many such interventions, this has been important to indicate to community members and wider partners alike that it is worth their time to invest in working with the school.

What is particularly important in all this, is that compared to 'failing' schools which were converted to academies to 'kick-start' their rapid improvement, MCA's genesis as part of a wider LA strategy has allowed it the time to engage in thoughtful, long-term, strategic planning – and, quite literally, to build its vision into the school. MCA has, furthermore, been able to build its student admissions year-on-year since opening, and this slow expansion has been crucial in allowing it to operationalise and embed its long-term plans.

## **Community Engagement**

From the very start, MCA was very clear that it wanted to work with and for the community. The genesis of this community vision, moreover, illustrates the way in which the different stakeholders in the academy have tended to support each other in a productive manner. As we have seen, the city's academies programme had a strong economic dimension, setting out to engage and support major employment growth sectors. This in turn implied a role for the academies in area regeneration since they were expected to enhance skills and employment levels in their areas, particularly – though not exclusively – amongst young people. At MCA, BT as the lead sponsor shared this broader economic and regeneration agenda. The potential sponsors' expression of interest to the government for the establishment of the academy, therefore, set out their aim of tackling the 'challenging and inter-related

economic, social and physical issues' facing the area, and articulated their commitment:

to improving the economic well-being of the local population and to raise overall levels of skill, knowledge and ambition; and in particular to create more employment opportunities for young people and their families in North Manchester.

With this in mind, the sponsors set out to recruit a principal who would not only have educational expertise, but would also understand the academy's wider role in terms of links with employers and community agencies. The successful candidate – and co-author of this paper – argued that her own knowledge of business links needed to be supplemented by another senior leader with a strong community engagement background. Accordingly a vice principal – another co-author – was appointed whose school experience was supplemented by some years spent working in the voluntary and community sector.

Together therefore, the senior leadership of the academy, the lead sponsors and the local authority shared a broad common agenda which they were able to flesh out as the initiative moved from initial planning towards implementation. In particular, they adopted an approach which, in important respects, was fundamentally different to that seen in central policy at the time. Rather than focusing on outcomes data for Collyhurst, identifying outcomes which were poor, and then trying to identify interventions to improve each outcome, MCA set out to understand and respond to its community's lived experiences. In line with this, some of MCA's first steps were taken from the stance not of professionals who were going to 'fix' the community's deficits, but of newcomers to the area who first needed to learn from the community.

For instance, even before it opened, one of MCA's very first community projects was to develop an oral history of the Collyhurst area, to which end MCA staff worked with community members to interview some of the area's long-term residents. Those working on the project were particularly struck by the contrast between current, negative perceptions of Collyhurst and the one-time pride in the area recalled by some residents. This spurred the formation of a local history group – which, reflecting the initial project's focus on oral histories, called itself the 'Once upon a time' group. With support from MCA, the group produced and distributed a book for primary aged students that presented Collyhurst as a place with a positive history, and included residents' recollections and photographs. Over time, and with continued support from MCA, this group has formally established itself as a charitable organisation and has a growing local membership. It now holds regular meetings at MCA, produces newsletters, organises social events, and runs a website which allows former residents to share their memories of living in the area. MCA has created an administrative post to support the group, filled by a community member who originally engaged with the school as a volunteer.

MCA has since facilitated many projects which help to champion Collyhurst and empower its residents by supporting them to access new experiences, view their community positively, and develop the capacity to take their own actions. In turn, senior staff at MCA also act to champion Collyhurst within wider strategic

developments. For instance, they have recently been actively involved in the development of new regeneration plans for the Collyhurst area, arguing for the inclusion of community health facilities which the area currently lacks.

From the outset, MCA also provided adult learning opportunities. While many schools in England offer such opportunities on an ad hoc basis, MCA adopted a distinctive, planned approach by establishing a 'community college'. Specifically, it established a pathway for learners, enabling them to move from sport and cooking activities which would support them to become active and eat well, to acquiring new skills and gaining confidence by engaging with a wider range of activities, to achieving qualifications, and thence to supporting access to employment. Within this, there was also a deliberate effort to align the qualifications on offer with opportunities for local employment. So, for instance, qualifications are offered relating health and social care. MCA's free job club (a place where jobseekers can meet to encourage one another and be helped to find employment) then also advertised local vacancies and supported its members to apply for these.

This strand of activity has expanded continuously, until currently, there are 250 adult learners working with the academy. There are now beginning to be examples of the impact of this programme on adult employment. For instance, a programme to support community members to develop the skills needed to become self-employed was added to the initial offer, and one of its first graduates now runs his own upholstery business. MCA also offers its facilities at low cost to community sports clubs, and offers open access sessions in badminton, netball, trampolining, basketball, cricket, skate-boarding, and street dance. In total there are currently over 1300 community users every week, 80 % of whom come from local post codes.

## **Curriculum and Teaching**

In terms of its core role as a provider of education for students aged 11–19, MCA set out to develop a distinctive offer. The aim was to engage young people who might be alienated by a more traditional approach to teaching and learning, and to support them to access positive post-school destinations. While enabling students to achieve high grade passes in national examinations is an important part of this offer, so too is the development of the 'soft skills' valued by employers, such as team working, problem solving, effective communication and creative thinking skills. The curriculum therefore ensures that students experience situations which enable them to develop and apply these skills. This approach is, in part, a response to the low employment levels in Collyhurst which mean that young people may not have access to role models in the family and community who have consistent experience of work or who have accessed further or higher education. It is also informed by an ambition for Collyhurst to become an area from which employers will actively seek to recruit, which in turn is part of a wider goal of ensuring that students should not be disadvantaged by any stigma associated with the place where they live.

As well as designing its school building to have flexible learning spaces, MCA also set about structuring its curriculum in an innovative way, around three key outcomes – being learning ready, being community ready, and being work ready. This required a shift from teaching curriculum content in a series of entirely separate subject areas (the traditional English model) towards a more holistic approach emphasising the development of interdisciplinary skills. MCA has therefore developed a curriculum structure with five broad and inter-linked disciplinary areas: English and Maths, Health and Well-being, Science and Technology, Global Understanding, and Creative Arts. Lessons are structured around key learning outcomes rather than simply around subject content, and typically are led by teams of teachers and support staff who work flexibly with individual students, small groups, large groups, or indeed, whole year groups, as the learning activities demand.

Sponsorship from BT was also important in enabling the academy to explore how new technologies might be used effectively to support teaching and learning. Although BT was not able to supply technologies as this would have created a conflict of interest, it was able to create opportunities for MCA staff to speak to people at the forefront of innovative technology use in schools, and to trial and evaluate the use of a wide range of learning devices. Through this, MCA came to understand that, although technology enhanced much of the curriculum, it could not and should not replace the dialogue and relationships that enable students to develop ‘soft skills’, and that it was important not to disadvantage students with poor access to technologies outside school.

BT’s sponsorship has also been important in shaping the way in which MCA has sought to connect teaching and learning to opportunities in the community and to the academy’s core values. MCA’s understanding of what it means to be ‘ready for work’ was, for instance, negotiated with BT and draws on the sponsor’s corporate values. Students have also been able to access the BT apprenticeship programme, and this arrangement has been extended to other major local and global employers. These companies work closely with teaching teams to create placements, internships, and bring ‘real life’ problems and challenges both to learning in the school, and to the community college. One company, HMG Paints, is, for instance, supporting a group of students – selected through a formal interview process – to develop their own spin-off company called ‘Future Coatings’. These students are currently serving an apprenticeship with HMG Paints, working at the company premises on Fridays – when the school closes at lunch time – and spending time in each of its departments so they learn the different aspects of the business.

MCA has an equally active partnership with local universities and colleges through which students (and their families) are supported in considering further and higher education as an alternative to training or direct entry into employment. For example, students have recently worked with Architecture undergraduate students from the University of Manchester to design regeneration projects for Collyhurst. The academy has also started to map the economic growth sectors in Manchester, the different professions and job roles associated with these, and the different qualification pathways which can allow access to these. Staff are then able to use this knowledge to help students think through the job sector they want to work in, the

sort of role they would like to have, and what they need to do to achieve this – and to encourage them to aim at an appropriately ambitious level.

This flexible, outward-looking approach demands teaching staff with very particular skills. Since opening, MCA has become involved in 'School Direct', a national programme for locating teacher training more fully in schools. As a result, it hosts its own initial teacher training programme and is therefore able to recruit at least some new teachers who have been trained in its own preferred ways of working. Most recently MCA has been accredited as a 'national provider' of initial teacher training, and this should increase the supply of exceptional teachers in the area. All teachers and support staff at MCA also engage in a continuing professional development programme which is built into the school timetable. Staff training sessions take place every week after the school closes at Friday lunchtime, and these are often led by staff themselves, to pass on their expertise and talent to others.

Teachers from different curriculum areas are also paired up in order to observe and help improve each other's teaching, and MCA has developed a common framework for recording teachers' individual strengths and weaknesses, and for aggregating these at curriculum area level. This creates a platform from which teachers who have strong skills in particular respects can support those who are less skilled, and different subject areas can learn from one another's strengths. The technologies available in the school also allow teachers to video-record their own lessons to review later and share with colleagues, and to be observed remotely and receive live coaching from the observer.

## **Personal and Social Support**

The curricular work of the school is supported by strong personal and social support for students. Schools in England have long prided themselves on their 'pastoral' systems (Best, 2002) which have sought to address their students' emotional and family problems. In areas of social and economic disadvantage, these systems have to be particularly strong, and in schools such as MCA they have become much more data-based and systematic than has traditionally been the case. So, for instance, information is collected about all students in relation to indicators and sources of disadvantage. These include whether students are entitled to free school meals (which indicates low family income), whether they care for other family members, whether they come from at-risk groups such as Traveler families or children who are 'looked after' by the local authority, whether they have English as an additional language, whether they have special educational needs, and whether they are at risk of abuse. Some 70 % of MCA's school population falls into one or other category and 4 % fall into multiple categories. Students identified in this way are monitored closely in terms of attainment, behavior and attendance, and any incidents that might indicate risk. MCA then has a team of specialists – attendance officers, educational psychologist, welfare and safeguarding workers, nurse, mental health

workers, counsellor, behaviour specialists, and family support workers – who are either employed directly or can be called upon to work with students as necessary.

More generally, the academy seeks to ensure that students are able to participate fully in the life of the school, and to engage in a wider range of experiences than they might otherwise be able to access. It provides uniform, sports kit and cooking ingredients for all students, pays for them to take part in school trips, and runs a ‘breakfast club’ before school which means that those who are not fed properly or given a good start to the day at home go to lessons ready to learn. In the same way, it directs all students to take part, at least twice a week, in after-school activities. Currently the academy offers 1700 additional sessions every week with activities as diverse as study support, origami, horse riding, cycling, jewellery-making and robotics. Beyond these, students are offered access to community-run clubs which are hosted at the academy outside the school day, and the academy provides holiday activities for children aged 7–14 from across the Collyhurst area.

## **Partnership Working**

Many of MCA’s achievements to date have been made possible through the wide range of partnerships it has developed. In particular, in addition to the partnerships alluded to above with BT, community organisations and local businesses, it has provided outreach teaching, project funding and community activities in conjunction with local primary schools. While some of these partnerships have developed as a series of separate relationships, MCA has also created mechanisms to bring a wide range of partners together. A central vehicle for this has been MCA’s ‘Project 10’, set up in 2011. This derives its name from the fact that it was designed to bring together representatives from ten partner organisations working in Collyhurst: the academy, the local social housing provider, Greater Manchester police, the local authority regeneration and adult education services, Collyhurst tenants and residents associations, local faith organisations, early years childcare services and Collyhurst primary schools. Its membership has since expanded to include a health practitioner, and representatives from charitable organisations.

In part, Project 10 acts a knowledge exchange, allowing these organisations to share intelligence about what is happening in the area, including data held by their organisations, any strategic proposals relating to the area, and how particular policy changes might impact on local residents. It has also had a research and development role – seeking to understand the Collyhurst community better and to develop new activities in response. So, an early research activity undertaken by Project 10 was for partners to interview their own service users and then share their findings with the group, so it could develop a shared understanding of challenges and assets within the community. Through these different mechanisms, Project 10 has facilitated joint working practices and stimulated new activities. Following an early Project 10 meeting where the poor take-up of the LA’s early years and adult education services was discussed, for instance, both services agreed to schedule activities

jointly, enabling parents in Collyhurst to access education courses while their children were involved in early years activities. As neither partner's community venue was large enough to accommodate this, it was agreed that MCA would host – and the academy has since been able to link its community college activities and job club to this provision.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Many of the roles in MCA are typical of those that might be found in many English secondary schools. MCA's principal manages six other senior staff with responsibilities ranging from pastoral care, to teaching and learning, and to community engagement, together with a group of 'middle leaders' with responsibility for broad discipline areas. Senior staff also attend strategic local authority groups addressing such issues as student admissions. Perhaps most importantly given MCA's commitment to working with and for the Collyhurst community, the vice-principal who is one of the co-authors of this chapter is designated as community director, with responsibility for leading all of the school's community-related work and for chairing Project 10. She is supported by a 'community team' of five staff funded from the school's core budget. This team, along with MCA's various student and family support services, brings significant experience in working with family and community issues to the academy's workforce. The academy also plays host to, and holds the funds for, a local charitable body – the 'Big Local' – which facilitates and funds community-led projects in the Collyhurst area. Big Local's co-ordinator is based at MCA and included within the community team.

We have already alluded to the key role of BT in the planning and establishment of the academy, and this engagement continues. As part of its social responsibility agenda BT has a significant involvement in education, and MCA has established a BT Forum to engage BT employees in the work of the academy. BT also plays a key role in the academy's governing trust, established to oversee its activities and hold MCA to account. The trust also includes members with backgrounds in social housing, local authority services, financial services, and further education. The governors are therefore not only able to help develop MCA's agenda, but can also bring their considerable business expertise to bear on the school's management. To date, this has enabled MCA to begin to blend practices from business and education. This is crucial given that it has an annual turnover in excess of £7 million, employs over 200 staff and is responsible for a £32 million asset. Furthermore, given the reputational risks to the sponsors, governors and MCA itself should things go wrong, one of the business processes which has been bought to the academy is risk management, and reputational risk is at the heart of the governors' planning decisions.

This complex situation makes significant demands on the principal who is required not only to manage MCA's full range of activity, but to balance and ultimately synthesise this range within a coherent vision. As yet, this has been managed without major problems and MCA's progress is being carefully monitored so that it

can take steps to offset the sorts of risks which might reasonably be anticipated. For instance, since schools serving disadvantaged areas are vulnerable to low attainments, MCA has established thorough internal data monitoring processes to ensure that students are on track academically, and that any dips in attainment can be identified and addressed quickly to ensure students do not fall behind. In addition, the academy has, from the outset, embedded succession planning into its management processes. By including the school's values in the personal specification for staff posts, and through its initial teacher training and staff development programmes, MCA has actively sought to ensure that it can 'grow' its own leaders who will continue to pursue the academy's broad vision in future.

## New Developments

Since opening in 2010, MCA has become successfully established with governance and management structures, partnerships, and wide-ranging provision, matched to its ambitious aims. A particular challenge for the future is how to ensure that the full potential of these activities can be realised. For example, much of what MCA has been able to achieve through its partnership arrangements to date – and particularly through Project 10 – has arisen out of the personal commitment of individuals rather than because the weight of the service they work for is behind them. In this respect, the sustainability of some of MCA's currently partnerships is fragile, and a number of partners have been restricted in the actions they can take to support a shared agenda for Collyhurst. Partners may be able to take actions to align their own work, but they may not be in a position to commit their organisations to taking actions which go beyond this. Moreover, in a time of austerity, MCA itself cannot take ever increasing responsibility for addressing shortfalls in wider service provision, or for leading area strategy.

It is partly in response to this situation that MCA has engaged in a new development – the creation of 'Children's Community' in Collyhurst. The Children's Communities initiative is being led by a major UK and international charity, Save the Children, in collaboration with the University of Manchester, and four pilot Communities are in the process of being established. The idea has been developed in part from the high-profile Harlem Children's Zone ([www.hcz.org](http://www.hcz.org)) and associated Promise Neighborhoods (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html>) initiatives in the USA, but more particularly from the extensive experience of community schools and area-based initiatives in the UK (Dyson, Kerr, Raffo, Wigelsworth, & Wellings, 2012; Kerr, Dyson, & Raffo, 2014). In common with these other initiatives, Children's Communities seek to develop co-ordinated, multi-strand approaches to improving children's and young people's outcomes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. They do this by following a set of core principles (Dyson et al., 2012). In summary, these involve:



- Taking a 'doubly holistic' approach to improving children and young people's outcomes – simultaneously addressing a holistic range of outcomes across education, health and well-being, and wider life-chances – and doing so across all of the childhood years – from birth to young adulthood.
- Focusing on a limited geographical area where a distinctive set of social and economic dynamics is at work and where intervention to change those dynamics is possible.
- Basing any intervention on a thorough understanding of those dynamics so that the underlying local causes of disadvantage are addressed and not simply the surface manifestations.
- Sustaining this approach over time so that underlying causes can be addressed.
- Bringing together a wide range of partners, including but not restricted to schools, who have the capacity to sustain the holistic approach.
- Creating a level of autonomy in funding and governance so that the approach can be sustained so far as possible regardless of changes in local and national priorities.
- Evaluating the impacts and outcomes of the approach rigorously.

In many ways, MCA's work has embodied these principles from the start. There is already a wide range of provision for children and young people, targeted at both educational and non-educational outcomes. That provision arises out of an attempt to understand the underlying dynamics of the area, and the community consultations and efforts that Project 10 has made are particularly important in this respect. A Children's Community is, however, also seen to have two important advantages which can further MCA's current work. Firstly, the requirement to address a holistic range of outcomes for children, and to do so throughout their childhood, creates a strategic framework for thinking about how existing provision Collyhurst can be aligned and any gaps in provision addressed, so that a seamless 'pipeline' of support is created. This framework is, moreover, one which a wide range of partners can sign up to and locate their provision within. Secondly, Children's Communities are required to have a degree of autonomy in funding and governance from other organisations. This is so that they are able to determine their own agendas in response to the needs of their target areas, rather than being shaped by service priorities which have their origins elsewhere.

With this in mind, there are plans to develop the Project 10 structure by formally registering it as a company which will operate as an 'unincorporated organisation'. This is defined as an organisation where a number of individuals come together for a common purpose, and develop their own constitution and elect a committee to run the organisation. Unincorporated organisations may also trade and carry out business and commercial activities. This will enable the Children's Community to operate as an entity in its own right, rather than as part of MCA. It is anticipated that this will help to minimise pressures on MCA, manage concerns about reputational risks to any of the partners involved, and attract a deeper commitment from organisations which may have been reticent about contributing to activities led by the academy, when it already has considerable resources.

The Children's Community initiative itself brings relatively little extra resource beyond funding for a coordinator and assistant, and for evaluation support. This is a deliberate decision on the part of Save the Children on the grounds that dependency on large-scale funding – even if this could be found – would almost certainly make the initiative unsustainable in the long term and would make it impossible to transfer it to places without such funding. In Collyhurst, therefore, the Children's Community's promise lies in strengthening and expanding partnerships with existing services and organisations, in the hope of 'bending' the very substantial resources already dedicated to those services in pursuit of a local strategy.

In this respect, the work of MCA and of the Children's Community initiative as a whole is very different from the approach of the Harlem Children's Zone, which is heavily dependent on securing substantial funding from external sources, including philanthropic donations (Harlem Children's Zone, 2013). Put simply, it is less about establishing entirely new services and forms of organisation than about using what already exists more strategically. For this reason, the development of coherent strategy, the alignment of existing provision with that strategy, and the selective development of new forms of provision that are called for by the strategy, are the distinctive features of the transition to children's community status. In addition, in the approach adopted by MCA and the other Children's Communities, the development of strategy is intimately bound up with the evaluation of its work, and it is to this issue that we now turn.

## Evaluation and Strategy Development

From opening, MCA has been a data-rich environment. For many years, schools in England have had access to detailed information on the demographic characteristics, attainments and progress of their students. The National Pupil Database (Department for Education, 2013) contains records for every student in state schools, recording, amongst other things, their age, gender, ethnicity, special educational needs status, entitlement to free school meals and attainments in national assessments. Using these data, schools can track not only how individuals are doing, but how well groups of students perform, and can therefore identify where additional or different forms of provision are called for. MCA supplements these data in a number of ways so that it is able to identify patterns of need. In addition, it can track which students and which community members access which services or take part in activities, and how they respond to these. It can also access data held by its partner organisations on the Collyhurst area. These data enable MCA to track changing patterns in, for instance, health, crime, household income and employment.

Data of this kind have made it possible for MCA to begin to evaluate the impact of the various services and activities it provides. For instance, it is able to demonstrate that, although its students enter the school with below-average attainment, they make rapid progress and are performing at national average levels by the end of their second year (Ofsted, 2012). MCA can also show that its additional activities

for students and adults are well used (with between 900 and 1250 users per week), student attendance is above national averages, anti-social behaviour in the area has declined, and local people have found employment through and in MCA. Furthermore, in an effort to explain some of the patterns seen in measured outcomes over time, and to relate these to its actions, MCA has generated a range of qualitative data through interviews and other feedback mechanisms. This forms the basis of case studies of individual students and families whose lives have been changed in significant ways by its work.

Such data indicate that MCA is having a positive impact. However, it is keen to develop a much more rigorous and robust evaluation strategy which will enable it to see the impacts of its different activities, separately and collectively, and to establish causal links between these and changes in measured outcomes. Evaluating something as complex and wide ranging as MCA's overall provision, and, in particular, the Children's Community initiative, is, however, notoriously difficult and something to which standard evaluative approaches are ill-suited (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007; Dyson & Todd, 2010; Hollister & Hill, 1995). The major problems are to do with the complexity of the 'intervention' that MCA is attempting, the broad nature of its aims and intended outcomes, and the certainty that it will develop over time as conditions change and as the school learns. Moreover, the extremely open context in which the intervention is being attempted means that many external factors are likely to impact on outcomes.

In this situation, the Centre for Equity in Education has worked with MCA and Project 10 to formulate a multi-strand approach to the evaluation of the new Children's Community. Some of this is familiar from traditional approaches to evaluation. We have, for instance, developed set of core outcomes derived from what the research and advocacy literature say is important for children and young people to do well (see, for instance Anderson Moore et al., 2009; Bradshaw & Richardson, 2009; UNICEF, 2007), together with bank of quantitative indicators which can be monitored over time. To this we have added a cost-benefit analysis designed to identify the long-term economic returns of any outcomes and the additional costs incurred in generating them (see Dhiri & Brand, 1999; Levin & McEwan, 2000, for accessible introductions), and a process evaluation seeking to understand how the various elements in the Children's Community are implemented and explore possible links between this and the outcomes that are produced.

In addition, however, we have developed a 'theory of change' evaluation (Anderson, 2005; Connell & Kubisch, 1998; Dyson & Todd, 2010) of the academy's work. Theory of change evaluations, in common with other theory-based approaches proceed from the observation that all interventions imply assumptions about how, in a given set of circumstances, a particular action or set of actions will generate a particular set of outcomes. They seek to surface this (often implicit) theory of how the intervention will work, paying particular attention to unpacking the causal chains of impacts that lead from different strands of action within the intervention to its intended outcomes. Once this theory is made explicit, it becomes possible to seek evidence to show whether those chains are indeed unfolding as predicted, or whether they are stopping short of producing outcomes, or whether

entirely different causal processes are at work. Working in this way has a number of advantages. It requires and enables the leaders of an intervention to be clear about what they are doing and why, so that flaws and omissions can be identified even before the intervention is operational. It also means that those leaders receive early feedback on whether the impacts are rolling out as planned, without the need to wait for long-term outcomes to become manifest. Above all, the tracking of causal chains means that outcomes can be attributed securely to elements of the intervention, while the interactions between those chains can be identified and the relative contributions of different actions to different outcomes can be assessed.

## Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned

Although we have – for good reason – presented the MCA story as one of success, it is important not to underestimate the challenges which the initiative has faced and continues to face. In particular, MCA has been established at a time when schools are held strictly – some would say, brutally – to account for their performance in relation to a narrow range of student attainment outcomes. It is not unknown for academies that have failed in this respect to be subject to vigorous central government intervention, including the replacement of their senior leaders, nor for their sponsors to lose control of the institutions which they have established. The costs to principals and sponsors – not to mention to local children and communities – of getting things wrong are, therefore, extremely high.

A key question, is how MCA has managed to navigate these substantial external pressures, and to do so, at least to date, with notable success. The answer in part lies with the quality and commitment of leadership both within the academy and in its sponsoring and partner organisations. To some extent, the availability of good leaders is a matter of serendipity. However, it is also notable that in the case of MCA there has been a deliberate strategy on the part of the sponsor of appointing leaders who can bring a broad range of experience and expertise to bear in shaping and delivering the academy's vision. This strategy has been continued by the principal in her appointment of a community-oriented vice principal and in the appointment and development of teachers with similarly broad views. This means that a commitment to the vision is embedded deeply. It is, therefore, more likely to survive the external pressures to which the academy is subject and to survive the turnover of staff at both leadership and class teacher level that is inevitable in a large institution. This process of embedding is not necessarily easy to achieve, as the university team's work in a second community-oriented academy found (Rowley & Dyson, 2011). Here, the pressures on the sponsors to secure acceptable levels of attainment led them to appoint leaders with more narrowly educational expertise, and those leaders in turn inherited rather than appointed the staff of the school. Almost inevitably, the broader vision of the academy proved much more difficult to realise than it has at MCA.

A second factor in MCA's relative success is that the broad vision is not only embedded within the school, but it is shared more widely beyond the school. Although the Labour governments between 1997 and 2010 aggressively pursued an educational agenda focused on raising standards of attainment, their Every Child Matters and extended schools policies created spaces within which a broader view of education could emerge. These spaces were exploited by Manchester City Council as they formulated their own distinctive version of the academies programme, and then by BT as the lead sponsor in drawing up the vision for the academy. Subsequently, MCA's building of alliances with other partners through Project10 and the Children's Community initiative has ensured that the vision is not owned by the academy alone, but is distributed across a wide range of stakeholders. The substantial engagement with the local community further embeds this vision beyond the school.

The replacement of the Labour government by a centre-right Coalition in 2010, and then by a right-wing Conservative government in 2015 has meant that the national support for a broad vision of education has disappeared. However, as we have argued elsewhere (Kerr et al., 2014), spaces for creative action to tackle social and educational disadvantage are likely to be found even in the most unpromising policy environments. The MCA initiative appears to have been particularly successful in colonising these spaces and defending them through the creation of alliances. It helps that the vision informing the academy broadens the notion of education embodied in national policy, but does not openly contradict it. MCA is as interested as any other school in securing higher levels of attainment for its students – it simply recognises that this can only be achieved sustainably through a much broader approach to working with students, their families and communities. It also helps that MCA's approach draws primarily on the resources already available in the academy and in its partner organisations, together with whatever fundraising it can manage for itself. Even the Children's Communities initiative will not change this situation fundamentally. Unlike many other schools in England, therefore, MCA has avoided making its broader approach dependent on external initiative funding and has not been vulnerable therefore to the widespread termination of such funding that took place after 2010.

The consequence of all this is that MCA's vision is well-protected against the various threats to which such approaches are subject in the English system. It should, in principle, be capable of withstanding the loss of key personnel, changes in funding regimes, or shifts in government policy. However, it is important to recognise that this vision has not yet fully been tested. The original leaders are still in place and the initiative still has all the attraction of a new venture. The school has only now reached full capacity, and its first set of national examination results are still awaited. Moreover, although all the early signs are that its broad approach is having the positive impacts that were hoped for, it will be some time before robust evaluation evidence is available. It is also important not to underestimate the speed with which external threats can materialise. Schools in England are always just one set of poor results away from a crisis, whilst the impacts of austerity measures in central and local government are likely to escalate rapidly in the near future. MCA, therefore, offers a highly promising model of how schools can develop a broader approach to education, but it cannot yet claim to be a model which is fully proven.

## Towards a New Institutional Design?

Bearing these caveats in mind, we wish in this final section to consider what might be learned from the MCA model even before its effectiveness has been fully demonstrated. In particular, we wish to return to the claim made in the introduction, that MCA is trying to create an entirely new approach to how schools can contribute to the well-being of the areas and populations they serve. This is true, we argue, in two interrelated ways. First, MCA is attempting a reconceptualization of the purposes of schooling in disadvantaged areas. Second, this reconceptualization involves it in working towards a new and distinctive institutional design.

There are many schools in England – as in other parts of the world – that offer some form of additional services to their students and to the wider community. Indeed, at one point in the recent past, virtually every school was offering something of this kind (Wallace et al., 2009). However, the purposes of such provision have never been clarified at national level, and in practice it tends to have been based on a multiplicity of semi-articulated and contradictory rationales (Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2007; Dyson & Jones, 2014). Moreover, when those rationales are scrutinised, they frequently reveal default assumptions about the deficits characterising children, families and communities and the need for schools to save such communities from themselves – assumptions that are familiar from community school initiatives across the world (Cummings et al., 2011).

By contrast, MCA has been able, as we have seen, to undertake an in-depth strategic planning process and to give considerable thought to what it wants to achieve. The resultant ‘broad vision’ that we outlined at the start of this chapter seeks to escape the deficit assumptions that tend to bedevil community schools elsewhere, both by trying to construct a form of education for its students based on broad notions of learning and development, and by positioning the school as being the partner and advocate of the local community – ‘with you...for you...about you’ – rather than its saviour.

This conceptualisation of the purpose of a community school has in turn led MCA to develop new and distinctive organisational forms. Internally, these are evident in the fluid design of the building which encourages innovative forms of teaching, in the innovative approach to curriculum which breaks out of traditional subject boundaries, and in the management and staffing structures which ensure that the professionals in the school are able to work in accordance with its overarching vision.

Perhaps more significantly, the boundaries between MCA’s internal structures and practices and its engagement with an agenda that goes beyond the traditional academic remit of schools are blurred. This is evident, for instance, in its provision of an extensive range of out-of-hours activities for students, its recruitment of a team of social, health and family workers to support students and their families, its development of a community college and the significant community presence in the school building, the positioning of a community director as vice principal, the partnership with a range of external agencies and organisations, and the role of a major

business organisation as lead sponsor. Above all, the development of the Collyhurst Children's Community involves the creation of a new organisational structure uniting the school with its partners, and the commitment of this new structure to a set of common purposes which go well beyond traditional school concerns.

There are many ways of trying to characterise what is happening in these developments. MCA can, for instance, be seen as engaged in 'boundary crossing' (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011), not simply on account of the physical, organisational and social boundaries through which it breaks, but also because of the learning about new roles and new ways of working which this entails. As such, its efforts are part of a wider boundary-crossing enterprise that followed from the 1997–2010 Labour governments' efforts to break down the barriers between what were then the very separate agencies and organisations providing services for children and families (see, for instance, Edwards, 2009; Edwards, Daniels, Gallagher, Leadbetter, & Warmington, 2009).

As a result, MCA can be seen as having constructed itself not so much as a school focused on narrowly-defined academic outcomes, but as a 'social enterprise', in which its academic concerns have become part of a much more ambitious effort to 'tackle social problems, improve communities, people's life chances, or the environment' (Social EnterpriseUK, 2012). In this guise, MCA is, of course, not simply a social enterprise in its own right but also part of the wider social enterprise that is the Children's Community. In working within that Community, moreover, and linking itself structurally and in relation to shared purposes to other organisations, MCA has arguably transformed itself into what is currently known as a 'networked business', not so much because of its innovative use of the web as because it is 'a company or organization whose value functions are connected to each other and with those of other organizations' (Nasrado, 2014).

However MCA is characterised, it is evident that it is not simply a traditional academically-focused school. Nor come to that, is it the kind of community school with which we have become familiar over the years – at least, not if we mean by that a traditional school to which a few extra services and activities have been added. On the contrary, it is arguably part of a new 'generation' of efforts to link schools with other services and organisations in order to tackle disadvantage (Kerr et al., 2014). This new generation, as Lawson (2013) argues, takes us beyond the additive model of earlier community schools, towards more extended partnerships that are:

configured to facilitate the development of new institutional designs for schools, postsecondary education (broadly defined), and companion systems serving children, families, and adults. (Lawson, 2013, p 645).

What we have, in principle at least, is a school and set of partner organisations that are prepared to work beyond their traditional boundaries in pursuit of common social goals and that have developed an organisational framework to make this possible.

This notion of a new generation of efforts at linkage has obvious implications for how community schools might develop in future. Should MCA and similar developments elsewhere prove to be as effective as they promise to be, there will

be compelling reasons for abandoning the additive model of community schooling in favour of more fully integrated and organisationally coherent partnerships. However, regardless of questions of effectiveness of these developments, what is happening at MCA raises fundamental issues about the nature and purpose of schooling. In recent years, there has been a growing backlash in England against a narrow conceptualisation of schooling in terms of pupil attainment, institutional performance and economic gain. Instead, critics have begun to advocate for schooling based on a 'civic' or 'democratic' agenda, stressing the importance of developing the social agency of learners and the contribution of schooling to civic society rather than simply to the economy (Fielding & Moss, 2011; Gunter et al., 2010).

At the same time, concerns have been growing about the negative impacts of social and educational inequality, not just on those who do least well, but on the cohesion and well-being of society as a whole (Piketty, 2014; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). In such a context, the role of schools – and particularly of schools serving disadvantaged populations – is once more open to question. As yet, there is little sign that policy-makers at national level have begun to free themselves from the narrowly economic model of education to which they have been wed for the past three decades. MCA, however, offers a natural experiment in how things might be done differently. It is, we suggest, one which policy-makers might do well to follow.

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## Chapter 12

# The History and Development of a Partnership Approach to Improve Schools, Communities and Universities

Ira Harkavy, Matthew Hartley, Rita Axelroth Hodges, and Joann Weeks

**Abstract** The compelling, important, and innovative idea of “university-assisted community schools” originated at the University of Pennsylvania. Today it is an advanced, international exemplar. The main ideas merit attention and scale-up. For example, universities and other higher education institutions located in challenging urban neighborhoods and rural places have important resources to offer local children, families, communities, schools, and neighborhood organizations, starting with their talented faculty and highly energetic and creative students. These resources position these higher education institutions to serve as anchors and hubs for the kinds of complex, multi-faceted innovations needed to improve community outcomes, as well as mutually beneficial outcomes for the higher education institutions doing this important work. Starting in the mid 1980s, the leader-authors of this chapter and their school and community partners seized this idea and then rolled up their sleeves to make it happen. For example, they pioneered and scaled-up important innovations such as academically-based community service—where professors teach their courses in local community schools and other community settings—while also demonstrating how higher education institutions and leaders of research universities in particular can become transformational agents for beneficial social change. This chapter describes the journey toward this advanced exemplar, including the development of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, the growth of the international network of university-assisted community schools, and the several awards that nominate this model as an international exemplar.

**Keywords** Engaged university • Service learning • partnerships • Cradle-to-career pipelines • Community development • Anchor institution • Area-based initiative • Community school • At-risk youths

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## Introduction

Our position is simple: No radical reform of American higher education, no successful education reform. The radical reform of higher education, we contend, is most likely to occur in the crucible of significant, serious, sustained, active engagement with public schools and their communities. Splendid abstract, contemplative, inner-ivory tower isolation will neither shed intellectual light nor produce positive democratic change.

We strongly agree with the Chilean sociologist Eugenio Tironi that the answer to the question “What kind of education do we need?” is to be found in the answer to the question “What kind of society do we want?” (Tironi, 2005). Education and society are dynamically interactive and interdependent. If human beings hope to maintain and develop a particular type of society, they must develop and maintain the particular type of education system conducive to it. Stated directly, *no effective democratic schooling system, no democratic society*.

From our experience of more than 20 years of work with West Philadelphia schools and neighborhoods, we believe that university-assisted community schools constitute the best practical means for democratically transforming universities, schools, and communities in order to develop participatory democracy (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett 2007).<sup>1</sup>

## The University-Assisted Community School Approach

“Community schools” bring together multiple organizations and their resources not only to serve and educate young people but also to democratically engage all members of the community in which the school is located. Essentially, this idea extends and updates John Dewey’s theory that the neighborhood school can and should function as the core neighborhood institution—one that provides comprehensive services and galvanizes community institutions and organizations to help solve the myriad problems individuals and communities confront in a rapidly changing world. American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey recognized that if the neighborhood school were to function as a genuine community center, it would require additional human resources and support. But to our knowledge, he never identified universities as a key source of broadly based, sustained, comprehensive support for community schools. We emphasize “university-assisted” because we have become increasingly convinced that colleges and universities are uniquely well-positioned to provide strategic, comprehensive and sustained support for community schools (e.g., academic and instructional resources, health and human services, college access

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<sup>1</sup>This chapter draws significantly from a previous article written by the authors: Ira Harkavy, Matthew Hartley, Rita Axelroth Hodges & Joann Weeks (2013), *The Promise of University-Assisted Community Schools to Transform American Schooling: A Report From the Field, 1985–2012*, *Peabody Journal of Education*, 88:5, 525–540, DOI: [10.1080/0161956X.2013.834789](https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2013.834789)

programs, and evaluation) that effectively engage students, their parents and guardians—indeed all individuals living in the neighborhood (Benson et al., 2007).

The university-assisted community school strategy assumes that community schools, like colleges and universities, can function as focal points to help create and foster healthy urban environments and democratically engaged communities. The strategy also assumes that universities and colleges function best in such environments. More specifically, the strategy assumes that public schools can function as environment-changing institutions, and can become strategic centers of broadly based partnerships that engage a wide variety of community organizations and institutions (Harkavy & Hartley, 2009). Since public schools “belong” to all members of the community, they should serve all members of the community.<sup>2</sup> More than any other institution, public schools are particularly well suited to serve as neighborhood “hubs” or “centers” around which local partnerships can be generated and developed. When they play that innovative role, schools function as community institutions *par excellence*. They then provide a decentralized, democratic, community-based response to rapidly changing community problems. In the process, they help young people learn better, and at increasingly higher levels, through action-oriented, collaborative, real-world activities.

For public schools to successfully function as integrating community institutions, however, local, state, and federal governments, as well as nongovernmental agencies, must be effectively coordinated, and the assets of higher educational institutions strategically leveraged to provide the significant resources community schools will need to play the greatly expanded roles that we envision them playing in American society. We discuss this issue more fully at the end of the article.

When institutions of higher education give very high priority to actively solving real-world problems in their local communities, a much greater likelihood exists that they will significantly advance research, teaching, learning, and service, as well as interdisciplinary collaboration, and simultaneously reduce what Penn’s founder Benjamin Franklin stigmatized in 1789 as “ancient Customs and Habitudes,” that impede the development of mutually beneficial, higher education-civic partnerships (Hartley, Harkavy, & Benson 2009).<sup>3</sup> More specifically, by focusing on solving universal problems that are manifested in their local communities (such as poverty,

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<sup>2</sup>Public schools are not, of course, the only places in the community where learning and social organization occur. Other “learning places” include libraries, museums, private schools, and faith-based organizations. Ideally, all of these places would collaborate.

<sup>3</sup>The college Franklin envisioned broke radically with the classical tradition and gave instruction entirely in the vernacular language. Instead of imitating English colleges, Franklin theorized, an American college’s curriculum, methodology and texts should be appropriate for the education and development of American youth. For a college in Philadelphia to insist on instruction in Latin and Greek and a curriculum dominated by intensive study of classical texts in their original languages, Franklin believed, simply exemplified the disastrous tendency “in mankind [to] an unaccountable prejudice in favor of ancient customs and habitudes, which inclines to a continuance of them after the circumstances, which formerly made them useful, cease to exist.” Reinhold, Meyer, 1968, “Opponents of Classical Learning in America During the Revolutionary Period,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 112 (4): 224.

poor schooling, inadequate healthcare), institutions of higher education will generate knowledge that is both nationally and globally significant and be better able to realize what we view as their primary mission of contributing to a healthy democratic society.

American colleges and universities have deep civic roots. The vast majority of our institutions of higher learning were established to serve their local communities and to prepare leaders for their communities and society (Hartley & Hollander, 2005). This history strongly supports our belief that the democratic mission is, and should be, the primary mission for U.S. higher education. The founding purpose of the early colonial colleges and historically black colleges and universities founded in the nineteenth century was to educate young people for service to others. Fulfilling America's democratic promise was the founding purpose of land-grant universities. And the emergence of an urban-serving mission for higher education dates from the late nineteenth century, notably the founding of the Johns Hopkins University, the first modern research university, in 1876. William Rainey Harper, the first president of the University of Chicago, was perhaps the most eloquent and powerful proponent for the engagement of universities with their cities and communities (Benson et al., 2007). He helped the University of Chicago become arguably the greatest university at the turn of the last century by acting on the premise that involvement with the city, particularly its schools, would powerfully advance faculty research and student learning.

Harper's (1905) devotion to pedagogy logically derived from two propositions central to his vision for the University of Chicago in particular and for American universities in general:

1. "Education is the basis of all democratic progress. The problems of education are, therefore, the problems of democracy" (Harper, 1905, p. 32).
2. More than any other institution, the university determines the character of the overall schooling system: "Through the school system, the character of which, in spite of itself, the university determines and in a larger measure controls. . . . through the school system every family in this entire broad land of ours is brought into touch with the university; for from it proceeds the teachers or the teachers' teachers" (Harper, 1905, p. 25).

The societal, indeed global, reach of universities also makes them particularly important partners in school-system reform, as well as community-wide improvement in areas such as health, education, and economic development. In this era of global information and communication, local school systems are powerfully affected by larger national and global schooling systems. But local changes cannot be sustained if they remain only local and unconnected to broader national and global developments. Significant systemic change not only must, therefore, be locally rooted and generated; it must also be part of a national/global movement for change. For that to occur, an agent is needed that can simultaneously function on the local, national, and global levels. Universities are that agent. They are simultaneously the preeminent local (embedded in their communities) and national/global (part of an increasingly interactive worldwide network) institutions.

To help accelerate progress to the point where major changes become firmly institutionalized and produce significant results, we have called for an action-oriented acceptance of the following radical proposition: all colleges and universities should make solving the problem of the American schooling system a very high institutional priority; their contributions to its solution should count heavily both in assessing their institutional performance (by themselves and others) and be a critical factor when responding to their requests for renewed or increased resources and financial support (Benson et al., 2007). Actively helping to develop an effective, integrated, genuinely democratic pre-K through higher education schooling system, we contend, should become a primary mission of American universities and colleges. It is also one that all types of higher educational institutions can and should embrace. Whether teaching or research focused, large or small, rural or urban, colleges and universities have intellectual and tangible resources that can be brought to bear in partnerships with their local schools. These reciprocal partnerships not only assist schools and the children and communities they serve, but they also promote powerful advances in learning and knowledge for students in the university through problem-solving learning.

At this time, moreover, when public colleges and universities in particular are facing serious and severe strain resulting from large-scale, significant cutbacks in governmental funding, particularly at the state level, they are also under increased scrutiny by the government to demonstrate that they are serving the public good. “Community benefit” has become an essential component of funding appeals to many donors and foundations, as well as governmental agencies. Simply put, higher education understands more fully than ever that it is in its enlightened self-interest to be civically engaged with their local schools and communities.<sup>4</sup>

In order for colleges and universities to act effectively, however, they must overcome the burdens of history and tradition. In particular, they need to overcome the fragmentation of disciplines, excessive overspecialization, and the false dichotomy between the arts and sciences and professions that is particularly characteristic of all major research universities. These departmental and disciplinary divisions too often produce narrow, solipsistic research, resulting in our knowing more and more about less and less. They have also increased the isolation of universities from society. A report published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development entitled *The University and the Community: The Problems of Changing Relationships*

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<sup>4</sup>For a case study on how one institution, Oregon State University, transformed itself in the face of declining public financial support by focusing on its land grant mission, democratic processes, and community connections, see: Ray, E. J. (2013). Institutional change in a culture of democracy. In S. Bergan, I. Harkavy, & H. van't Land (Eds.), *Reimagining democratic societies: a new era of personal and social responsibility* (229–236). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. The Coalition for Urban Serving Universities also powerfully advocates for federal support of public urban research universities based on their significant contributions to the development of the nation's cities and metro regions: <http://www.usucoalition.org/>. For more general discussion on the challenges of governmental cutbacks, see: Newfield, C. (2011, August 28). Public education for the public good. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Available online: <http://chronicle.com/article/Public-Education-for-the/128824/>

pointedly observed, “Communities have problems, universities have departments” (Center for Educational Research and Innovation, 1982, p. 127). The statement neatly indicates a major reason why universities have not contributed as they should. Quite simply, their un-integrated, fragmented, internally conflictual structure and organization work against collaborative understanding and helping to solve highly complex human and societal problems.

However, it is also the case that if colleges and universities can succeed in transforming themselves into genuinely engaged civic institutions they will be better able to achieve their self-professed, historic missions of advancing, preserving, and transmitting knowledge; and they will help produce the well-educated, cultured, truly democratic citizens necessary to develop and maintain a genuinely democratic society. Implementing that organizational revolution poses extraordinarily complex intellectual and social challenges. However, as Dewey argued, working to solve complex, real-world problems is the best way to advance knowledge and learning, as well as the general capacity of individuals and institutions to do that work (Benson et al., 2007).

## Organizational Learning: Our Experience at the University of Pennsylvania

Admittedly, the history of Penn’s work with West Philadelphia public schools has been a process of painful organizational learning and conflict; we cannot overemphasize that we have made many mistakes and our understanding and activities have continually changed over time.<sup>5</sup> Penn is only now beginning to tap its extraordinary resources in ways that could mutually benefit both Penn and its neighbors and result in truly radical school, community, and university change. We have come to see our work as a concrete example of Dewey’s (1910) general theory of learning by means of action-oriented, collaborative, real-world problem solving. Conceptualizing our work in terms of schools as the strategic components of complex urban ecological systems represented a major advance for us.

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<sup>5</sup>For further discussion on the history of the University of Pennsylvania’s engagement in West Philadelphia, see Puckett, J. L. & Lloyd, M. F. (2015). *Becoming Penn. The pragmatic American university, 1950–2000*. University of Pennsylvania Press. Etienne, H. F. (2012). *Pushing back the gates: Neighborhood perspectives on university-driven revitalization in West Philadelphia*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. Hodges, R. A., & Dubb, S. (2012). *Road half traveled: University engagement at a crossroads*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press. Netter Center for Community Partnerships. (2008). *Anchor institutions toolkit*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, available at [www.nettercenter.upenn.edu](http://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu). Rodin, J. (2007). *The university and urban revival: Out of the ivory tower and into the streets*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Benson, L., Harkavy, I., and Puckett, J. (2007). *Dewey’s dream: Universities and democracies in an age of education reform*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. Maurrasse, D. (2001). *Beyond the campus: How colleges and universities form partnerships with their communities*. New York: Routledge.



When we first began work on university-community relationships in 1985, we did not envision schools or universities as highly strategic components of urban ecological systems. What immediately concerned us was that West Philadelphia was rapidly and visibly deteriorating, with devastating consequences for community residents, as well as the university. This included increased blight, crime, and poverty, as well as Penn's ability to continue to attract and retain outstanding faculty, staff, and students. Given that "present situation" (as Dewey would have phrased it), we asked, what should the university do? (Dewey, 1916, p. 222). Committed to undergraduate teaching, one of the authors, Ira Harkavy, and distinguished Penn historian Lee Benson designed an Honors Seminar aimed at stimulating undergraduates to think critically about what Penn could and should do to remedy its "environmental situation." Intrigued with the concept, the president of the university, Sheldon Hackney, himself a former professor of history, agreed to join them in teaching that seminar in the spring semester of 1985. The seminar's title suggests its general concerns: *Urban University-Community Relationships: Penn-West Philadelphia, Past, Present, and Future as a Case Study*.

When the seminar began, Harkavy and Benson literally knew nothing about Dewey's community school ideas. They also knew nothing about the history of community school experiments and had not given any thought to Penn working with public schools in West Philadelphia. For present purposes, we need not recite the process of trial, error, and failure that led them, and their students, to see that Penn's best strategy to remedy its rapidly deteriorating environmental situation was to use its enormous internal and external resources to help radically improve both West Philadelphia public schools and the neighborhoods in which they are located. Most unwittingly, during the course of the seminar's work, they reinvented the community school idea. They developed a strategy based on the following proposition: universities can best improve their local environment if they mobilize and integrate their great resources, particularly the "human capital" embodied in their students, to help develop and maintain community schools that function as focal points for creating healthy urban environments.

By 1989, particular interest was focused on Turner Middle School, largely due to the interest and leadership of its principal, to create the model that is now referred to as university-assisted community schools. The principal appointed a community school coordinator who was a Turner teacher released on special assignment. From the beginning her role was to work with Penn, the community in Turner's catchment area, and the Turner faculty and staff. The community school would be university-assisted but school staff-controlled and managed, rejecting university control (exemplified by Boston University's take-over of a school district) or community control (experienced in Ocean Hill-Brownsville in New York City) (Benson & Harkavy, 1991).

Observing the work of their students and their partners in the West Philadelphia community schools over a number of years led Harkavy and Benson to develop a key principle that has guided their thinking and practice in a wide variety of ways and situations. That principle can be formulated as follows: at all levels (K through 16 and above), collaborative, community-based, action-oriented service-learning

projects, which by their nature innovatively depart from customary, teacher-dominated school routines, allow and encourage both teachers and students to participate democratically in school and classroom governance and functioning. Such projects create spaces in which school and classroom democracy can grow and flourish. In their judgment, as well as ours, that general principle can be instrumental in inspiring and developing effective programs for democratic citizenship in a wide variety of schools (at all levels) and communities.

Over time, the seminar's increasingly successful work stimulated a growing number of Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) courses (Penn's term for service-learning) in a wide range of Penn schools and departments, developed and implemented under the auspices of the university's Netter Center for Community Partnerships. ABCS courses focus on action-oriented, community problem solving and the integration of research, teaching, learning, and service, as well as reflection on the service experience and its larger implications (e.g., why poverty, racism, and crime exist).

To date, approximately 200 such courses that work with schools and community organizations to solve strategic community problems have been developed at Penn. In the 2014–2015 academic year, 63 courses, across 8 schools and 26 departments, involving approximately 1600 Penn undergraduate and graduate students, were offered. Over the past 20-plus years, an increasing number of faculty members, from a wide range of Penn schools and departments, have revised existing courses, or have created new courses, providing innovative curricular opportunities for their students to become active learners, creative real-world problem solvers, and active producers (as opposed to passive consumers) of knowledge. That relatively rapid growth has resulted largely from the organizational innovation described in this article.

For example, in 1991, Professor Francis Johnston, a renowned expert on nutritional anthropology who had recently concluded a lengthy tenure as chair of the Anthropology Department decided to redesign a course, Anthropology 210, to address the community-identified problem of poor nutrition, with the initial work at Turner Middle School. It became the prototype for Academically Based Community Service courses. Over the next few years, a widening circle of Penn faculty and students worked with Johnston in collaboration with local middle school teachers and students to understand the nutritional practices in the community. The course also sought to address the problem through a series of projects aimed at encouraging better nutrition. These included an educational program, a school-based garden, an in-school market that provided healthy snacks, and a nutritional outreach program for the community. Anthropology 210's success not only influenced the anthropology department (which went on to develop an academic track on Public Interest Anthropology), but it also inspired other Penn departments and schools to become involved (Johnston and Harkavy, 2009; Benson et al., 2007). Furthermore, it led to the development of the Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative—a central component of University-Assisted Community Schools, which engages and empowers youth, university students, and community members to promote healthy lifestyles and build a just and sustainable food system. Today, the Agatston Urban Nutrition

Initiative works with 20 Philadelphia public schools, serving more than 10,000 students.

Moelis Access Science is another example of the reciprocal, democratic partnerships that Penn has developed through University-Assisted Community Schools and ABCS courses. Begun in 1999 with initial support from the National Science Foundation, Moelis Access Science works to improve science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education of both K-12 students and undergraduate and graduate students at Penn (Access Science, 2007). Faculty and students from across campus provide content-based professional development for teachers and direct classroom support for implementing quality hands-on and small group activities. For example, a series of six ABCS courses in Penn's Earth and Environmental Science Department focus on environmentally based and environmentally triggered diseases, particularly those related to asthma, tobacco, lead poisoning, air quality, water quality, and community health. Working together, Penn undergraduates and faculty, West Philadelphia public school students and teachers, and community members engage in environmental research to help improve the students' homes, schools, and neighborhoods.

As of 2015, there are five university-assisted community schools in West Philadelphia—three elementary schools with kindergarten to 8th grades, and two high schools. The Netter Center employs a community school coordinator full-time at each school as well as additional part-time staff who work in the afterschool and summer programs. Staff from its others programs such as Moelis Access Science and the Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative are also regularly working in the schools. The work is further supported by the efforts of Penn faculty and students in ABCS classes, as well as by Penn students funded through the Federal work-study program, or as interns or volunteers. The community school coordinators also work to engage other community resources in the schools.<sup>6</sup>

## Promising Findings

Problems like poor nutrition, under-resourced urban schools, and poverty are complex and systemic. We certainly make no claims about solving them. However, studies of the Netter Center's work have found important and positive outcomes for both Penn and West Philadelphia. For example, one study compared Penn undergraduates taking Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) courses to those in similar courses without a community engagement component: 47 % of ABCS students reported an increase in research skills versus 36 % of non-ABCS students. Additionally, students in ABCS courses more often reported an increase in their desire to act morally and ethically, to become an effective community leader, to

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<sup>6</sup>Additional information on Netter Center programs is found at: <https://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/programs>

develop a meaningful philosophy of life, to be concerned about urban communities, and to become a volunteer in the community (Johnston & Weinreb, 2002).

Penn students participating as classroom fellows (paid interns, work-study or volunteers working in K-12 schools) through the Netter Center's Moelis Access Science program also reported positive outcomes: 95 % reported an increased ability to present science and math ideas; 100 % reported an increase in communication skills; 95 % reported increased ability to work with children and adolescents; and almost half (45 %) of new undergraduate fellows indicated that their experience with the program would be influential in their thinking about their career, indicating the possibility of teaching or entering the field of education (Access Science, 2007).

Philadelphia public schools continue to face severe challenges, including the impacts of massive funding deficits that have shrunk or eliminated the number of teachers and support staff (counselors, nurses, non-teaching aides) and other services formerly provided by the District itself. At the neighborhood level, the schools that the Netter Center works with enroll young people most impacted by the high poverty levels in these communities and significant racial isolation. While the work continues to be difficult, we are still encouraged that the university-assisted community school—by providing and integrating resources from Penn and other community partners—can improve this situation.

Through a most generous naming gift in 2007 from Barbara Netter and the late Edward Netter (a Penn alumnus), the Netter Center has, among other things, been able to make a significant commitment in recent years to comprehensive evaluation of its work with the community by hiring a full time evaluator, Gretchen Suess. Dr. Suess is working with a distinguished committee of faculty advisors from across diverse disciplines at Penn, as well as a team of undergraduate and graduate student interns. The Evaluation Team is taking a mixed-methods, developmental evaluation approach to tracking and analyzing longitudinal data to determine impacts at Penn, the school, and the overall community. These impacts include individual-level impacts, as well as organizational and institutional change. Below are some examples of data that have been collected.

In the 2013–2014 school year, 285 students were enrolled in Netter Center-supported afterschool programs at three K-8 UACS sites. In the spring of 2014, 67 teachers were surveyed about changes they had witnessed among the regular participating students (those who attended 30+ days of programming). Teachers reported that among the students who needed to show improvements in different areas, over two-thirds of the students improved their participation in class (79 %), 72 % of students improved academically, 65 % were more attentive in class, 65 % of the students were coming to school motivated to learn, and 63 % of the students were completing their homework to the teacher's satisfaction. Data also showed that 70 % of all regular participants with a disciplinary issue in 2013 reduced their suspensions in 2014 (Research for Action, 2014).

The Netter Center has also worked with its school partners to bring in needed resources at the school. For example, at Comegys Elementary School a playground was built on site through the partnership of the Philadelphia Eagles football team and the City of Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program. The partnership regularly builds

playgrounds at Philadelphia schools that lack such facilities, but had never done an evaluation of the impact of these playgrounds. The Netter Center agreed to do the evaluation for the project, which factored significantly in Comegys School being selected as a site for a playground. The 18-month evaluation of the Eagles Youth Partnership (EYP) and Mural Arts Program (MAP) Playground Build Project at Comegys Elementary, supported by the UACS partnership with the Netter Center, found that the investment of multiple local anchor institutions contributed to positive trends in helping stabilize the school as a beneficial neighborhood resource.

Fifty-nine percent of all students at Comegys in 2013 reported exercising more because of the new playground space; however, this accounted for only 49 % of female students versus 71 % of male students. Female students took 7.3 steps for every 10 steps male students took (Suess et al., 2014). Students whose teachers used the outdoor classroom/garden during the 2012–2013 school year were three times more likely to learn about healthy foods, three times more likely to learn about science, and two times more likely to learn about math than their peers who did not use the outdoor classroom (Suess et al.).

Penn's institutional investment had a scaffolding effect, which was subsequently deepened following the playground build project. The principal at Comegys expressed this idea of how partnerships can continue to build upon partnerships: "If it wasn't for the fact that we had the University of Pennsylvania partnership, which was connected to the Netter Center, we probably wouldn't have gotten the Eagles partnership, so everything works together" (Suess et al., 2014). In addition, it was on the turf field built as part of the Eagles partnership where Penn Men's Lacrosse team began working with Comegys students to teach them a new sport. Young Quakers Community Athletics is now an afterschool initiative between the Netter Center and Penn's Division of Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics.<sup>7</sup>

Penn and the Netter Center have also received significant recognition for civic and community partnerships based on external evaluation of its work. The Netter Center received the inaugural W.T. Grant Foundation Youth Development Prize that

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<sup>7</sup>Young Quakers Community Athletics (YQCA), directed through the Netter Center's University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS) program, creates mutually beneficial partnerships between select Penn intercollegiate athletic teams and West Philadelphia K-8 public schools. The Penn players mentor the children on the field and off. In addition to the mentoring, the program provides staff, coaches, uniforms, sports equipment, bus transportation, and access to the University's world-class playing fields at no cost to the schools or their students. The program participants also benefit from the Netter Center's comprehensive UACS programming, which brings additional academic, human, and material resources from Penn to their schools during the school day, after school, and in the summer. Founded in 2012 with boys' lacrosse at Comegys, YQCA has grown quickly to include girls' lacrosse at Comegys and co-ed track at Huey and Lea Schools with plans for reaching even more students through additional sports in the future. Preliminary results of YQCA have shown positive results for both the K-8 students and Penn students. For example, from a survey of Young Quakers in 2013–2014: 93 % responded that YQCA has helped them learn to treat all people with respect; 89 % reported that YQCA has motivated them to try harder at school and make better choices in life; and 84 % said that YQCA has helped them to focus in school. See Suess, G. (2014). YQCA PR spring 2014 post program prelim findings 2014. Unpublished internal document, Netter Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania.

was selected by the National Academy of Sciences in 2003. This award honored the university-assisted community school program for its “high-quality, evidence-based collaborative efforts that generate significant advances in knowledge while increasing the opportunities for young people to move successfully through adolescence with ample support and care.” Recognition of this work has grown during the tenure of President Amy Gutmann and is supported by Penn Compact 2020, her strategic vision for propelling the University forward in its core endeavors of teaching, research, and service based on the following tenets: “increasing access to Penn’s exceptional resources; integrating knowledge across academic disciplines; and engaging nationally, locally and globally to bring the benefits of Penn’s research, teaching and service to individuals and communities at home and around the world” (Gutmann, 2013, p. 3). Under her leadership, the University has twice received the Presidential Award of the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll (the highest federal honor a college or university can receive for its commitment to community service) in 2008 and 2012. And in 2009, Penn was named, along with the University of Southern California, “Best Neighbor” university in the national *Saviors of our Cities: 2009 Survey of Best College and University Civic Partnerships*.

## Adaptation

Beginning in the early 1990s, a number of institutions began to express interest in the model of university-community-school collaboration being developed by the Netter Center and its school and community partners, what was then known as the West Philadelphia Improvement Corps (WEPIC). In 1987 and 1988, the German Marshall Fund of the U.S. supported education study tours involving WEPIC partners that resulted in a publication by the Brookings Institution (1989) entitled, *Schoolworks: Reinventing public schools to create the workforce of the future, innovations in education and job training from Sweden, West Germany, France, Great Britain, and Philadelphia*. Increasing numbers of visitors came to learn about the university-assisted community school program. Local and national press coverage, as well as the speeches and writings of the Center director and Penn colleagues, drew attention to the work at a time when colleges and universities, particularly those in urban areas, were just beginning to seriously explore campus-community partnerships and the service-learning and civic engagement movements were in their early stages (Hartley, 2009).

In 1992, the Center entered into discussions with the Wallace Foundation (then the DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund) about the replication of the university-assisted community school model, particularly the Center’s work at Turner Middle School, which was the most developed site. The cohort of students involved in WEPIC’s school, afterschool, weekend and summer programs were demonstrating better attendance, fewer suspensions and improved academics. A planning grant creating the WEPIC Replication Project was awarded for an 18-month period to

explore the feasibility of adapting the model nationally. The WEPIC Replication Project hosted a series of visitors and conferences, and then issued a request for proposals that were reviewed by its independent advisory board. A one million dollar implementation grant supported Miami University of Ohio (for work in Cincinnati), University of Kentucky-Lexington, and the University of Alabama-Birmingham for an initial 3 years, including training and technical assistance activities.

With additional grants from the Wallace Foundation and the Corporation for National Community Service's Learn and Serve America program, 23 university-assisted community school (UACS) programs were funded across the country through 2004, including 2- and 4- year colleges and research universities.<sup>8</sup> In 2000, the Mott Foundation funded the Netter Center to support the Foundation's training efforts for the rapidly expanding Twenty-First Century Community Learning Center programs, particularly to focus on the role of higher education-community-school partnerships. Through 2005, 75 partnership teams came to Penn for training, far exceeding our original expectations about levels of interest.

The early adaptation activities also sought to create an informal network among the colleagues who were adapting Penn's university-assisted community school model. Meetings of the site leaders were held at Penn as well as at the funded replication sites, including meetings in Lexington, Cincinnati, Birmingham, Albuquerque, and Denver. This network grew through annual conferences hosted by the Netter Center, as well as the numerous site visits to Penn, and the work occurring around the country was documented in the Netter Center's *Universities and Community Schools* journal.

With the naming gift to the Netter Center in 2007, the strategy for adaptation shifted from funding individual university-assisted community school partnerships to creating regional training centers, based at higher educational institutions that have demonstrated significant experience and commitment to the work. The long-term goal is to create a national network encompassing communities, cities, and regions across the U.S.

In 2008, the Netter Center began supporting the development of multi-state regional training centers on the university-assisted community school model. The University of Oklahoma-Tulsa was selected as the first regional training center in the southwest. Although funding through Penn concluded in 2011, the Netter Center's Tulsa partners continue their important work through the Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma an anchor institution consortium comprised of nine higher educational institutions and other community partners that links high schools to col-

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<sup>8</sup>The 23 colleges and universities that were funded are: Bates College; University of Southern Maine-Lewiston/Auburn College; University of Rhode Island; Rhode Island College; Johnson and Wales University; Miami University of Ohio; Temple University; Lock Haven University; Slippery Rock University; University of Dayton; Central State University; Clark Atlanta University; Morehouse College; Mercer University, Macon, Ga.; University of Kentucky-Lexington Campus; Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis; University of Denver; Regis University; Community College of Aurora; University of Michigan-Ann Arbor; University of New Mexico at Albuquerque; New Mexico State University; and West Virginia University.

leges through academic service-learning projects, college readiness, and career exploration. Since September 2012, the Higher Education Forum has been housed at Tulsa Community College. The Forum has partnered closely with Tulsa, Union, Broken Arrow and other local school districts, giving particular focus to college access and better alignment between high schools and post-secondary education under the theme of “One Agenda.” Other partners in this work include the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce and Junior Achievement. The Higher Ed Forum also developed a “Request for Academic Partnerships” protocol “to support the processes involved with identifying, creating, evaluating, and sustaining academic partnerships between P-12, higher education, and community agencies.” The RAP process has helped ensure an inclusive, transparent approach to higher education-community-school partnerships in Tulsa and is informing the work of other colleges and universities (Higher Education Forum, [n.d.](#)).

In September 2011, the Netter Center selected the Center for Service and Learning at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) to develop the second regional training center, the Midwest Center for University-Assisted Community Schools. The IUPUI proposal was selected from a strong pool of university applicants from across the country, given the depth of its engagement in the community schools in Indianapolis, particularly the award winning George Washington Community High School. The Midwest Center worked to deepen the model in Indianapolis, provided training to Indianapolis School District (IPS) principals and principal licensure candidates, as well as provided professional development on UACS strategies for colleagues throughout the Midwest. IUPUI is sustaining the work of the Midwest Center for UACS by permanently housing it, as of fall 2014, in the University’s new Center for Family, School, and Neighborhood Engagement.

In September 2014, the Netter Center selected the University of Connecticut (UConn) as its third regional training center. UConn’s Office of Public Engagement created the New England University-Assisted Community School Collaborative, which is further developing its partnerships with community schools in Hartford, as well as throughout Connecticut, in addition to providing guidance on the university-assisted community school model for higher educational institutions and their school partners throughout New England.

The Netter Center has also supported national networks in support of community schools. In 1997, it was one of the founding partners of the Coalition for Community Schools, housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership, to promote and advance community schools. Over 160 regional and national organizations are now partners in the Coalition. The Netter Center’s director served as the chair from its inception until spring 2012. With a growing number of colleges and universities engaged in community schools, the Netter Center worked with the Coalition to develop a University-Assisted Community Schools Network in 2015 to share resources, best practices, and advance the work. The University-Assisted Community Schools Network is working to create a professional learning community among faculty members, administrators, and practitioners who are engaged in university-community partnerships and community schools.



Additionally, the Netter Center's director is also a founding member of the Anchor Institutions Task Force (AITF). He chaired a Task Force of twenty university presidents and academics that produced a report for incoming U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan on, "Anchor Institutions as Partners in Building Successful Communities and Local Economies" in February 2009. The report emphasized the need for more collaborative policy approaches, promoting HUD's potentially catalytic role in stimulating interagency cooperation across the Federal government. The group, impressed with the extraordinarily positive response to their report, decided to form a permanent Anchor Institutions Task Force (AITF). The AITF is now a formal organization with the mission of forging democratic civic partnerships involving anchor institutions. With over 600 members, AITF is guided by the core values of collaboration and partnership, equity and social justice, democracy and democratic practice, and commitment to place and community (Marga Inc., [n.d.](#)).

## A Developing Framework

We recognize that local context is critical in the UACS model—each higher education institution (whether a community college, college or university) has different needs, strengths and resources just as local public schools and communities have distinct assets, needs, and interests. However, we suggest that there is a framework that helps to produce an optimally functioning university-assisted community school. The key elements of this framework, based on two decades of our own work and research and the experience and research of our replication sites, are:

1. A central office on campus that coordinates university resources. For this work to sustain, it must become integrated into the mission of the higher educational institution, and not remain the effort of a few faculty members.
2. Engagement across the campus that involves multiple schools and departments.
3. A school principal who welcomes and encourages the partnership, and conveys this philosophy to the school faculty and staff.
4. A coordinator at the school site who is the link between the school, the community, and the higher educational institution. The coordinator may be an employee of the university, the school, or from the community.
5. Community school staff that are integrated into the school's operation, so that planning for and provision of supports for students, their families and the community are as seamless as possible.
6. Parent/community involvement through advisory boards or other mechanisms to advise on the supports needed in the school and the delivery of such services.

Numerous colleges and universities continue to adapt the university-assisted community school model. The University of Dayton (UD) is a key partner in the Dayton Neighborhood School Centers. Initiated after the end of court-ordered busing in 2002, the Neighborhood School Centers adapted the community schools

approach believing that community building was the prerequisite to the programming in the schools. Five neighborhoods and their elementary schools and local leaders, coordinated by UD, began a process of building sustainable partnerships. The five Neighborhood School Centers, each with a local nonprofit as the lead agency, offer a diverse range of programming, all emphasizing development of the assets of youth and the community. The University at Buffalo, through the UB Center for Urban Studies, is similarly advancing school and community development through a range of partnerships focused on neighborhoods in Buffalo's East Side. Futures Academy (a traditional Pre-K through 8th grade public school) is the site for its "Community as Classroom" initiative that advances student learning and development through community improvement activities. The students study their neighborhood's history, especially the built environment, and work on projects to improve the community. For example, Futures Academy students worked with UB students and area residents on the Futures Garden project, transforming a vacant, derelict lot near the school into a community garden and ArtPark.

In Miami, Florida International University has established the "Education Effect," its university-assisted community school partnership with Northwestern High School to improve learning and college access, which is funded in large part by JPMorgan Chase Foundation. The partnership is increasing the number of dual enrollment classes at Northwestern High, creating an aquaponics science lab, and bringing the high school students to FIU to learn about college life. Many others—Binghamton University—State University of New York, Johns Hopkins University, Montclair State University, Seattle University, University of California-Los Angeles, University of Maryland-Baltimore, and University of Tennessee-Knoxville to name a few—are also developing a university-assisted community schools approach.

The partnerships between higher educational institutions and their communities that have adapted this approach demonstrate a range of positive impacts, including improved achievement in K-12 schools; application of undergraduates' and graduates' knowledge to local, real-world settings; growth of faculty involvement in engaged scholarship; and genuine, collaborative relationships between universities and their local communities.<sup>9</sup> University-assisted community schools have also enabled schools of education at many of these sites to assume new leadership roles within their institutions, as their concentration of relevant expertise puts them in a position to help formulate and guide university-wide engagement strategies with local schools. Through this role, schools of education can better prepare teachers to understand and implement strategies that support parent and community involvement, as well as a pedagogy that engages students in real-world problem solving.

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<sup>9</sup>For Penn data, please see section on Promising Findings above. For data on other sites, please see Harkavy, I., & Hartley, M. (Issue Eds.). (2009). *Universities in partnership: strategies for education, youth development, and community renewal: new directions for youth development*, 122. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Periodicals. In particular, see pp. 19–40 for information on University at Buffalo; pp. 41–60 for Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; and pp. 81–106 for University of Dayton. For data on Florida International University, see O'Neil, D. (Winter 2011–2012). The education effect. *FIU Magazine* (pp. 17–21). Miami, FL: Florida International University Division of External Relations.

Participation in the Netter Center's fall 2012 international conference, hosted in celebration of its 20th Anniversary, is a powerful indicator of the ever-increasing reach of the university-assisted community school concept. The two-day conference on "The Role of Higher Education-Community-School Partnerships in Creating Democratic Communities Locally, Nationally and Globally" drew over 500 participants from nearly 80 colleges and universities and 110 local, national, and global organizations across the U.S. and seven other countries. The meeting featured a number of major plenaries and thematic sessions on key topics related to university-community-school partnerships, including college access, nutrition and health, STEM, arts and culture, education and citizenship, poverty and race, anchor institutions, as well as perspectives from university and college presidents.

## Conclusion

Even with partnerships dating back over 20 years with schools and the community of West Philadelphia, an expanding group of faculty and students involved in academically based community service teaching and learning, and visible and sustained support for the Netter Center from President Gutmann, serious impediments have prevented Penn from realizing the potential of university-assisted community schools in practice. These impediments—including intellectual fragmentation, a discipline-based faculty rewards system, and the legacy of the ivory tower—have also had the impact of slowing Penn's development as a truly democratic, cosmopolitan, engaged, civic university (Hartley et al., 2009; Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2010). They have reinforced, in Franklin's wonderful phrase, an "unaccountable prejudice in favor of ancient Customs and Habitudes" (Reinhold, 1968, p. 224), rather than helping to realize Franklin's original vision for the university to educate students with "an *Inclination* join'd with an *Ability* to serve Mankind, one's Country, Friends and Family [Original Emphasis]" (Franklin, 1749).

Indeed, university-assisted community schools now being developed at Penn and elsewhere have a long way to go before they can fully mobilize the powerful, untapped resources of their own institutions and of their communities, including those found among individual neighbors and in local institutions (such as businesses, social service agencies, faith-based organizations, and hospitals). Among other things, this will require more effective coordination of public and private funding streams and services. Government is indispensable in this process. Through financial incentives and the bully pulpit, government should encourage community colleges, colleges, and universities *to do well by doing good*—that is, to better realize their missions by contributing *significantly* to developing and sustaining democratic schools and communities (Harkavy & Hodges, 2012).

Institutions of higher education are essential for solving schooling and educational problems. In recent years, as we have discussed, civic and community engagement has developed among an increasing number of higher educational institutions through the development of university-assisted community schools. That engagement needs

to be both deeper (more significant, serious, and sustained) and wider (involving many more colleges and universities). Nonetheless, we think that recent history indicates that university-assisted community schools are a promising approach for effective and efficient school reform, pre-K through higher education.

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## Part III

# Introduction to Part III: Promising Innovations and Going to Scale for Systems Change

The advanced exemplars featured in the preceding eight chapters can be characterized in five ways. (1) They have moved beyond the status of “special projects”, i.e., ones that depend entirely on short-term grants and other special funding initiatives. (2) All are tailor-made for particular places with their respective population characteristics, school/community ecologies, and somewhat unique public policy environments. (3) All remain adaptive social experiments, and unavoidably so because there is no escape from the surrounding novelty, uncertainty, and complexity amid the never-ending quest to achieve desirable outcomes at scale. (4) All are grounded in explicit recognition that the achievement of desirable child, school, family, and community outcomes hinges on two new working relationships: (a) partnerships among schools, child and family serving agencies, universities, governments, and increasingly, private sector organizations; and (b) Collaborative working arrangements involving educators, social and health service providers, university faculty members, governmental officials, and representative young people, parents/caregivers, and community leaders. (5) All offer timely, important opportunities for colleagues elsewhere in the world to “go to school” on what these leaders have prioritized, accomplished, and learned, potentially facilitating a rapid dissemination and scale-up.

Framed by these five keynote characteristics, comparative analysis of these eight chapters yields fourteen themes.

- Turbulent public policy environments with contradictory rationales pose never-ending challenges. The prime example: Policy incentives for alternative school designs, encouraging and supportive in one light, also constrain and even inhibit these new school-related designs. Traditional performance accountability requirements, which were developed for an industrial age, stand-alone school, top the list of constraints.
- These exemplars benefit from school-community governance and leadership structures, albeit of different kinds. Some enjoy oversight from governmental structures and offices, while others benefit from special intermediary organizations that effectively organize and mobilize diverse stakeholders for collective

action while performing critical roles for resource coordination and maximization.

- These schools are not panaceas for concentrated, place-based social and economic disadvantage, but every proposed solution must include new school-related designs. In other words, schools are necessary, but by themselves insufficient to address every indicator of social and economic disadvantage.
- Educational leaders increasingly understand that children’s academic outcomes depend on other outcomes indicative of overall child well-being, and so growing numbers of them frame and name sub-optimal child well-being indicators as “barriers to learning, engagement, and school success.”
- A dominant feature of this new school-related design reflects this barrier orientation. It is the configuration of school-based and school-linked health and social services (broadly defined) to address students’ barriers to learning, healthy development, academic achievement, and overall school success.
- A second dominant feature follows suit: In the main, these new school-related designs have been developed by educators and other helping professionals, particularly in the formative stages. “Professionals know best” is a recurrent theme and core feature in part because policy makers have structured grants and provided incentives with this orientation.
- Although recognition is growing about the rapidly-changing nature of family system dynamics, in the main the focus is on children and youths—operationalized narrowly as “students.” Two-generation, family-centered models and strategies rarely are emphasized, signaling a timely opportunity for strategic innovation.
- The core idea of an extended school day is gaining popularity, enabling educators to provide supportive, safe havens for children and gain more influence over how children spend their time.
- These exemplars also earn the descriptor “advanced” because many have three distinguishing features: (1) Their reliance on assessment and performance data in all manner of decisions; (2) Their mechanisms for evaluation-learning, continuous quality improvement; and (3) Their increasing tendency to frame and advance their work by means of an explicit, testable theory of change or logic model.
- All are making progress with the never-ending struggle to make the endemic complexity in this new design more manageable. Many leaders are striving to strike a balance between linear logic with its one-at-a-time, step-wise, technical problem solving protocols and manifest needs for new protocols and practices that simultaneously addressing co-occurring needs and problems across several fronts.
- All of these exemplars have emergent structures and strategies for cross-boundary leadership and program/service coordination, albeit with the proviso that their work is not done.
- Schools called community schools and community learning centers enjoy new facilities as part of innovative school building architectures. Thanks to a timely, strategic combination of function and form, these new school-related building

architectures announce to all external constituencies that something new, different and better is available to young people, adults, and entire family systems.

- All have figured out, or are in the process of figuring out, how to address funding needs. Leaders have been clever and skillful in leveraging net new money while reallocating existing funds. Often hidden from view are the difficult, but consequential decisions leaders have made to stop offering some programs and services in order to reallocate funds for other priorities indicated by their assessment data.
- Leaders have not yet mounted a dual agenda characterized as “inside out” (i.e., schools help to improve local communities) and “outside in” (i.e., local community economic and social development initiatives are dovetailed with new school designs, helping educators succeed).

Together, these fourteen themes are instructive to newcomers to this new design, helping to prepare them for the work that lies ahead. At the same time, they should provide comfort to more experienced colleagues who may wonder whether the needs and challenges they face are unique.

The final three chapters build on these common themes, and they also extend the conceptual foundation provided in Part I. Chapter 13 identifies and describes several possibilities for future innovations. Chapter 14 focuses on start-up, scale-up, scale-out, sustainability, and continuous improvement. Chapter 15 provides a systems change framework that encompasses universities and governmental agencies, setting the stage for policy learning and international networks that speed up design, development, research and evaluation and policy learning and innovation.



# Chapter 13

## Closing Two Achievement Gaps: Nominees for Practice and Policy Innovations

Hal A. Lawson and Dolf van Veen

**Abstract** Worldwide the idea of “the achievement gap” refers to the academic learning of students and the overall performance of entire schools. A second achievement gap also merit attention: The gap between rich and poor students, one that indicates that, for too many young people in several parts of the world, the circumstances surrounding their births determine their life chances. Community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools can be configured, implemented and improved in ways that address both gaps. Building on the compelling, evidence-based accounts provided by the lead-authors of the chapters comprising Part II, this chapter identifies important next phases in the development of this innovative school design. Examples of these next phases start with new language and frameworks for planning, specifying, and evaluating interdependent relationships among educators, community health and social service providers, parents and community leaders. Next phases also include needs to differentiate between partnerships among schools and other organizations and collaboration among people. Additionally, the examples extend to new ideas for how special subjects such as art, music, drama and physical education can be reconfigured to facilitate diverse students’ social inclusion and social integration. Perhaps above all, the priority for connecting community school components to classrooms is emphasized, improving teachers’ work and enriching students learning. This classroom-connected, teacher-supportive design is an advanced feature that moves these new schools toward innovative, integrated social pedagogy and away from a deficit-oriented, “fix, then teach” approach to services for vulnerable children and

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their families. Last, but not least, opportunities remain to expand this new school design to emphasize school-and-work and school-to-work initiatives, together with economic innovations such as time dollar programs and micro-lending schemes for small businesses. The reminder here is that services alone will not lift people out of poverty or provide pathways toward prosperity and social integration.

**Keywords** Achievement gap • Social inclusion and integration • Complex change • Teacher supports and resources • School-to-work • Economic development • Community school • At-risk youths

Although each of the innovative exemplars featured in the chapters constituting Part 2 has unique features, these special exemplars also can be appreciated together as a collective design experiment. In other words, each is like a piece for the same puzzle. Although this puzzle remains unfinished, it has immense potential for better policy and improved practice. To capitalize on this potential, it is timely to consider networked communities of practice, which enable collective knowledge generation, innovation exchanges, mutual assistance, and policy-related lesson drawing (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2015).

All such collective puzzle solving is facilitated when leaders have the equivalent of a picture on the top of a puzzle box. Two such metaphorical pictures provide an appropriate way to launch this chapter because they provide opportunities to explore possible missing pieces in the puzzle.

One picture is framed by the persistent inability of schools serving significant numbers of vulnerable students to achieve desirable academic achievement outcomes at scale. We call this puzzle-solving picture “the old achievement gap” because it features students’ academic achievement.

The frame for this picture is narrow, and it often constrains new school designs such as the one featured in this book. It is founded on the conventional, inherited idea that schools solely are academic institutions concerned nearly exclusively with young people in their role as students. In this special framework, educators and schools are accountable for student academic achievement, while other helping professions (e.g., social work, nursing, public health) and their respective organizations are accountable for other child and family well-being indicators.

What we call the new achievement gap is founded on growing awareness of profound inequalities involving children’s well-being (Ben-Arieh, 2007). Child well-being is influenced by co-occurring and interlocking social and economic determinants, particularly ones nested in, and influenced by, family well-being and place-based vitality. So, for example, children’s academic achievement outcomes depend in part on improvements in family well-being outcomes (Briar-Lawson, Lawson, & Hennon with Jones, 2001), and family system outcomes are influenced by housing, food security, and employment opportunities.

Additionally, child and family outcomes and school outcomes often depend on improvements in the particular places where they reside (Taylor, McGlynn, & Luter, 2013). The new social geography of education and schooling showcases the importance of urban neighborhoods, inner ring suburbs, rural communities, and entire regions (Dyson & Kerr, 2015; Kerr, Dyson, & Raffo, 2014; Sampson, 2012; Tate, 2012).

This child well-being gap extends to a priority for reducing inequality—and without a predetermined political solution. Although inequality has been a constant in many nations, and human diversity alone gives rise to unavoidable distinctions and predictable social stratifications, it has become increasingly apparent that problematic equality is rising in some nations (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009); and also that it is durable (Piketty, 2014; Tilly, 1999). Emmenegger, Häusermann, Palier, & Seeleib-Kaiser (2012) characterize this new gap as “the age of dualization.” Brady’s (2009) simple translation is perhaps more appealing: “Rich democracies, poor people.” Either way, the future of democratic societies hinges in part progress toward addressing this new achievement gap.

New school designs such as the one featured in this book provide an “inside-out strategy” for improving selected child well-being, family support, and community development outcomes. Meanwhile, “outside-in strategies” progressively optimize conditions for school success as leaders strive to achieve important community economic and social development outcomes for housing, food security, employment, transportation, and neighborhood safety and security.

The next phase in the international research and development agenda entails joining these inside-out and outside-in strategies in order to simultaneously address both the old achievement gap and the new one. One of the main policy assumptions also is a practice guide. *As progress is made on closing this new achievement gap, the old one also will be closed; and vice versa* (e.g., Basch, 2010; Ben-Arieh, 2007). In other words, over time and with the right conditions, academic learning and achievement will improve for vulnerable students in challenging schools and, as they do, more young people will have access to, and take advantage of, opportunity pathways to employment, well-being, and active democratic citizenship.

In this chapter, we focus primarily on the inside-out strategy. We identify and describe promising innovations for community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools, and multi-services schools. As our chapter title announces, we offer these innovations as nominees, not as mandates. Consistent with the rationale provided in all the previous chapters, each innovation must be adapted so that it is fit for purpose, in special contexts and at particular times.

Although we stop short of claiming that these nominees are requirements, we nevertheless hold the view that these innovations are like missing pieces on the top of the puzzle solving box. As leaders progressively design and implement them and figure out how each piece fits with the others and enhances the whole, they will advance community school-related designs and make measurable progress toward closing both the new and the old achievement gaps.

## **Developing Connections to Classrooms to Enrich the Instructional Core**

Academic learning and achievement are no less important because they are just one important component in child well-being. In other words, improvements in children's academic learning and academic achievement must remain a policy aim and practice goal. A substantial body of research helps to direct efforts directed at closing the old achievement gap (Hattie & Anderman, 2013).

### ***Starting with the Research on School Reform***

Research on the history of school reform in diverse nations oftentimes yields the same two findings. First, the reform problem tends to be narrowly framed to increase student academic achievement, and the solution set typically is restricted to three improvement priorities. They are new curricula, preferred instructional strategies, and, to insure the faithful implementation of new curricula and pedagogies, professional development supports for teachers and school leaders.

The second finding documents disappointment. Unfortunately, myriad reform initiatives fail to penetrate classrooms at scale, and so they do not result in improvements in what and how teachers teach and what and how students learn. Expressed in formal terms, the core technology of conventional schools—also known as the instructional core (Elmore, 2004)—does not improve at scale. In the same vein, key programmatic and behavioral regularities, which are defining features of a school's culture, often prove to be intractable (Sarason, 1996).

The entrenched institution of schooling thus triumphs over all manner of reforms. This unsettling conclusion is a stimulus for timely innovations in community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools. By design, they have the have to potential to yield outcomes that conventional reform models and strategies cannot.

### ***Missing Priorities in Conventional Reforms: Timely Opportunities for Innovation***

The dominant approach to conventional school reform typically omits four priorities, and this oversight helps to explain its disappointing results. These priorities are: (1) Students' barriers to healthy development, learning and overall success in school, many of which are rooted in external causes; (2) Needs and opportunities to gain influence and some measure of control over students' out-of-school time; (3) Educators' overall lack of awareness about what works pedagogically with

vulnerable, culturally- and ethnically-diverse students; and, (4) The adverse effects of these three priorities on teachers' commitments, expectations for themselves as well as their students, job satisfaction, individual and collective efficacy, and retention. All are especially relevant to individual schools, networks of schools, and school districts which serve significant numbers of vulnerable students.

Community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-services schools offer viable solutions to all four priorities-as-opportunities. For example, collaboration with community health and social services professionals, in tandem with collaboration with the school's student support professionals, provides a tested strategy for addressing external barriers to attendance, on-time arrival, healthy development, learning, and overall success in school. In the same vein, collaboration with out-of-school time (OST) providers and positive youth development specialists enables all educators and especially teachers to gain beneficial influence over how young people spend their time. Moreover, both kinds of collaboration (i.e., with community service providers and OST providers) provide insights and practical strategies that teachers can use to connect with diverse students, resulting in differentiated, culturally-competent instruction that improves academic learning (Gay, 2010).

Most of all, as progress is made on these three priorities, beneficial effects for teachers also are evident. For example, teachers who are provided with these supports and resources become more resilient, have higher expectations for themselves and their students, and enjoy comparatively higher levels of job satisfaction (e.g., Day & Gu, 2014).

When these beneficial outcomes are in evidence, two critically important outcomes may be expected to follow. First: Teacher attendance improves (Mendez et al., Chap. 10). Ultimately, teacher retention improves, enhancing schools' innovation readiness and capacity (Weiner, 2009). These twin workforce outcomes increase the probability that vulnerable students will enjoy the opportunity to develop a sense of attachment to a caring adult who works daily with them in classrooms.

### ***Building Systems: Commonalties in a New Classroom-Connected Design***

The achievement of these several, essential outcomes hinges on a formal system for connecting teachers' classroom work with the efforts of both OST providers and community health and social service providers. A formal system entails developing tried and tested mechanisms for facilitating mutually beneficial interactions among teachers, student support professionals, community health and social service professionals, OST providers, and increasingly, parents/caregivers.

Developing this system is akin to building and paving a two-way street. One direction is outside-in. It connects community helping professionals and OST

providers to teachers and their classrooms. The other is from teachers and their classrooms to OST providers and community professionals.

Eight key components in this two-way street system make it work. The first is shared data systems and cross-boundary record-keeping (McLaughlin & London, 2013). The second is linkage protocols with provisions for accurate and useful data and continuous reporting on intervention development and success (Anderson-Butcher, Iachini, & Wade-Mdivanian, 2007). The third is formal communications systems, including computer-assisted mechanisms and structured opportunities for face-to-face information-sharing and joint problem-solving.

The fourth component is cross-boundary coordination. In North America, two kinds of specialists are charged with this function: A health and social services coordinator (typically a social worker) and an OST coordinator (typically a teacher with solid connections and credibility with classroom teachers). In Europe cross-sector, interprofessional teams (education, health and human services) oftentimes are coordinated by educators/pedagogical staff members from schools or a network of schools, and the OST coordinator can also be a staff member working for local authorities and networks of schools (e.g., the chapters from Belgium and the Netherlands).

In both Europe and North America, cross-boundary coordination extends beyond direct practice to policy and resource coordination. Advanced exemplars have a team or council structured consisting of top level leaders from schools, community agencies, and local governments. Some exemplars also have an operational team charged with assessments and other diagnostics as well as planning for prevention and intervention for schools (Edwards & Downes, 2013; Van Veen, 2006, 2012). In nations with specialized schools for special needs students, professionals of special schools are part of these cross-sector, interprofessional teams, connecting mainstream/regular and special schools and contributing to broad agendas for social inclusion of all young people (Van Veen).

The fifth component is a revised system of roles, responsibilities, and working relationships. As with coordinators and the function of coordination, expanded roles, responsibilities and working relationships entail important cross-boundary planning, which starts with the school and extends to community agencies and neighborhood organizations.

The sixth component is a resource development and allocation plan that is tailor-made for this new system. This new system includes dedicated time blocks for this all-important collaboration between teachers and other program and service providers.

The last two components often are missing from technical systems. One is a clear, coherent, aligned, and feasible plan for teacher-supportive, classroom-connected interprofessional collaboration (Lawson, 2003, 2004). Such a plan provides shared understanding among all of the involved adults—OST providers, community professionals, student support professionals, teachers, and parents—that they depend on each other. Genuine interprofessional collaboration is not possible without these shared perceptions of interdependent relationships (Lawson, 2003, 2004).

Finally, all of the collaborating professionals, but especially classroom teachers, need to have shared mental maps, i.e., visual pictures that demonstrate the differences between the new system and the old, “non-system.” Only when everyone perceives the benefits will they exercise joint ownership over the new design, endorse the common purposes it offers, and join forces to develop, institutionalize and sustain the system. Figures 13.1 and 13.2 provide two such systems design pictures (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997).

### Stopping Vicious Cycles and Starting Virtuous Ones

Figure 13.1 indicates that, absent the new system, classroom teachers and students with unmet needs typically become enmeshed in unproductive and relationship-damaging interactions. A vicious cycle is in evidence when every problematic teacher-student interaction builds on the former ones and leads to others that become increasingly intense and complicated. These vicious cycles inevitably produce undesirable, preventable outcomes. One is reduced academically engaged learning time for all students in the class. Furthermore, these vicious cycles are associated with suspensions, expulsions, preventable student and teacher absenteeism, and early school leaving or “dropping out” (Freeman & Simonsen, 2015). In brief, a classroom-connected system that prevents these undesirable problems serves students and teachers alike, perhaps providing an important strategy for closing the old achievement gap.

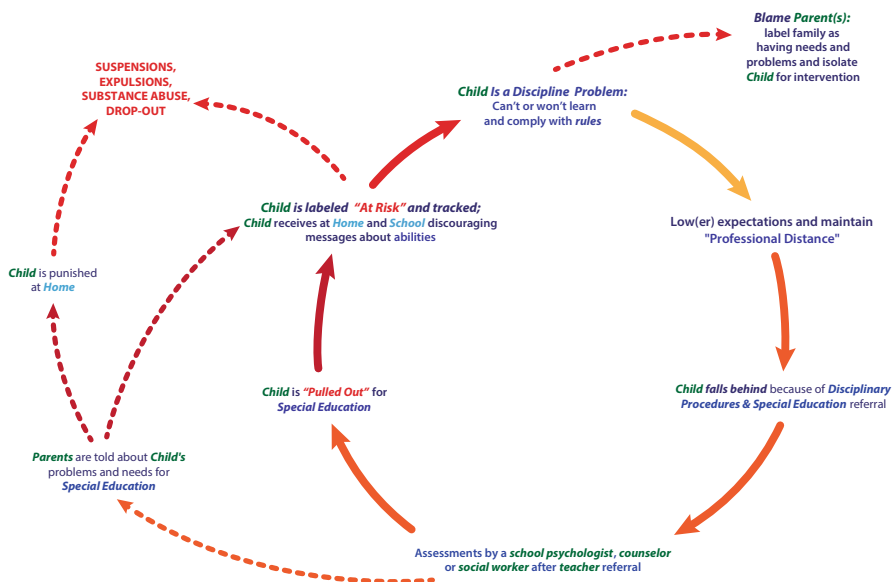
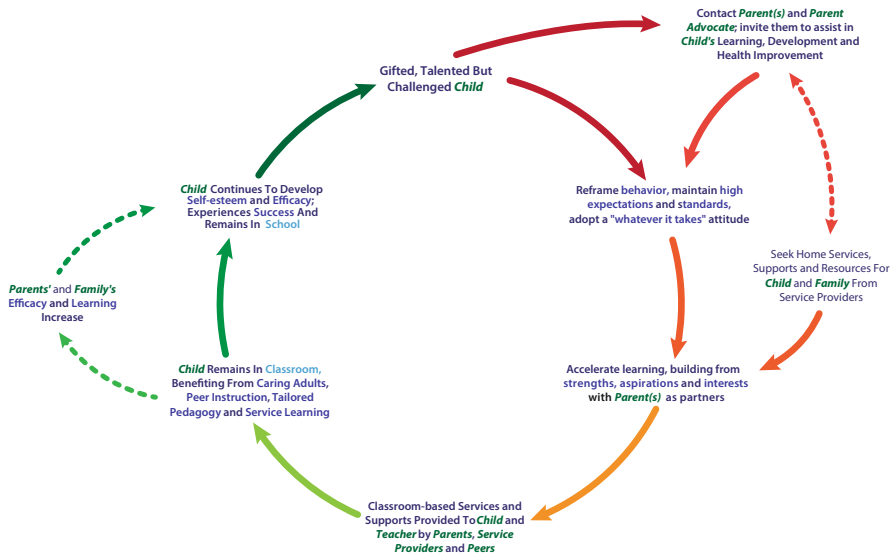


Fig. 13.1 Self-fulfilling prophecies and vicious cycles



**Fig. 13.2** Self-fulfilling prophecies and virtuous cycles

In contrast to familiar vicious cycles that frequently develop when teachers work alone and also when improvement strategies do not penetrate to classrooms, the new system provides assistance, social supports, and resources to teachers, students, parents, service providers, and cross-boundary coordinators. As Fig. 13.2 indicates, virtuous cycles prevent vicious ones, and mutual benefits follow. Teachers benefit as students barriers to engagement, learning and achievement are addressed by service providers. Reciprocally, community service providers serving the same students benefit because young people's sub-optimal classroom experiences and problematic relationships with teachers no longer produce excessive stress, social-emotional problems, and anti-social behavior.

### *Enriching and Enhancing the Instructional Core*

Meanwhile, the benefits to teachers extend to new resources and supports for differentiated instruction (Aronson & Laughter, 2015; Gay, 2010), especially ones facilitated by collaboration with other professionals who also work with the same children. Teachers' collaboration with OST providers, for example, offers much-needed opportunities to increase students' academically-engaged learning time, starting with homework clubs but including bountiful opportunities for multiple teaching and learning strategies that are difficult to mount and sustain in classrooms. Reciprocally, OST providers often discover students' special interests and



pedagogical needs, offering teachers solid information about how best to reach particular students and providing important information regarding how best to differentiate instructional and learning strategies for particular students.

Where teachers' relationships with health and social service providers are concerned, these new collaborations have the potential to yield integrated teaching-learning and social/health services strategies (Mooney, Kline, & Davoren, 1999; Van Veen, 2012). These integrated strategies bridge the divides between a social service or a health intervention and a classroom-based instructional strategy. These special collaborations between teachers and service providers also offer opportunities to expand the idea of a professional learning community (presently teachers only) to classroom-based, interprofessional learning communities.

The expansive framework for vibrant, equitable "learning ecosystems" provided by Prince, Saveri, & Swanson, (2015) offers additional opportunities for innovation. This framework emphasizes equitable opportunities for learning, not just classroom-based instruction provided by teachers. Granting this framework's merits, at the present time all such OST learning opportunities will fall short of their immense potential if they are not connected to schools' instructional core.

In all of the above-identified ways, community schools and their counterparts offer critically important opportunities to develop a formal system that connects classroom teachers with OST providers and their programs as well as health and social service providers and their services. This formal system is explicitly designed to enrich and improve the instructional core, increase the quality and quantity of academically-engaged learning time, and address two kinds of barriers to academic learning and achievement: (1) Students' barriers and (2) Teacher-related barriers, including their retention. Developing this system with evaluation-driven, continuous improvement methods is a solid strategy for closing the old achievement gap.

However, a fully-developed system requires trail-blazing work on two companion innovations: (1) Specification of interdependent working relationships among specialized professionals (e.g., teachers, mental health professionals such as psychologists and social workers, nurses); and (2) Formal, observable, and testable frameworks for orchestrating and coordinating multiple inventions implemented in schools, community agencies, homes, and other places.

### ***Beyond the Collaboration Buzzword: Specifying Interdependent Working Relationships***

The second innovation is in many ways inseparable from the first, and it also provides a strategy for closing the academic achievement gap. The main idea is that collaboration among teachers, student support professionals, OST providers, and community health and social services professionals is a specialized intervention (Claiborne & Lawson, 2005). Like all manner of interventions, these professionals' collaboration efforts need to be specified.

Who needs to collaborate and toward what ends? What exactly does this collaboration entail and require? How does it influence the classroom-connected system described above? How does it influence the formation and operation of school-based and school-linked, interprofessional teams?

Unfortunately, collaboration has become yet another buzzword, one applied loosely and even carelessly to describe needs and opportunities for people to work and learn together. In many parts of the world, collaboration's meanings, requirements, and desired outcomes also are clouded by its conflation with "partnership." So-called "interagency collaboration" is another example of this conflation (Iachini et al. 2015). This popular conflation adds to the difficulties and creates its own set of challenges because a partnership also is a specialized intervention.

Intervention specification starts with a strategy for ending and preventing this conflation. *Collaboration means interdependent relationships among people, while partnership refers to new relationships among organizations*—schools, community health and social services agencies, youth development and youth care organizations, and local businesses. Two units of analysis are implicated here: Relationships among people (collaboration) and relationships among organizations (partnership). Where community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools are concerned, both are needed. Especially when they are aligned and synchronized, collaboration and partnerships are twin interventions, and they are indicators of advanced or mature exemplars.

An old saying applies to the next set of challenges with collaboration. "The devil's in the details." In short, it is one thing to proclaim interdependent working relationships among teachers and educators, student support professionals, OST providers, and community health and social services professionals. It is quite another to specify how these relationships play out in everyday practice; and also to craft policy that provides incentives and rewards for optimal arrangements. The effectiveness of new practice protocols and all manner of collaborative working arrangements (e.g., teachers' professional learning communities, interprofessional student services teams, interprofessional family support teams) depends on such specifications.

The theory of action for community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools and multi-service schools also depends on such specifications. Recall the main assumptions for this theory of action (theory of change)—as initially presented in Chap. 3. (1) Children's schooling-related needs, problems, and aspirations influence and are influenced by their counterparts in other realms of their lives. (2) Improvements in children's school engagement, academic learning and overall school performance will transfer to improvements in other aspects of their lives (e.g., improved mental health). (3) Reciprocally, improvements in, for example, a child's mental health via mental health interventions will transfer to schools, ultimately resulting in improved attendance, on-time arrival, engagement, academic learning, and overall school performance; (4) In addition to the transferability of outcomes from a single intervention (e.g., mental health) to these school-related outcomes, multiple interventions can and must be implemented simultaneously, harmoniously and synergistically when children's needs and

problems co-occur and nest in each other such that addressing one entails addressing one or more of the others—and indicating that the professionals who address them depend on each other.

Thompson's (2003) path-breaking conceptualization of three kinds of interdependent relationships provides guidance for the difficult work that lies ahead. He offers important choices for designers of various collaboration configurations, starting with the classroom-connected system described above. Together these three conceptualizations open evaluation pathways toward important questions regarding the value-added effects of the kinds of teams, communities of practice, and networks, which are centerpieces in community school-related designs (Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat, 2011).

These three conceptualizations of interdependent relationships are not mutually exclusive, i.e., a particular community school can have systems for all three. What matters is that the targeted relationships among people and their practice strategies are specified. With such specification, professionals know their respective roles and responsibilities in relationship to others. Only then can they be evaluated and improved systematically, enhancing the probability that children families are served, and maximizing the efficient use of precious resources.

### *Sequential Interdependence*

Sequential interdependence is exemplified by an industrial organization's product assembly line. In community school-like designs, sequential interdependence is founded on turn-taking by two or more individuals or teams. Typically individuals and teams are expected to proceed in a predetermined order. In some cases, program and service scripts or protocols are developed that designated roles, responsibilities and relationships and specify the required sequence.

The pattern here is a familiar one. As each individual or team takes its turn with a student, a sub-population of students, or a family system and implements one or more specialized interventions, an essential, short-term objective, also called a proximal outcome, is achieved. Over time and with the best sequencing, the achievement of each short-term objective progressively contributes to the achievement of a major goal. In Weick's (1984) terms: Each small win ultimately adds up to huge gains.

A community learning center example illustrates sequential interdependence. Students with mental health needs such as depression and suicidal ideation cannot be expected to learn optimally and succeed in school until such time as these two needs are addressed. Optimal practice models recommend therapeutic services provided by a specially prepared mental health professional, oftentimes one employed by a community-based mental health agency.

In this sequential relationship, the student initially is referred to the agency. The mental health professional starts by providing services, i.e., s/he implements and monitors evidence-based mental health interventions. The main assumption is

that the teacher cannot succeed and progress with the child until such time as the mental health need is addressed effectively. In other words, the teacher depends fundamentally on the mental health professional. S/he cannot achieve academic learning and classroom and school outcomes until such time as the mental health need is addressed. Honig, Kahne, and McLaughlin (2001) characterize this relationship pejoratively as “fix, then teach.” Setting aside the pejorative connotations, this collaborative relationship is an example of sequential interdependence.

All such sequential interdependence involves careful, orchestrated task coordination, whether within a team, inside an organization, or at the connected boundaries of schools and social/health service organizations. It can be viewed as a collective function or activity, one that is scripted and even regimented; and with shared responsibility and accountability among the several professionals.

### ***Reciprocal Interdependence***

Reciprocal interdependence is a special kind of collaboration, and it responds to three important needs. One is how long it takes to provide assistance, social supports, services, and resources to a student, a student sub-population, or a family system. The second need is cost: The longer it takes to meet data-identified needs and the more professionals it requires, the greater the expenditures. The third need is the paramount priority—what it takes to achieve desired outcomes and avoid bad ones.

Whereas sequential interdependence proceeds over a considerable period of time via individual and team turn-taking, reciprocal interdependence is predicated on strong, structured interactions in the here-and-now. The main idea is that no professional can proceed efficiently, effectively, and appropriately without the immediate, timely contributions of other professionals. Above all, the student, student group, or family system cannot make progress unless individual professionals and teams interact and jointly provide services in the here-and-now, synchronizing their respective efforts in the here-and-now and aiming to create a mutually-beneficial synergy.

The above example of the collaboration between the teacher and mental health service provider provides a case in point. The community-based mental health professional quickly finds out that she cannot make progress with the treatment plan until such time as the child’s trajectory in the classroom and the school overall improve. In other words, this mental health professional discovers that a separate, categorical mental health intervention fails to address some of the root causes of the child’s depression and suicidal ideation because it turns out that they are caused in part by the child’s perceptions, experiences, interactions, and behavior in the classroom, perhaps in relation to a particular teacher. Oftentimes, these several needs are associated with vicious cycles that develop between classroom teachers and children with mental health needs (Fig. 13.1).

In brief, neither the mental health professional nor the teacher can make demonstrable progress with the child when their respective interventions are crafted and implemented sequentially. Here, “fix, then teach” logic (sequential interdependence) turns out to be part of the problem. The way ahead necessitates interventions that connect and integrate mental health services and classroom pedagogy in real time, also requiring interdependent relationships between the community mental health professional and the teacher. Their individual and collective social experimentation, directed toward shared outcomes, involves back-and-forth interactions, interchanges, and in-flight adjustments in real time. No one succeeds, i.e., desired outcomes are not achieved, without mutually-beneficial interactions and behavior involving the mental health professional, the teacher, and, of course, the child.

In comparison to sequential interdependence, reciprocal interdependence is more difficult to structure, manage, and facilitate. Where schools and community agencies are concerned, it requires special connective-communicative mechanisms and linkage protocols—as described previously. Significantly, reciprocal interdependence is both a reason and a motive for forming interprofessional, school-linked teams that enable face-to-face intervention planning, progressive monitoring, and fortified, shared perceptions of interdependent relationships. Collaboration’s pattern of reciprocal interdependence is facilitated when special structures such as formal teams are developed; when teams are facilitated and led by specially-prepared leaders and coordinators; and when the social settings for teams are conducive to the institutionalization and sustainability of genuine team collaboration (Edwards, Lunt, & Stamou, 2010; Lawson, 2014; Mellin, Anderson-Butcher, & Bronstein, 2011; Van Veen, 2008).

### *Pooled Interdependence*

Pooled interdependence operates in a laissez faire environment. Here, individuals and teams contribute to each other’s success, but there is no formal plan or system, and no direct leadership and infrastructure, to institutionalize and sustain it. In fact, it may be the case that diverse professionals and educators are unaware of what others do and have done, even though their own efficiency, effectiveness and overall success would not be possible without the contributions-as-achievements of other individuals, teams, and organizations.

The mental health treatment and school success example provides a case in point. Both the mental health professional (and her agency) and the teacher (and his school) may owe their respective achievements to the un-orchestrated and informal contributions of the other(s). In short, in too many schools, interprofessional, collaborative working relationships between teachers, community service professionals, and OST providers are unplanned. Lacking a formal system and a supportive cross-boundary infrastructure, mutually beneficial assistance, social supports, and resources are more like random occurrences.

These features and others make pooled interdependence fragile, and that's just the beginning of its manifest limitations. Staying with the same example, when the mental health needs of students are no longer met, and academic and classroom challenges and problems develop suddenly and systematically, teachers, student support professionals, and school leaders remain in the dark as to what happened and why. This also means that they are left to their own devices about what to do differently and better. The challenges mount when a teacher leaves for another job, or the mental health professional takes maternity leave. Absent a formal system of arrangements, these workforce changes derail plans to coordinate classroom and school interventions with ones mounted in community agencies, homes, and neighborhood organizations. This problem is especially apparent when multiple interventions must be implemented simultaneously to address co-occurring and interlocking needs. Unfortunately, this problem often results in parents/caregivers who are uninformed, uninvolved, or caught between conflicting schedules and service delivery protocols. This is not a recipe for success.

### ***Developing Formal, Coherent, and Feasible Plans for Coordinating Multiple Interventions***

All of the professionals responsible and accountable for the success of community schools community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools depend on each other, and so they must collaborate because many of the children and families they serve have multiple, co-occurring and interlocking needs. Addressing and striving to prevent one need oftentimes entails strategies for addressing and preventing one or more of the others. Examples are plentiful, and they are well-known to every experienced practitioner.

For example, mental health problems such as depression often co-occur with other problems such as substance abuse, lack of student engagement, and unhealthy out-of-school time choices and behavior. Another example: Children in foster care ("looked after children") frequently have adverse childhood experiences that produce trauma-related symptomology, and many needs for special education services in tandem with mental health counselling. Yet another example: Children with parents with substance abuse problems have their own needs, and these needs often cannot be met without companion interventions for parents and the entire family system (e.g., Iachini et al., 2015). One more: Early school leaving or dropping out of school is caused by and associated with many factors, necessitating multiple interventions (Freeman & Simonsen, 2015).

What strategies can community school leaders select, implement and strive to improve in order to orchestrate the progressive implementation and synchronization of multiple interventions? Mindful that there are no easy or firm answers to this important practice and policy question, Weiner, Lewis, Clauser, and Stitzenberg (2012)'s inventory of five strategies provides structural and operational guidance.

Although they are identified and described separately next, they are not mutually exclusive. They may be packaged together in various combinations. These important opportunities for more detailed designs may give rise to several important innovations.

### ***The Accumulation Strategy***

In the accumulation strategy, interventions implemented by various people in schools, community agencies, and neighborhood organizations produce a cumulative effect that yields desired outcomes. Significantly, the effect of any one intervention does not depend on one or more others. In other words, each intervention is independent even though each ultimately contributes to the achievement of interdependent student, family and school outcomes.

This accumulation strategy is associated with the above-described idea of pooled interdependence. These two ideas belong together because their joint effects are implicit, perhaps even coincidental. Arguably, in many fledgling community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-services schools, this combination of pooled interdependence and the accumulation strategy reflects the current status. It provides a baseline for new designs.

In other words, planning for multiple intervention coordination, alignment, and synchronization begins with recognition that no such framework has been developed and also that improved outcomes depend on specifications of how multiple interventions will be coordinated across the boundaries. The following strategies provide important alternatives, and as they are implemented, progress in achieving outcomes will follow.

### ***The Amplification Strategy***

With this second strategy for orchestrating multiple interventions, whether in schools, community agencies, and homes, the effect of one or more interventions is conditional on the effect(s) of one or more others. This strategy is especially salient when co-occurring and interlocking needs must be addressed. Just as each need is nested in one or more others, interventions specially designed for one need also depends on the successful implementation of one or more others.

So, for example, OST interventions to improve a student's homework completion and enhance her engagement may need an "intervention booster." Career counseling and life course developmental planning interventions that connect academic learning with "possible selves" and adult lifestyles are one such booster (Oyersman, Johnson, & James, 2011).

### ***The Facilitation Strategy***

This third strategy for coordinating and orchestrating multiple interventions represents an advanced developmental stage of the amplification strategy. The main difference is noteworthy. In contrast to the informal system and implicit intervention relationships that characterize the amplification strategy, the facilitation strategy is founded on a formal system for orchestrating and coordinating multiple interventions.

For example, a community mental health professional's cognitive-behavioral therapy for a student's depression and social and emotional behavioral problems can be facilitated when this professional dovetails her efforts with companion interventions mounted by educators. Two prime examples of these school-based, facilitative interventions are data-driven response-to-intervention protocols for addressing students' academic and behavioral needs in school and a positive behavior intervention system, which provides generalizable norms, standards, and rules for behavioral conduct in schools, community agencies, and homes (Sailor, 2009).

Like the amplification strategy, with the facilitation strategy the effect of one or more interventions (e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy) is conditional on one or other interventions (e.g., response-to-intervention, positive behavior intervention systems). In contrast to the amplification strategy, in which intervention interactions may be fortuitous, in this facilitation strategy joint intervention causal relationships and combined effects are known and planned.

### ***The Cascade Strategy***

This strategy is built on patterns of sequential interdependence. Here, successive interventions are progressively implemented over time by individual professionals or teams, whether in schools, community agencies, homes, or some combination of these settings. The main idea is that the goodness of fit and power of the first intervention influences and perhaps determines the fit, power, and effectiveness of subsequent interventions. In effect, the first intervention's outcomes (e.g., cognitive behavior therapy provided in a community mental health agency) become inputs or intervention baseline for one or more others (e.g., classroom-based interventions to improve the students' cognitive, behavioral and affective engagement).

Ideally, these cascading effects are additive, integrative, and progressive. However, they also can be regressive and undesirable, especially when no organizing and unifying framework is present. The advantage of formal intervention frameworks is that they increase the probability that desired outcomes will occur, and they act as preventive mechanisms undesirable ones, including unintentional harm caused by professionals with good intentions (Allen-Scott, Hatfield, & McIntyre, 2014).



## ***The Convergence Strategy***

This strategy is built on patterns of reciprocal interdependence. Here, interventions implemented by multiple professionals, oftentimes doing their work in separate, but linked organizations, have an explicit, formal plan for their collaboration. They interact, reinforce, and strengthen each other in real time. In other words, they interact formally in the here-and-now, and they make reciprocal interdependence an explicit aim. Oftentimes working in teams, but also working alone with strong communications systems and linkage protocols, they strive to development complementary, positive interactions among interventions.

Students and families benefit because potentially separate interventions are explicitly dovetailed with the aim of creating harmonious, synergistic relationships. These relationships have structural components that serve as system infrastructure, and they build strong collaborative cultures among specialized professionals employed by different organizations. In these several ways, this convergence strategy provides a timely innovation that promises to advance community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools. For example, this strategy has enormous potential for improving student engagement, while preventing disengagement.

## **Focusing on Student Engagement, Disengagement, and Re-engagement**

A slogan from the youth development field introduces this important student engagement priority and the innovations needed to address it. “Kids vote with their feet.” This slogan directs attention to the developmental pathways toward engagement.

## ***Starting with Proximal Outcomes***

Students’ attendance, on-time arrival, readiness to learn, and varying combinations of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are important prerequisites and co-requisites for academic engagement, learning, and achievement. All can be viewed as proximal outcomes that community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools, and multi-service schools can uniquely achieve systematically; and at scale. These schools’ partnership systems and people-related collaborations can be configured accordingly (Van Veen & Berdowski, 2000).

In fact, accountability-oriented evaluations can and should focus on them as early indicators of progress and effectiveness, as indicated in Chap. 3 (see also several chapters in Part II). When they are omitted, the risks increase of evaluation-driven

“false negatives”—a tragic situation in which evaluators conclude that these new school designs have not made a positive difference, even though they have (Lawson, 1999). The main problem here is that evaluators have employed mismatched methods and have looked in the wrong places for progress toward desirable outcomes.

However, the roots of this problem run deeper. The root problem can be traced to the imprecision of community school-related designs. Too many designer-leaders have not developed formal logic models with synchronized intervention systems that are predicated on the important developmental progression identified above.

To reiterate: This complicated progression starts with regular attendance and on-time arrival; proceeds to learning readiness with varying combinations of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, which facilitates classroom (academic) engagement; and ultimately, when teachers do their jobs and students are engaged, academic learning and achievement improve. Absent such a strategic focus on these engagement-related priorities, and without sufficient specification regarding how multiple interventions are connected and what kinds of interdependent relationships will be prioritized, community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools, and multi-service schools end up as “hollow shell” partnership configurations. Mirroring the limitations of conventional school reform strategies, hollow shell partnerships and loosely-configured, people-related collaborations are insufficiently specified, and they are not riveted on the daily student priorities that matter most. Engagement is one such priority.

### ***Mapping and Addressing Four Kinds of Engagement***

An international handbook devoted exclusively to student engagement provides a rich resource for engagement-focused maps and intervention strategies (Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012). One of its main strengths also is a limitation. Its’ comprehensiveness, especially the variety of engagement conceptualizations and improvement strategies it presents, can be dizzying and paralyzing. Another limitation is an implicit model of the conventional school with egg crate classrooms in which teachers work alone.

Where community schools, community learning centers, multi-services schools, and extended services schools are concerned, a special conception of engagement provides important opportunities for partnership and collaboration innovations that improve results. It is called a social-ecological framework for engagement (Hancock & Zubrick, 2015; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Wilcox, Lawson, & Angelis, 2015).

The framework is ecological because it is founded on the several settings that influence child well-being overall and their engagement in schools, community agencies, and other settings. Engagement is social because, in contrast to biology-related ecologies, it is not strictly determined. Instead, the engagement of individual students and groups of students is malleable. It is socially constructed and constituted by identifiable people (students, parents, educators, helping professionals) in

particular social settings (schools, community agencies, neighborhood organizations, homes) and at particular times.

The same social-ecological conceptualization is germane to student disengagement, i.e., their gradual withdrawal from schools, youth development organizations, and other child and family-serving agencies (Lawson & Lawson, 2013). What's more, this conceptualization applies to the work of re-engaging students (Hancock & Zubrick, 2015), especially those who have dropped out of school (e.g., Mills & McGregor, 2014).

Whether the focus is engagement, disengagement, or re-engagement, this new agenda involves four ecological settings and the engagement opportunities they offer. Figure 13.3 maps these engagement priorities, emphasizing that they are at least related and can be interdependent.

The conventional focus on academic or classroom engagement with its priorities for cognitive, affective, and behavioral indicators remains center-stage, and teachers bear considerable responsibility for it. However—and in contrast to conventional engagement models and walled-in school reform strategies—in this social-ecological conceptualization there are three other kinds of engagement—engagement in school activities, engagement in community organizations, and engagement with family systems in homes. Each of these other three kinds influences, and is influenced by, academic or classroom engagement.

Significantly, this comprehensive, social ecological framework provides additional resources, assistance and supports to teachers and students alike. Simply stated, *people other than classroom teachers share responsibility and accountability for academic engagement*. Such a comprehensive strategy thus is a preventive mechanism for a current problem that is evident world-wide. This strategy is a



**Fig. 13.3** Connecting four engagement priorities and improving them together

potential remedy for unwarranted and excessive blame placed on teachers for students' lack of classroom engagement, learning, and improved achievement. With a social-ecological framework for engagement, responsibilities and accountabilities for engagement are shared.

## School Engagement

School engagement is manifested in students' involvement in school-sponsored co-curricular and extra-curricular programs and services, which are centerpieces in community school-related designs. Examples include student clubs, sports, drama, the arts, newspapers and yearbooks, and honorary societies. The main ideas-as-potential benefits derive from the positive youth development research. When the right conditions are in place and interventions work as planned, students involved in these activities develop a sense of connection to school, a sense of attachment to the caring adults who supervise these programs, and membership in a prosocial peer group. All are facilitators for attendance, on-time arrival, learning readiness and behavioral controls, and student motivation.

What's more, when these co-requisites are harnessed effectively, students' classroom (academic) engagement improves, setting the stage for companion improvements in academic learning and achievement. Reciprocally, academic engagement facilitates school engagement. In this social-ecological framework, these two kinds of engagement are mutually reinforcing (Lawson & Lawson, 2013).

Another important opportunity for innovation has not been described sufficiently, and it is a timely, strategy way to improve efforts directed toward the social integration of diverse students, particular those with special needs who are at risk of peer-related social exclusion. The school subject matter areas that risk being viewed as "expensive frills"—with some targeted for reduced time and resources and perhaps elimination—provide important bridges between academic (classroom engagement) and school engagement, especially so in community school-related designs. Examples of these school subjects include art, music, drama, and physical education. In addition to their subject-specific contributions to children's engagement, education and overall well-being, they offer two other timely, important opportunities to address three manifest needs.

The first is founded on the fast-growing priority for twenty-first century skills and especially the priority for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—the so-called STEM disciplines. These twin priorities are evident in nearly every nation as part of schools' contributions to economic development. A recent noteworthy development expands this rather narrow approach to STEM and economic development. The arts are added—and with a special priority for how the various arts disciplines are needed for the creativity component and team-based problem-solving prioritized in nearly every definition of twenty-first century skills. A new acronym has developed to describe this important expansion of STEM. STEAM is the new one, with the A standing for the arts and providing multiple opportunities to link classroom engagement school engagement and community youth engagement.

The second opportunity concerns the connection between these special school subjects (e.g., physical education and music), their companion extra-curricular activities (e.g., interscholastic sports, school choirs and orchestras), and the important needs for the social integration of culturally and ethnically diverse students. A strong, convincing line of research conducted under the title of “intergroup contact theory” provides structural and operational guidance regarding how these school subjects and extra-curricular activities can be oriented toward social integration alongside school and classroom engagement (e.g., Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011).

The main idea is that school subjects such as physical education and art provide opportunities for diverse groups to enjoy face-to-face contact with each other. This interpersonal contact sets the stage for them to learn about undesirable stereotypes based on race, ethnicity and special physical and developmental needs, paving the way for the elimination of harmful prejudices.

In a nutshell, what makes these school subjects different (and risks the label “frills”) actually provides ideal settings for social inclusion and cultural integration outcomes. These activity-based subjects provide ideal settings for diverse students to develop new friendships—if they are explicitly designed and conducted to achieve this important social integration outcome.

Risking over-simplification, a research-supported script drives teaching, learning, and participation designs. The four components are: (1) Learning about the outgroup(s); (2) Repeated interventions for attitudinal and behavioral changes in relation to one or more outgroups; (3) Generating affective ties among individuals and groups; and (4) Helping individuals and like groups reappraise their initial, prejudicial views and stereotypes, expanding their horizons and preparing them to other students and adults do the same.

These four components can serve as drivers for curricular designs and instructional strategies for physical education, art, drama, music and other subjects, especially designs and strategies that bridge the “regular school day” and “out of school time.” The intervention power of this new bridging configuration increases when designs for community school organizational climates are configured to facilitate the social integration of diverse students, parents, and staff members. Figure 13.4, which is informed by Stanton-Salazaar’s (2001) research, provides examples of formal, explicit norms for positive school climates.

## **Engagement in Communities**

Youth engagement in community agencies and neighborhood organizations is the third kind. As with school engagement, community school-related designs offer a special opportunity because community partnerships are defining features. The main idea is that positive youth development and beneficial out-of-school time programs facilitate both school engagement and classroom engagement—and vice versa.

- Leaders have established explicit standards of excellence with specific goals that announce high expectations for all students
- The announced core values for the community school prioritize racial and ethnic diversity as educational and developmental assets and promote social inclusion
- Students and adults learn, accept, internalize, and help promote norms of reciprocity and mutual obligation in support of social inclusion and social integration.
- Teachers emphasize and implement differentiated, culturally-competent teaching and learning strategies, including strategies that draw on out-of-school time learning and development and also are coordinated with health and social service interventions.
- Student support professionals and community service providers emphasize and implement differentiated, culturally competent interventions, including strategies that are connected to and integrated with classroom pedagogies.
- Parent and community leaders are prepared and supported to serve as cultural brokers who are able to bridge cultural and organizational divides and develop bonding and bridging interpersonal relationships (social capital).
- Teachers, principals, student support professionals, and community service providers have ready access to parent and student cultural brokers and guides who provide embedded professional development and build professionals' resilience and collective efficacy.
- Diverse students and their parents/caregivers enjoy voice, choice, autonomy supports and some self-determination as community school decisions are made.
- Culturally and ethnically-diverse teachers, student support professionals, and community providers are viewed and utilized as coaches, mentors and consultants for newcomers with limited experience with culturally and ethnically diverse populations.
- Adults (e.g., teachers, principals, student support professionals, community service professionals) assume **multi-stranded relations**, i.e., they perform multiple roles and serve several functions such as teacher, coach, mentor, activity/club advisor, and counselor

**Fig. 13.4** Community school climate features that improve social integration

- Through participation in a variety of community school programs and services, children, youth, and parents experience **multiplex relations** i.e., they gain access to multiple resources and sources of support—emotional, identity-related, motivational, informational—and they use them for career decisions, life plans, and academic engagement.
- Cradle-to-career education systems, complete with student and family counselling programs that trumpet the importance of school success and postsecondary education completion, provide visible, accessible and effective opportunity pathways out of poverty.

**Fig. 13.4** (continued)

Here too, intervention logic and careful orchestration of multiple interventions are like keys for opening these doors of opportunity. Community professionals, leaders of neighborhood organizations, and school leaders (particularly community school coordinators) need to capitalize on the opportunities to develop formal plans and service protocols that effectively connect youth engagement in communities, school engagement, and classroom engagement. To reiterate: Reaping the benefits from this kind of engagement depends in part on figuring out what kind(s) of interdependent relationship(s) needs to be developed (e.g., reciprocal, sequential) and how multiple interventions mounted in schools, community agencies and neighborhood organizations will be orchestrated.

### **Engagement in Homes**

The fourth social-ecological setting is the home, and engagement-related planning and intervention development focus on parents/caregivers and entire family systems. Facilitating the engagement and re-engagement of children and youth, while preventing their increasing disengagement, is a powerful way to recruit, engage, and sustain the participation and joint leadership of parents/caregivers. Here, there is a direct connection to the parent and family interventions presented in Chap. 4—namely, parent involvement, collective parent engagement, and family support.

A unique feature of community school-related designs also provides opportunities for interventions in the home and directed toward parents and the family system. These new designs feature programs and services for parents and entire family systems, typically offered during times when “regular school” is not in session. Two-generation strategies are predicated on the idea that one of the best ways to engage and support a child is by simultaneously engaging and supporting the parent/caregiver and the entire family system (e.g., Ascend at the Aspen Institute, 2012). So, for example, adult career and technical education programs offered at the school serve parents and,

at the same time, enlist parents' support in engaging their children. In the same vein, two-generation strategies show considerable promise in helping new immigrant parents/caregivers and their children learn a nation's dominant language (Ross, 2015).

As with the other forms of engagement, interdependent relationships are mainstays in formal intervention planning. The three other kinds of engagement (classroom, school, community) influence what happens in homes; and reciprocally, what parents/caregivers and entire family systems prioritize and do in the name of engagement influences young people's engagement in community agencies and neighborhood organizations, school programs and activities, and classrooms.

### ***An Explicit Plan Driven by Data***

Although the relationships among these four kinds of engagement are complicated, the fact is that they already are operative, albeit implicitly and behind the scenes. The partnership systems and the various collaboration arrangements made possible by community school-related designs enable educators, parents, neighborhood organization leaders, and community agency professionals to craft collaboratively explicit, testable engagement strategies that target all four kinds of engagement and unite them in a clear, coherent, aligned, and useful framework. As this work advances, significant progress will be made in addressing the old achievement gap, while providing opportunities to intervene early and prevent tragic school dropouts.

Comprehensive, integrated school-community data systems are essential co-requisites and facilitators for this all-important engagement work (McLaughlin & London, 2013). For example, these data systems enable statistical analyses that yield identifiable groups (sub-populations) of like students with identical and similar engagement-related needs and assets (Lawson & Masyn, 2014). Interprofessional collaboration arrangements can be structured accordingly—for example, educators and community professionals are able to develop an engagement-related system of roles, responsibilities, and relationships.

At the same time, cross-boundary, school-community engagement interventions are easier to develop, implement and evaluate, when sub-populations of students are the targets. Another advantage: In comparison to time-intensive and costly individual interventions, group-based interventions are more efficient and effective, and they often pave the way for youth leadership.

### ***Beyond Professional Knows Best: Youth, Parent, and Community Member Leadership***

As the number of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools grows, a major question looms. Whose schools are they?



This overall question gives rise to others. What and whose interests do these schools serve? Who decides what they prioritize and do? Even with their data systems, do educators and other helping professionals always know all that is needed and how best to proceed? What, if anything, do educators and other professionals do to tap the expertise and preferences of students, parents, and active community members? How might professionals make the shift from “doing to” to “crafting with” students, parents, and community leaders?

Entire books are needed in response to these questions and others they implicate. We raise them because they represent the next phases in the design of community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools, and multi-service schools and, once they are prioritized, timely innovations will follow. Many of the required conceptual frameworks and research-supported building blocks already are available.

### ***A Shift from Direct to Indirect Practice with Children and Adults***

Research on youth (student) leadership for school improvement continues to grow, and some of it includes descriptions and recommendations regarding how professionals’ roles, responsibilities and relationships change to facilitate this leadership (e.g., Mitra, 2007; Mitra, Lewis, & Sanders, 2013). Beyond the school, youth leadership for school-community partnerships also has been described and documented, including how this leadership has resulted in impressive innovations such as young people being elected to school boards and their leadership for the design of an alternative high school (Lawson, Claiborne, Hardiman, Austin, & Surko, 2007).

Research also indicates that youth leadership in particular depends on another important precondition. Supportive social settings are a practical necessity (Tseng & Seidman, 2007). Like the best organic gardens that provide optimal environments for growing healthy food, school, community, and home settings must be conducive to genuine youth leadership. Unfortunately, the hierarchical, control-oriented structures of many conventional schools make it difficult to develop supportive social settings for youth leadership. Viewed through this lens, community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools, and multi-services schools offer distinctive advantages because of the alternatives structures, programs, and timetables they provide.

### ***Four Pillars for Distributed and Collaborative Leadership***

Four pillars support the conceptual foundation for this leadership, and all are equally important. Two dimensional, cross-boundary school and community leadership is the first one. Conventional ideas for distributed leadership—an intra-school

phenomenon focused specifically on the instructional core (Spillane, 2013)—is paired with cross-boundary, collaborative leadership for various kinds of people-related collaborations and organizational partnerships (e.g., Green, 2015; Ishimaru, 2013). Together distributed and collaborative leadership are optimized when they are jointly focused on leadership for school and educational equity (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014; Raffo, 2014). This unfinished agenda has import for schools, universities, and state/provincial education departments, and it extends to the much-needed resources, supports and preparation programs for school-family-community-university coordinators (e.g., Lawson, *in press*; Williams, 2012).

The second pillar is the idea of relational power (Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009), also known as relational agency (Edwards, 2009). Initially developed to refer to interprofessional relationships, the idea extends to professionals' relationships with young people, parents, and community members. The main idea here is that, when professionals genuinely collaborate with each other and also with the students, parents and community members they serve, they generate this potent resource called relational power. This relational power includes resource-providing and –generating social capital relationships (Allan & Catts, 2012; Lawson, 2014). It stems in part from the more equitable power and authority relationships that professionals develop with persons known in other settings as students, clients, service users, consumers, patients and “laypersons.”

The third conceptual pillar is founded on twin ideas (Marks, 2012; Marks & Lawson, 2005). One is goal congruence. The main idea is that helpers and persons needing assistance craft shared goals. More than technical strategy, the development of shared goals involves a professional shift from “doing to people” to “working with them.” Put another way, motivation changes from top-down, compliance-oriented “have to motives” to young people’s self-initiated and –maintained “want to motives.” All in all, when helping professionals, students, parents, and other adults share the same goals, and they are jointly motivated to work toward achieving these goals, the better the likelihood that children, youth, and adults will be intrinsically motivated and will work semi-independently to achieve these shared goals.

Goal congruence paves the way to the second idea—co-production (Cahn, 2000). Here, students, parents, and community members are actively engaged in crafting and adhering to collaborative interventions that achieve shared goals. Responsibility and accountability shift accordingly. Students, parents, and community leaders accept shared responsibility and voluntary accountability for improved results when leadership for co-production has been developed.

The fourth conceptual pillar is leadership-as-meaningful employment. Here, jobs are developed for young people, parents, and community leaders; and with the assumption that services alone will not lift people out of poverty (Schorr, 1997). In addition to the customary paid employment opportunities are impressive innovations involving a non-monetary economy.

Time-dollar systems with school and community time banking institutions hold considerable promise because these systems pair employment development with purchasing power, social networking and community building (see Cahn, 2000; Cahn & Rowe, 1992; Marks, 2012). The primary assumption is that poverty-challenged people rarely will have enough money to purchase all of the goods and

services they need. These needs will remain unaddressed until such time as an alternative arrangement is made to meet them. A local, non-monetary economy is one strategy for doing so.

The main ideas for the time dollar and time banking systems derive from this need-driven opportunity. (1) Redefine work to include the services everyday people provide to each other (e.g., cutting another person's chair, walking another person's dog, shopping for another person's food, fixing another person's broken window). (2) Recognize and reward the time it takes to provide this service—for example, each hour of service-as-work counts as two time-dollars; (3) Develop community-based, computer systems to record and monitor each person's time dollar banking accounts; (4) Publicize the full range of time-dollar related services available for purchase in the community; (5) Develop social networking leaders and mechanisms to facilitate the "purchase" of goods and services using time dollars; and, (6) Consider the option of developing time banking systems and time dollar stores in community school-related designs so that students have access to goods (donated by community organizations) and learn how to develop savings accounts and manage "money."

Innovations like these are powerful mechanisms for leadership development, the generation of relational power, and much needed assistance, social support provision, and resource exchanges in urban neighborhoods, inner ring suburbs and isolated rural communities challenged by concentrated disadvantage and co-occurring needs. They extend beyond social and health services to include all-important economic innovations. Two other innovations take community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-services schools in this same important direction toward economic resources and job-related opportunities.

## **Two Innovations that Expand School Designs to Prioritize Employment Readiness and Economic Development**

These last two innovations can be summarized easily and succinctly because the stage has been set in the above discussion and also in previous chapters. Together they have import for future policy, practice and research involving area-based, clusters of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-services schools.

### ***Building Pathways to Postsecondary Education for Employment and Citizenship***

The first entails the development of cradle-to-career education systems. Here, entire "organizational families" of community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools and multi-service schools are joined with birth-to-age three programs, preschool programs, and postsecondary education institutions (e.g., Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014; Lawson, 2013; McGrath 2008; Tough, 2008).

Especially in de-industrializing democracies where postsecondary education is a practical necessity, these new systems are mechanisms for education's contributions to economic and social development. More than this macro-level contribution, these systems with their educational opportunity pathways provide visible, tangible pathways out of poverty, helping to prevent perceived and actual social exclusion and social isolation. Developed explicitly in this way, these new educational systems designs facilitate student engagement, career-related identity development, persistence and resilience, and academic learning and achievement. In brief, they are powerful facilitators for addressing both the old and the new achievement gaps.

### ***Expanding Designs for Employment and Economic Development***

The second kind of innovation does not require students to have the kind of deferred gratification needed for a cradle-to-career system. It expands the design of community schools, community learning centers, extended services schools, and multi-services schools to encompass and prioritize two related economic development initiatives.

The first is the familiar and tested configuration for career development and job-related learning. School-and-work programs are paired with school-to-work initiatives. The former is a here-and-now configuration, and it extends to a variety of out-of-school time programs and services.

The school-to-work initiative is a vertical configuration that spans grade levels and school levels. Both configurations involve a different set of partnerships—this time with employers, particularly businesses, corporations, and governments. All such job-related and economic development partnerships progressively expand the idea of a community school, community learning center, multi-services school, and extended-services school.

The second economic development priority is related to the time dollar and time-banking innovations described above. In addition to innovations in the non-monetary economy, these leaders for this new school design have the opportunity to develop partnerships with banks, credit agencies and governmental organizations that loan money to provide micro-credit and micro-loan strategies to entrepreneurial parents/caregivers and even young people who ready to launch their own small businesses (Briar-Lawson et al., 2001).

For example, student gardens are a common fixture in many American community schools. The food students grow is a potential commercial product, and an especially valuable one in challenging places with few grocery stores and shortages of healthy food. Micro-loans in support of small businesses that respond to the needs of places known as "food deserts" provides an important way to educate students, keep them engaged in school and with their eyes on the graduate prizes, and, at the same time, provide income at the same time they develop entrepreneurial

skills and abilities. While conventional schools are able to mount the same innovative agenda, their stand-alone structure constrains and impedes these innovations.

Comparatively more readiness and capacity are evident in community schools, community learning centers, extended services schools, and multi-service schools because they already are configured to meet co-occurring needs and achieve interconnected outcomes. In fact, the logic model originally presented as Fig. 3.1 can and should be expanded to include employment-related fixtures and economic development innovations.

Figure 13.5 has been designed accordingly. Framed by a Cradle-to-Career systems building agenda, and informed by the path-breaking work of others (Kerr et al., 2014, p. 160), it expands the services-oriented designs characteristic of the exemplars featured in this book. This figure indicates that designs for community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-services schools can be expanded strategically to include employment-related and economic development innovations.

This same figure diagram showcases several other important, innovative features, and many combine “inside-out” and “outside-in” improvement strategies. For example, data-driven assessments (left side of the figure) are more expansive, and they require new coordinative mechanisms overseen by newly-prepared and deployed cross-boundary leaders. Also in contrast to conventional schools, this new logic model emphasizes explicit goals for adults, entire families and communities.

Turning to outcomes at the right side of the Figure, family support is added to more conventional, school-based, short-term outcomes. The several parent and family innovations described in Chap. 4 provide strategies for achieving this outcome—an important one for community school-like designs and unique in relation to conventional schools.

The new intermediate outcomes start with improved academic outcomes—indicating a priority for closing the old achievement gap. However, two other, related intermediate outcomes are added to this conventional one. Both are achievable with community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools.

Improvements in both child well-being and family well-being are essential, and their relationship is showcased in this Figure. Based on the compelling idea of two-generation helping, social support and resource strategies (Ascend at the Aspen Institute, 2012; Briar-Lawson et al., 2001; Ross, 2015), this dual outcome is a game-changer for all manner of schools, but especially the schools featured in this book. Developed as a way to make progress in closing the new achievement gap, it provides a very different answer to the questions posed early. Whose schools are they, and what purposes do they serve?

The intermediate outcome regarding staff retention and efficacy was introduced earlier in this chapter. The research-based reminder here is that schools serving the most vulnerable, diverse populations oftentimes are riddled by two kinds of undesirable turnover. Student turnover and staff turnover nest in each other, and one result is that student strangers interact with adult strangers and vice versa. This is not a formula for success.

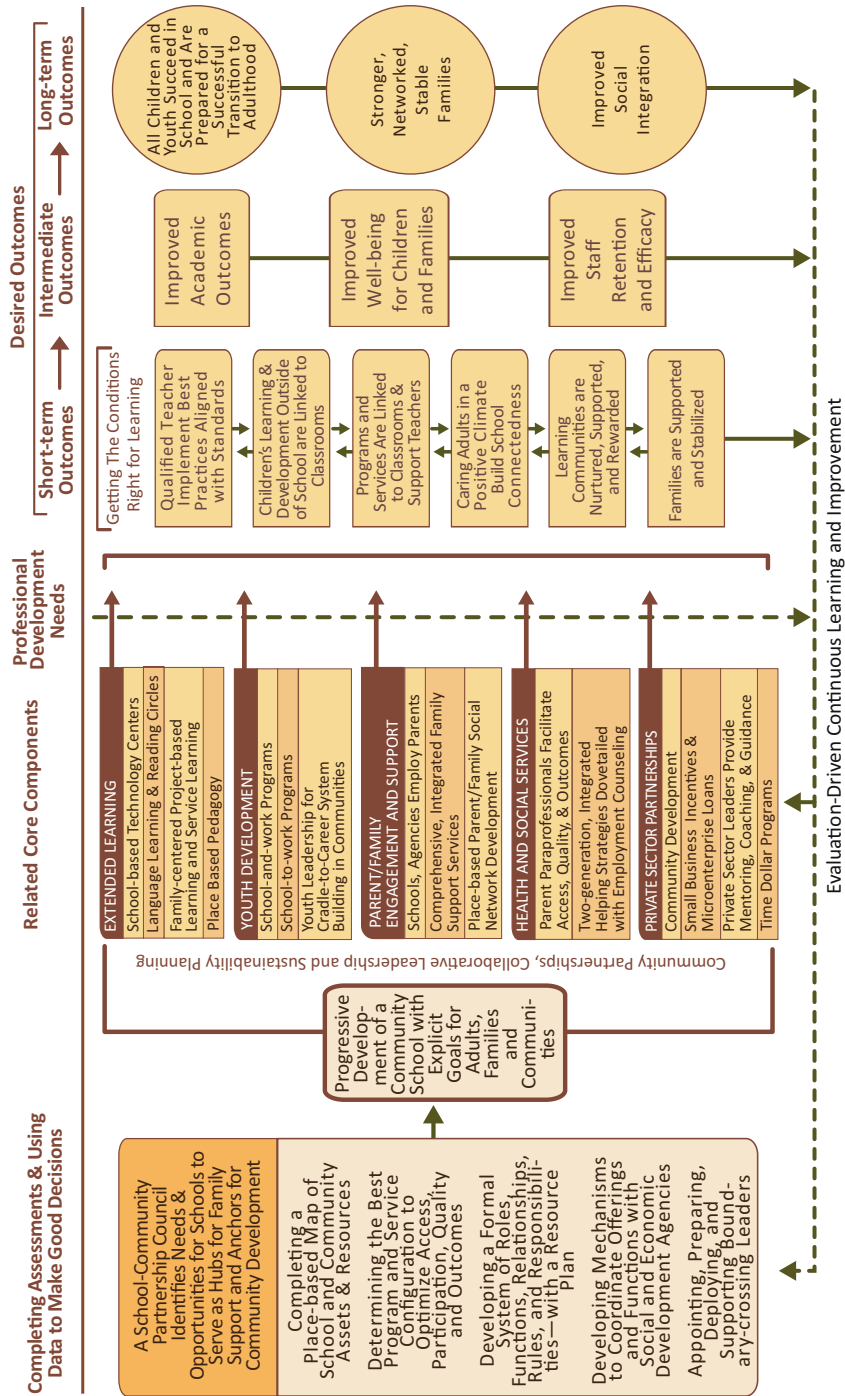


Fig. 13.5 Expansive place-based community school development

The new systems prioritized in this chapter provide one way to improve staff quality, efficacy, and stability. Family support and resource interventions that target simultaneous improvements in child well-being and family well-being offer the companion opportunity to slow down student turnover because students change schools when their families move.

So the dual turnover challenge involving both the workforce and students is met by a theory of change that addresses them together. New school designs that serve the workforce and include interventions to strengthen and stabilize families increase the probability that strong, enduring relationships will develop between stable students, strong families and a stable, supported workforce. In contrast to schools needed to be turned around, ones in which strangers interact with strangers, this new framework helps to create the conditions conducive to success.

The long-term outcome of stronger, stable, and networked families follows from these intermediate outcomes. With families as the units for planning and analysis, the way is paved for place-based initiatives that manifest a special resource called neighborhood collective efficacy for children (Lawson, Alameda-Lawson, Lawson, Briar-Lawson, & Wilcox, 2014; Sampson, 2012; Tate, 2012).

Three main ideas are noteworthy, and all are signaled in Fig. 13.5. When place-based collective efficacy is high, parents and other adults jointly steward the learning, healthy development, and school success of the children who reside in their area. Their joint efforts reduce crime and delinquency, substance abuse, mental health needs, under-achievement, and school dropouts. Second, when the family-related social fabric of neighborhoods and communities is strong, diverse children and families are offered opportunities and mechanisms for social integration, particularly new immigrants.

Third, these place-based assets and outcomes are facilitators for children's engagement in schools and in classrooms, setting the stage for academic learning and achievement and overall school success. In this complicated, but feasible framework, progress is made in closing the two achievement gaps, one involving schools and educational attainment overall and the other involving child well-being and extended to progress toward addressing problematic inequality.

## **In Conclusion: Inescapable Novelty, Complexity and Uncertainty**

Like missing pieces for the same puzzle, the several innovations offered in this chapter are nominees for inclusion in the next set of design experiments in community schools, community learning centers, multi-services schools, and extended-services schools. Like all innovations, they necessitate additional policy incentives and rewards, net new resources, professional development for all manner of professionals (especially interprofessional education and training and cross-boundary leadership development), and both organizational and inter-organizational

capacity-building, particularly with regard to cross-sector, integrated, and user-friendly data systems.

This work is not easy, and it is yet another iteration of a pioneering journey surrounded by novelty, complexity and uncertainty. On the other hand, the choice of “standing pat” and “resting on our current laurels” has adverse consequences. Foremost among these shortcomings is limited progress toward addressing the old achievement gap (academic learning outcomes) and the new achievement gap (child well-being as framed by persistent and growing societal inequality). Lives hang in the balance.

All of the innovations presented in this chapter have an especially important feature. All entail crossing well-established boundaries, including professional specializations, organizational jurisdictions, and policy sectors. A special kind of theory—boundary theory—offers special resources and insights for how best to proceed with this new, complex, and uncertain work (e.g., Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Halley, 1997). It is ripe with opportunities for individual, group, organizational, and policy learning, and designs for this learning need to be developed and implemented accordingly.

Finally, it bears repeating that leaders for this work are pioneers because their main charge is not merely to transport and implement someone else’s good idea. These pioneers must *design* innovations that are fit for purpose, in their specialized contexts, and at particular times.

As indicated in this book’s introduction, leaders are *inventors* for new professional, organizational, institutional, and policy designs. Mindful of the needs they must meet, the problems they must solve, and windows of opportunity open to them, they proceed with clear goals (*intentionality*) and with testable theories of action and logic models that specify *causal relations*. Knowing that today’s organizational and professional designs will not yield desired outcomes at scale, their pioneering design work also is based on *contrasts* between existing arrangements with sub-optimal outcomes and the innovations needed for better outcomes.

This essential design work is not limited to local exemplar development. It extends to efforts to scale-up, improvement, and sustain these initiatives, and it also necessitates coordinated changes in universities and governments. The last two chapters are structured to address these two sets of priorities—and with the assumption that they are related.

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# Chapter 14

## Planning for Scale-Up, Scale-Out, Sustainability, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability

Hal A. Lawson and Dolf van Veen

**Abstract** Although the idea of replication—a direct, wholesale transfer of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools, was the dominant idea in the twentieth century, today there is just cause for considerable caution and even explicit avoidance of what amounts to “one size fits all thinking,” together with generalizable and transportable models and strategies. Instead the idea of going to scale, abbreviated as scale-up, is the preferred alternative because of growing recognition that every new design must be tailor-made for the characteristics of the local population, the school’s organizational ecology, and place-based, social geography. Endemic tensions always are involved when leaders strive to scale-up this new school design, and the tensions and potential conflicts mount when this new design is slated for “scale-out”—which refers to moving the new design from one nation to another. This chapter presents salient issues, frames related challenges, and offers recommended strategies for scale-up, scale-out, and later, for sustainability planning. Significantly, it draws on the exemplars presented in section two and presents a framework for scaling up and scaling out with improvement science. This new framework emphasizes voluntary accountability mechanisms, including the imperative to use relevant research and recommended best practices as guides. The chapter concludes with the “ten R’s” of systems change, perhaps opening avenues to user-friendly planning checklists for the complex developmental journeys that confront all leader-designers.

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This chapter begins with an important story. It originates with the pioneering efforts of education leaders, health and social services officials, and policy leaders who pioneered the development of full-service community schools in the United States in the 1990s. These pioneers learned three valuable lessons. These lessons learned remain in good currency because they help today's leaders avoid the flawed assumptions that characterized work during this earlier era and also because these lessons pave the way for different and better approaches to designing, developing, and disseminating community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools.

Many pioneering leaders and policy officials assumed that, if they established just one full service school in a particular place, they quickly could achieve two outcomes simultaneously. Health and social services needs of all local children and families could be addressed in a timely fashion. As these needs were addressed, children's school readiness would increase, and their academic performance would improve.

In many places, this new full-service school configuration was marketed optimistically as "one stop shopping;" and this combination of school and service outcomes was promoted as a two for the price of one bargain. Little wonder that educators, social and health service leaders, and policy officials were confident that they had crafted the ideal anti-poverty design.

The big debate at that time was whether the full-service community school should be created at the elementary level or the middle school level. Subsequently, experimental models for both elementary and middle schools were piloted and evaluated.

The three most important findings from these early experiments remain in good currency as today's lessons learned. First, new school designs are needed for both levels of schooling. Second, high schools in the same places also needed the full range of school-linked and—based programs, services, supports, and resources. Third, when poverty, social exclusion and social isolation prevailed in particular places, these new schools were vital, but by themselves they were insufficient to achieve the full range of desirable outcomes.

So, beginning in the latter part of the 1990s, leaders from several policy and practice sectors in the United States began an important design and development journey, one that still is underway. With special interest in the path-breaking efforts of the Children's Aid Society of New York City, leaders continue to learn what it takes to progress from just one school to "families of schools," i.e., clusters of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools. Initially called "replication," today the preferred descriptor is "scale-up," alternatively known as "going to scale." This idea of going to scale with clusters of new school designs is bolstered in many nations by the development of

cradle-to-career education systems, i.e. system-wide configurations of school clusters with preschools, programs for infants, and postsecondary education institutions (Lawson, 2013).

At the same time, leaders are wrestling with the sustainability of the innovative designs they have established, especially ones that were made possible by special grants and contracts. Resource-needy school communities challenged by poverty, social exclusion, social isolation, and some measure of policy neglect are especially challenged to sustain all that they have gained. Meanwhile, the new watchword—accountability—is omnipresent (Day & Van Veen, 1999).

This long introduction provides the policy, practice, and research context for this chapter. Our title announces our priorities and purposes. We address scale-up, scale-out, sustainability, continuous improvement, and accountability because all are essential priorities in the design and development work underway in several nations. In contrast to some frameworks that separate scale-up, sustainability and accountability, we join them in a relational framework. We emphasize that planning for scale-up, sustainability, and accountability is a priority at start-up, especially when special, time-limited grants are involved.

We recognize that each of these chapter priorities merits a separate chapter, and some invite entire books. Due to space constraints, we have delimited our analysis, which renders it selective and incomplete. Mindful of unavoidable limitations, we highlight important issues, offer some practical tools and planning inventories, identify alternative frameworks, and identify some important references for future reading.

## **Exciting and Enticing Designs for Schools: But Can They Be Scaled Up and Out?**

Another story with two parts provides a narrative for the histories of new school designs in several parts of the world. Part one trumpets a new design's marvelous innovations and emphasizes how these innovations enable this special new school to achieve impressive outcomes. When this same new school has achieved valuable outcomes that few other schools have been able to produce, the story line is irresistible.

Part two of the story comes later, and it is based on a powerful combination of evaluative research and practical experience. The familiar conclusion is that this new design could not be duplicated easily, i.e., attempts to take it to scale were unsuccessful. In fact, in some cases, when a few key leaders left, the new design turned out to be unsustainable.

One important reason for this scale-up and sustainability problem was identified earlier in this book. In too many cases, policy officials and local leaders accepted two flawed assumptions. They assumed that a design that was tailor-made for particular people, special school-community ecologies, and unique places was like

a cookie-cutter recipe for its mass production in very different places. They also assumed that school leaders in pioneering sites, nearly all of whom turned out to be exceptional in many ways, were either plentiful or could quickly be mass-produced.

Scale-up and sustainability advocates who have made these twin mistakes oftentimes have learned four important lessons. First, they have learned the hard way how important it is to study gifted and talented leaders and quickly implement leadership development programs aimed at a critical mass of comparably equipped leaders. Succession planning for groups of leaders proceeds with the assumption that the initial leaders will depart—oftentimes because other school districts and governmental agencies lure them away.

Second, leaders have learned to ask whether it is possible to mass-produce extraordinary leaders. If the answer is tentative or negative, plans for scale-up need to be scaled back in accordance with what mass-produced leaders are able to learn, know, and do. Going to scale for a new, complex school design depends on achieving the requisite competencies in a critical mass of leaders, including some who may not be deemed extraordinary at start-up. Scale-up oftentimes depends on what ordinary people are able to learn quickly and do effectively.

Third, scale-up and sustainability advocates have learned to look beyond the main features of community school-related designs. They have shifted their attention to the conditions needing to be in place for it to succeed. In addition to a critical mass of school leaders, examples of such conditions include new organizational capacities, essential workforce competencies, the availability of required funding, the need for evaluation-driven, organizational learning and improvement mechanisms, and the priority for interventions that match the problem needing to be solved (Adelman & Taylor, 2004; Scheirer, 2013; Scheirer & Dearing, 2011).

A fourth lesson derives from an established funding pattern for school innovations. In many nations, new designs and experimentation receive extra (new) funding on top of existing funding schemes. Even when implementation is successful, only rarely are old funding streams adjusted to sustain the new designs, nor are these funds available for reallocation to facilitate scale-up of the innovations in other sites. In fact, it often is the case that the older funding schemes continue to support the very same practices and practices that were targeted for improvement in the first place. In the same vein, local and regional policies also need to change in support of the innovations, while helping to eliminate the older policies and practices that were associated with sub-optimal outcomes. School-community governance and leadership councils provide the all-important social infrastructure for this scale-up and sustainability agenda (Van Veen, 2001; 2006).

These four lessons learned are important to digest and disseminate because they derive from big mistakes. All such mistakes drain and deplete scarce resources. Mistakes also reduce people's change readiness and commitments, perhaps sowing the seeds for cynicism and withdrawal and possibly contributing to undesirable workforce turnover and lower morale. Fortunately, these undesirable consequences can be prevented.



## **A Framework for Scaling Up and Scaling out with Improvement Science**

Through this book, the case has been made that community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools represent a timely, opportunistic innovation that serves children, families, communities, helping professionals, and policy makers. Going to scale becomes a priority when this opportunistic innovation achieves desirable outcomes; and also when recognition grows that the same old schools will continue to deliver the same old, undesirable results.

McDonald, Klein, and Riordan (2009) provide a good launching point for our analysis. With an emphasis on the connection between start-up and scale-up, their simple, pragmatic formula is instructive and useful.

Successful start-ups and scale-ups in schooling by design require a mix of *new money*, *ambitious talent*, and *cutting-edge ideas*. This is a combustible mix. We mean this in a good way. That is, the mix is capable of generating substantial energy given the right spark. That energy can be used for startup and for scale-up. (McDonald et al., 2009, p. 53, emphasis in the original).

Another policy and practice provision is important during times of rapid and dramatic innovation, especially when the evidence indicates that the old system does not yield desirable outcomes, and there is a sense of urgency accompanying unmet needs and serious problems. Here, policy authorities and leaders of funding agencies give local school designers unusual amounts of flexibility and justifiable freedoms to move and use money in creative ways. In the Netherlands, this approach extends to entire areas called “regelvrije zones.”

In addition to funding flexibility, policy-related freedoms extend to existing rules and regulations, especially ones that prevent and constrain interprofessional collaboration and organizational partnerships. So it is helpful, in starting-up, to negotiate with policy authorities and leaders of funding agencies that it is permissible to use/allocate money in different ways and develop new procedures and accountabilities. Special zones of experimentation, structured in this way, facilitate scale-up and sustainability, while incubating timely innovations that improve outcomes (Van Veen, 2006).

### ***An Important Combination Requiring a Delicate Balance***

All such start-up and scale-up formulas have the potential to facilitate planning and evaluation. On the other hand, the search for commonalities and generalizability also has risks and dangers. For example, place-based variability cannot and should not be wished away. With this need in mind, leaders worldwide increasingly are appreciating the need for a delicate, important combination.

Local data-driven, place-based tailoring of this new design needs to be combined with the fast-growing knowledge base regarding this design's essential, defining features. For example, research-based knowledge regarding how best to design, configure, and implement school-linked health and social services is an international treasure trove, and the same opportunities accompany the growing knowledge base on how best to maximize learning during out-of-school time, ideally combining it with positive youth development strategies.

These research contributions are part of a delicate balance needing to be established and maintained. On the one hand, there is little to be gained and much to be lost by "reinventing the wheel" when an international, research-supported knowledge base is available. On the other hand, "one size fits all" wheel design creates its own nasty problems.

### ***Endemic Uncertainty, Novelty, and Complexity***

There is no escape from endemic uncertainty, novelty, and complexity, which helps to explain the knowledge gaps that always emerge and must be addressed. A recent summary of urban school reform research and development describes the never-ending challenges for designers of community schools, multi-service schools, and community learning centers, especially the gaps that always emerge.

Thus it tends to go in school reform: gaps develop among intentions, designs, and outcomes. And the real work of reform turns out to be different from what many reformers imagine as they set out to do it. It is not just about inventing good designs, installing them properly, and scaling up the installations. And it is not just about pressing even harder for fidelity to initial intention. It is instead about doing both of these things, *plus* working deliberately to align intention, design, and outcome within a context where misalignment can be expected and where it offers good cues for *revising* intentions and designs. (McDonald, & the Cities and Schools Research Group, 2014, pp. 140–141).

In this framework, ideas about automatic and easy replication are out of order. All in all, the realities of change quickly trump the appealing parts of replication-oriented, change mythology (Georgiades, 1991).

### ***From Replication to Scale-Up, Scale-Out, and Lesson-Drawing***

Growing international research on all manner of school designs heightens awareness about the limits and manifest risks associated one size fits all thinking and planning. After reviewing some of this research, Levin (2013) reached the same conclusion:

...innovations in schooling are rarely reducible to a set of rote practices to be applied no matter what; they inevitably require thoughtful consideration about what is best to do under any given set of circumstances, which may vary depending on the students, skill levels of staff, the degree of community support, the demographics of the program participants and the community, and more. (p. 1).

Consequently, an important shift in language and practice is noteworthy. It is the shift from replication to scale up, alternatively named “going to scale.”

This shift extends to a more cautious framework for *scaling out*, i.e., moving our new school-related design from one nation to another (Chabbott and Chowdhury, 2015). One recommended approach involves lesson-drawing across time, space and place (Schön & Rein, 1995). This priority for cross-national lesson-drawing is exemplified in the lessons provided by the author/leaders at the end of their respective chapters in Part II. These lessons are as instructive for what not to attempt as they are for how best to frame the opportunities, address the attendant challenges, and proceed with a learning and improvement framework.

Lesson-drawing in tandem with research-supported, theoretically- sound design principles is especially appropriate when the context matters. Indeed, it always does. Despite enduring assumptions regarding wholesale transportability and generalizability of every new design, time and again it turns out that variability is the norm, not the exception; and also that national and local contexts always matter (Bryk et al., 2015; Chabbott and Chowdhury, 2015; Day & Van Veen, 1996).

Thus, endemic tensions are unavoidable, and serious problems nearly always arise when a formal model for a successful community school, multi-service school, community learning center, or extended-service school is slated for wholesale transfer from one location to another.

The challenges are more profound when this new school design is targeted for scale-out. For example, when the host or sender nation is a comparatively advantaged, post-industrial nation, while the receiving or host nation is a developing one; and when special international development grants prioritize replication, problems inevitably arise. One such problem is colonialism.

Ramirez (2015) has neatly summarized a second, practical problem: “What it takes to look externally legitimate is often inconsistent with what is locally feasible and at times, desirable” (p. vii). The above-mentioned priority for lesson-drawing in scale-up and scale-out initiatives, in substitution for whole model transfer and replication projects, helps to prevent both problems.

### ***Appreciating the Policy Contributions of False Starts and Apparent Failures***

Lessons learned for scale-up, lesson-drawing, and sustainability wrought out of false starts and failed experiments are especially valuable. Arguably, there are as many negative lessons learned as positive ones, which is why McLaughlin (1996) called implementation research “misery research.” Some such false starts and failed experiments can be traced to some common causes. Knowledge about these causes can facilitate prevention actions and early interventions.

One such cause can be described as the problem of fickle educational policy makers. Some officials apparently expected miracles overnight, as indicated by

too-short timelines for incentive grants in support of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools.

Other policy makers have added to the challenges when they have insisted on accountability systems that were developed for the stand-alone, industrial age school. For example, they have promoted narrow accountability systems that focus exclusively on immediate academic achievement gains. In the near term, these systems predictably will result in determinations that the new school-related designs are policy failures because only in rare circumstances will academic achievement outcomes improve immediately and significantly. Achievable, immediate outcomes (“small wins”) such as improved attendance, increasing student engagement, and sure-fire indicators of positive youth development are no less important because they are modest. Ultimately, they can and will influence academic learning and achievement—if the other required conditions are in place.

Such an inherited, narrow accountability focus with its unrealistic expectations for academic achievement creates the conditions for what professional evaluators call “a false negative” (Lawson, 1999). The root problem here was that policy makers and evaluators alike proceeded with flawed assumptions. These flawed assumptions helped to explain why evaluators and policy officials have looked in the wrong places at the wrong time, oftentimes employing methods that were not matched to the innovation.

**Developmental Evaluation Designs for Scale-Up** Evaluations of social innovations are fundamentally different from conventional evaluations (Preskill & Beer, 2012). Mirroring the developmental nature of community schools, multi-service schools, extended-service schools and community learning centers, the evaluation questions and methodologies “move” and adapt as these new school designs progress. Some such developmental designs contribute to the new science of improvement because they document the development of interventions that show promise for producing better outcomes. Other such developmental evaluations contribute to the knowledge base for start-up, scale-up, scale-out, and sustainability because they provide thick, structured descriptions of the “change journey” (Lawson, 1999). All in all, evaluation innovations need to be developed in tandem with school-related innovations and with the same three criteria as guides. Evaluations need to be fit for purpose, in special contexts, and at particular times.

Unfortunately, the policy leadership community continues to recommend conventional outcome evaluations that are not fit for purpose because they are not developmental and are not designed to monitor progress and document the success of innovations. Policy challenges and constraints like these illuminate an important need. They emphasize the need for public policy leadership for scale-up, scale-out, sustainability, and developmental evaluations.

**The Need for Policy Entrepreneurs** Needs for policy leadership may be addressed in part by consulting the growing international knowledge base regarding the preparation, deployment, and strategic actions of change agents called “policy entrepreneurs” (Mintrom, & Norman, 2009; see also Williams, 2012). These special policy

experts know how to facilitate policy innovations. They are entrepreneurial because they are clever when it comes to finding alternative pathways toward their policy goals.

**Technical Assistance Needs** However, all such policy advocacy and entrepreneurship in support of scale-up, scale-out, and sustainability are hollow without technical assistance resources and an evidentiary base. Fortunately, the Children's Aid Society of New York and the Finance Project have provided a special first response to this manifest, international need. They have produced two important publications, both of which are accessible on line (the links are in the references). Both draw on an earlier publication that specified the developmental phases in community school designs (Dryfoos, Quinn, & Barkin, 2005).

Martinez & Hayes (2013) have provided invaluable case study research findings regarding the social returns on new economic and policy investments in community schools. What is more, Martinez, Hayes, and Silloway (2013) have authored a practical guide that prepares and positions others to complete comparable, policy-relevant studies that document how and why it is fiscally strategic and socially responsible to make investments in this new school-related design. Although the USA context for both reports is an obvious limitation, the frameworks these authors provide are readily adaptable to other national contexts.

### ***Cross-Sector Policy Bridges and Integrative Mechanisms as Scale-Up Facilitators***

Categorical, sector-specific governmental policy structures add to the scale-up challenges (Briar-Lawson et al., 2001; Van Veen, 2001; 2006). The main idea-as-policy-challenge is known worldwide. In the still-dominant view, a health problem is not a social problem, and these two kinds of problems are not educational problems. This separatist thinking continues to bedevil designers of these new kinds of schools, and it helps to maintain the idea of separate governmental departments with their respective, sector-specific policy systems. The consequences of this public policy arrangement start with accountability systems, and they extend to the all-important flow of money in support of these new school designs.

All in all, considerable work remains to be done in the area of policy bridging and integration. Promising examples include the establishment of inter-governmental children's cabinets and child-family services councils. These new bridging structures have derived in part from growing recognition of the co-occurring and interlocking nature of many child, family and community presenting needs and problems. However, even these new bridging and policy integration structures remain primarily oriented toward community health and social services. Much-needed connections to community schools, community learning centers, extended-service, and multi-service schools are next on the policy innovation agenda for newly-prepared and deployed policy entrepreneurs.

Fortunately, progress is being made in some European countries where local/regional authorities and school boards collaborate in developing and executing a comprehensive cross-sector plan concerning, among others, education and children, youth and families. Furthermore, some nations have designated youth ministers responsible for such comprehensive, cross-sector policy plans, including education, health and human services, business/workforce, housing, and more (Geijsel, Marz, Schenke, Slegers, & Van Veen, 2015; Van Veen, 2006). These practices and policies merit examination and scale-up in other nations.

### ***Toward a Critical Mass of Competent, Committed Leaders***

Next on the list of reasons for why scale-up and sustainability have been elusive is the lack of committed and qualified leaders. This shortfall, referenced earlier, can be reframed as a timely opportunity to facilitate scale-up and scale-out, and it involves the several organizations that prepare leaders. These organizations include higher education institutions, professional development agencies, and professional associations.

Four kinds of leaders are in short supply, recommending leadership academies as scale-up and scale-out facilitators. In no particular order, these leaders are (1) Policy leaders, including policy entrepreneurs as well as policy experts who know how to connect and integrate now-separate policies for youth development, school improvement, family support, and health prevention and promotion; (2) Top level school and community agency leaders ready to form partnerships and facilitate collaboration; (3) School leaders (principals, head teachers); and (4) school-family-community coordinators who perform all-important, boundary crossing work.

Unfortunately, the majority of schools, colleges, and departments of education have not prioritized leadership preparation for this new school-related design. This gap provides timely opportunities, including the preparation of leaders knowledgeable about research-supported, scale-up and sustainability strategies, as indicated in the final chapter.

### ***Abandoning Industrial-Age, Linear Scale-Up and Sustainability Formulas***

Worldwide there are indicators of the need for an integrated strategy for start-up, scale-up and sustainability. Unfortunately, these three lines of development often are separated. Industrial age, production-line logic helps to account for their unfortunate, consequential divorce. In the inherited, twentieth century logic, innovation adoption, implementation, and scale-up follow a linear, step-wise progression. This one-at-a-time sequence starts with design. Next is implementation, and it is followed by resource reallocation, evaluation, and only years later, sustainability.

In contrast to this twentieth century linear sequence, today's success formula joins these phases at the beginning—and with an important difference announced by the term “phases.” In contrast to steps with sequenced, one-at-a-time progressions, when start-up, scale-up and sustainability are structured in phases, the work is non-linear. In other words, progress is made on several fronts at the same time. So, for example, sustainability planning begins at start up and in tandem with scale-up planning.

Three firm expectations drive this twenty-first century relational planning: (1) Each new community school-related design is merely the beginning for others in the same locale; (2) This new school-related design is here to stay so planning for the long-term is a critical priority from start-up; (3) Resources need to be redeployed because, once starter grants are finished, net new resources oftentimes will not be available.

This scale-up and sustainability work is difficult to mount and advance because the sustainability research has been constrained by limited conceptualizations and design flaws (e.g., Scheirer, 2013; Stirmna, Kimberly, Cook, Calloway, Castrol, & Charns, 2012). Although everyone knows that additional, renewable resources are needed for these complex, school-related innovations, few guides provide salient funding details.

Fortunately, two new scale-up guides are available from the USA. Belay, Mader, & Miller (2014) have drafted an innovative guide to serve scale-up in New York City. Their framework is research-supported, and it includes plans for evaluation-driven, continuous improvement.

The Belay et al. guide builds on an earlier one developed by Melville, Jacobson, and Blank (2011). It provides relevant strategies, identifies requisite resource needs, and provides developmental benchmarks. These benchmarks are presented as structural facilitators (e.g., collaborative leadership) and functional facilitators (e.g., results-oriented vision; aligned and integrated programs and services; the importance of data and evaluation). With due recognition that neither school systems or community agencies typically are able to mount and sustain such a scale up agenda, Melville et al. (2011) emphasize the important roles played by intermediary organizations, including new ones specially developed for cross-boundary leadership and resource coordination (see also Jacobson & Blank, 2015; Miller, 2007, 2008; Schorr et al., 2010; Miller 2007, 2008; Williams, 2012).

Both guides were written explicitly for the USA context. While this feature is an asset for other USA sites, it is a limitation for sites in other nations. Nation-specific guides such as the one developed by Hopkins (2011) for Australia are invaluable because they typically take into account the special policy context.

All such scale-up, scale-out, and sustainability guides are important because they provide the equivalent of a map and a compass for leader/designers (Collins, 2005). This dual image of a map and a compass is attractive and instructive because starting, scaling-up, and scaling-out community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools and extended service schools are akin to long journeys into some uncharted territories. Viewed in this way, these guides are resources for

leaders at the same time that they facilitate the development of much-needed innovations that provide assistance, supports, and resources to vulnerable people residing in challenging places.

### ***Rigid Scale-Up Formulas Are Impossible to Provide***

Unfortunately, few such scale-up and scale-out guides address every relevant detail, especially with regard to three critically important priorities. The first is the speed of community school adoption, implementation and scale-up. Here, the question is: Should we start small, on a manageable scale, with just one component (e.g., out-of-school time learning); or should we proceed quickly with two or more components?

The second priority, once addressed, helps to answer questions about the first one. This second priority involves determinations of change readiness. For example, does the school district have the requisite organizational capacity (particularly for data-driven decision-making and also for inter-organizational partnerships)? Do educators and social/health service providers have the required practice competencies (particularly for interprofessional team collaboration and cross-boundary coordination)? To return to the change journey metaphor, if all of the requisite conditions are not in evidence, then it is best to limit the goals and the change-related distance leaders hope to travel successfully, perhaps starting with capacity-building (Hatch, 2009).

The third priority involves the all-important question of fiscal resources. For example: How much money do we need for transition costs from a conventional school to our new school design? What are the core transition priorities? What will we stop doing in order to start new community school programs and services? How long will it take to effect the transition? How will we know when the transition is over with? And, once the transition is completed, are funding streams sufficient so that programs, services, and the entire innovation can be sustained?

These questions are not restricted to school and community agency leaders. Together they indicate needs for a school-community governance council with leaders who are creative and clever with money, including ways to blend and braid existing funding streams in support of innovation (Melaville et al., 2011). Scale-up hinges in part on such a cross-boundary council with leaders who are savvy about scale-up, scale-out, and resource coordination and maximization.

Granting the important of such a grand design, nations differ in significant ways. For example, while North American communities have school superintendents and councils, these structures are not evident in other nations. In many European nations, the norm is partnerships with school boards, networks of schools, school leaders and local/city or regional educational and youth authorities in a particular city or collaborating cities. Furthermore, in nations such as The Netherlands, there are regional networks of school boards and the representatives of cities in that region (local authorities/aldermen). These bodies are required by law to discuss a 3/4 year



education and youth agenda for the region, including the kind of services schools and network of schools need in and around schools to support youngsters (and their teachers and families); the needed comprehensive/integrated services (education and health and human services); and things schools can do to support the broader city/community agenda for well-being, participation and (economic) development. These examples indicate the importance of somewhat unique national contexts in determining how best to organize and mobilize diverse policy officials, community officials, and school leaders for cross-boundary leadership and policy change.

### ***Outlining Nine Other Scale-Up, Scale-Out, and Sustainability Challenges***

McDonald et al. (2009) have identified other design, scale-up and sustainability priorities for all manner of new school configurations. We have adopted and adapted some of them, while adding others. Each presents its own special challenges and opportunities. Each requires an explicit strategy with expert guidance and the resources to make it happen.

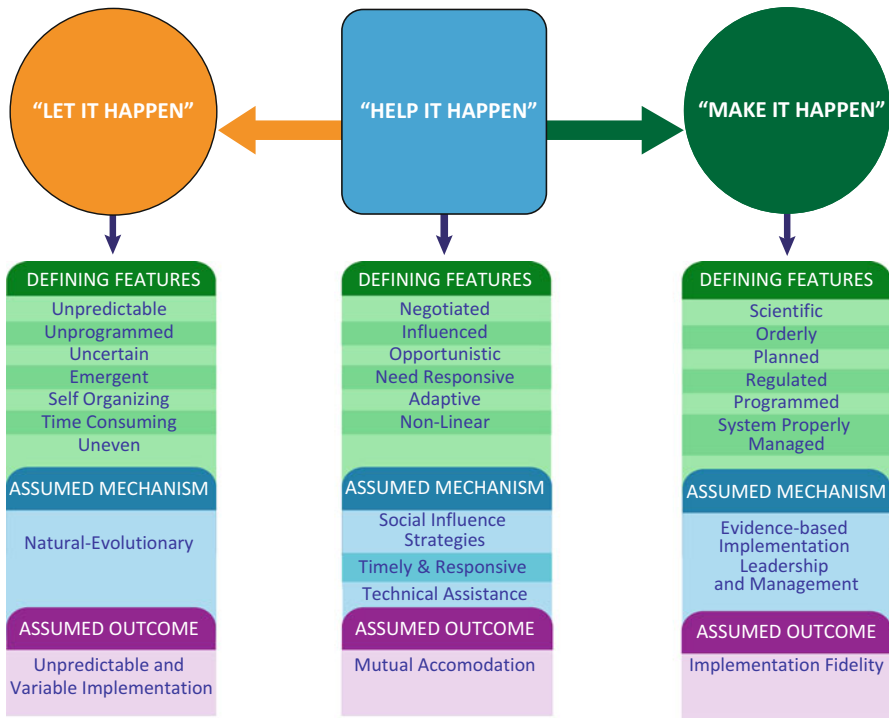
**The Fidelity Challenge** This challenge requires knowing precisely what the new design is, means, and entails, while also knowing and announcing what it is not. It also involves a delicate balance between implementation fidelity and permissible, local adaptation (McLaughlin, 2006). The preceding chapters have been structured in accordance with this important need.

To reiterate, logic models and theory of change diagrams are essential, and so is the fast-growing specialization known as implementation science. Innovation implementation leadership is perhaps the most important priority, and it entails choices. Figure 14.1, adapted from the work of Greenhalgh, Robert, MacFarlane, Bate, and Kyriakidou (2004, p. 593), structures these choices and connects each to relevant implementation theories.

In many start-up, scale-up, and scale-out initiatives, leaders need to know how to navigate the complex problem called “the too tight, too loose dilemma” (Fullan, 2006). When implementation is too tight—when top-down, compliance-oriented and enforced implementation is the priority, and leaders insist on “making it happen,” place-based uniqueness is ruled out and front-line practitioners, who tend to be treated as implementation puppets, often resist.

At the other extreme, when leaders “let it happen,” implementation is too loose, and required amounts of fidelity are lost. The new design that results may be called a community school, community learning center, multi-service school, or extended service school, but the reality is that something entirely different has been implemented.

Thus, meeting the fidelity challenge requires leaders who are able to look for and achieve what can be called the adoption and implementation “sweet spot,” i.e., a kind of middle ground position between too-tight implementation (strong-arming,



**Fig. 14.1** A continuum of strategies for implementing and embedding innovations

rigid strategies that “make it happen”) and too-loose implementation (“let it happen”). Leaders who know how to “help it happen” are able to navigate the tensions associated with the too-tight, too loose dilemma, providing structural guidance and responsive professional development supports. Helping it happen depends on quality controls for the integrity of the design, while encouraging permissible adaptations. This book’s rationale and chapter progression have been designed accordingly.

**The Teaching Challenge** All new designs involve learning, and so the priority is for qualified experts and learning systems strategies (e.g., on-line learning, distance learning). Two questions follow. Who are the experts? And what are the best ways to facilitate the dissemination and maximal uses of their expertise?

Viewed in this simple way, all scale-up and scale-out initiatives depend on a design for teaching and learning. Owing to research achievements, and the leading edge work of leaders such as this book’s chapter authors, some of this learning and teaching can be competency-based and outcomes-focused. Significantly, when a conventional school is slated for transformation into a community school, multi-service school, community learning center, or extended-service school, this work also entails knowing what each individual and team needs to unlearn, stop doing, and amend.

**The Ownership Challenge** Instilling shared ownership of the design is a special challenge because once-separate organizations and professionals are asked to assume collective identities with somewhat intertwined reputations and destinies. Part of this challenge depends on genuine participatory planning so that educators and other professionals conclude that the new initiative is not being forced on them, i.e., it is yet another example of a top-down, compliance oriented requirement. “Helping it happen” strategies (Fig. 15.1) contribute to shared ownership, together with relevant commitments to the new design.

**The Communication Challenge** Communicating effectively and accurately across boundaries and contexts is a special priority (e.g., Daniels, 2011). Another priority is for policy-relevant communications, both bottom-up and top-down.

Because this new design is an innovation, communications regarding this new design’s advantages must be a recurrent priority. This priority is especially important for the persons expected to embrace, adopt and implement the new design—namely, middle managers such as school principals and community agency supervisors as well as front-line professionals such as teachers, student support professionals, and community health and social service providers.

Typically, this communications responsibility is one assigned to top-level leaders, technical assistance providers and professional development experts, and school-family-community coordinators. Figure 14.2 provides research-supported examples of the actual and possible advantages that need to be communicated as part of scale-up and sustainability planning (e.g., Bodilly, 2001; Bodilly, Chun, Ikemoto, & Stockly, 2004; Bodilly, with Keltner, Purnell, Reichardt, & Schuyler, 1998; Fullan, 2001; Rogers, 1995; Weick, 1984).

**The Emotional Challenge** Change is emotionally demanding, especially when people must abandon cherished routines and learn new ones. In the case of the new school design featured in this book, designs for entire schools are being changed, and so is the system of roles, responsibilities, relationships, and accountabilities. This is grand change by any measure.

As Heifetz, Linsky, & Grashow (2009) indicate, the therapeutic strategies and techniques derived from the research on death-related grief and loss therapies are useful under these circumstances. All in all, providing emotional supports is one important part of going to scale with new school designs.

Another important challenge also derives from strong emotions, especially those grounded in commitments to cherished practices and “school the way it used to be.” Resistance and acts of sabotage are predictable. Unfortunately, these defensive orientations often are left out of most innovation implementation and scale-up plans. So are other people-created and—related obstacles.

In response to this scale-up and scale-out need, we have constructed Fig. 14.3. It provides examples of these obstacles. These examples and others they implicate recommend a prevention and early intervention plan developed specifically for resisters and saboteurs. Mirroring interventions for vulnerable children and families, the recommended strategy is strengths-based, solution-focused, developmentally-appropriate, and culturally-sensitive.

*Local, Tailored Design by Credible Colleagues*

- When the innovation is designed to meet perceived local needs and problems and credible colleagues who often serve as local opinion leaders have done the lion's share of the work, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Consensus:*

- When school and community leaders and other key opinion-shapers are involved in decision-making, agree on the "problem(s)"; see the problem(s) as urgent and also see the innovation's potential to solve the problem(s); and there is an agreed-upon path from implementation to better results, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated..

*Socially Responsible, Moral Leadership:*

- When leaders throughout the school and the district, especially the principal and the superintendent, view the innovation as a moral imperative and social responsibility, endorse it, connect it to core values, and make long term resource commitments, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Clarity/Communicability:*

- When the innovation is easy to understand and can be communicated successfully to key opinion leaders and users, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Coherence/Integration:*

- When the innovation fits with other school and district improvement initiatives, and it can be integrated with state/provincial, and national policy priorities, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Relative Advantage:*

- When the innovation promises important benefits, especially improvements not likely to be achieved in any other way; and these benefits outweigh the costs, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Observability:*

- When the innovation's benefits are noticeable to adopters/implementers (e.g., teachers, principals, community service providers) and other important stakeholders (e.g., school board members, mayors), adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Relational Trust:*

- When high levels of trust exist among superintendents, district staff, principals, teachers, student support professionals, social-health service providers, and parents, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

**Fig. 14.2** An inventory of innovation adoption and implementation facilitators needing to be communicated and emphasized for scale-up and sustainability

*Voice/Choice:*

- When adopters-users participate in adoption and implementation decisions and enjoy some choice regarding implementation timetables and learning processes, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Ownership/Vested Interests:*

- When adopter-users view the innovation as “theirs” and one that advances their respective self-interests, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Timing:*

- When the time is ripe for the innovation, especially the innovation responds to urgent needs and problems; and when it does not compete with too many other innovations, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Social Networks:*

- When existing social networks in the school, district, and community are both the targets and the dissemination and scale-up systems, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*“Triability”:*

- When the innovation is easy to try-out and visible results derive immediately from these trials, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Divisibility:*

- When the innovation can be “pieced out” and implemented incrementally, aiming for “small wins,” adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Will/Skill:*

- When adopters-users develop necessary commitments and are provided with professional development that yields requisite competencies, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Feasibility:*

- When the school or district office has the organizational capacities and resources needed for the innovation; and when new roles and responsibilities are manageable, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Compatibility:*

- When the innovation is tailored to fit the local context, advances existing organizational directions, fits as smoothly as possible into existing structures and operations, and is consistent with the priorities, principles, and values of projected users, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

**Fig. 14.2** (continued)

*Fewer Demands with More Direction and Coherence:*

- When innovation planning emphasizes all of the things that schools and districts will stop doing so that colleagues can focus on the innovation(s); and when these innovations are dovetailed with long-standing priorities, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Valid, Sensitive Evaluation:*

- When evaluation designs are embedded in the design and implementation process; when the evaluation measures are sensitive to minute progress indicators and “small wins;” and when positive evaluation results are communicated widely in a timely fashion, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Technical Assistance, Consultation and Coaching:*

- When implementation proceeds with these three resources, especially rapid-response and on-demand professional development, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Organizational Readiness and Supports:*

- When district and school leaders have done their homework on all that needs to be in place before widespread implementation and scale-up can occur, and when they have developed conservative implementation timetables, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*External Supports/Legitimacy:*

- When powerful external constituencies (e.g., school boards, parent and community groups, state board of education) support and promote the innovation, and when these constituencies view the innovation as something the school and the district should or must do, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Confirmation:*

- When evaluations document immediate benefits and visible advantages even as it is implemented, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Generativity:*

- When the work on the new yields additional innovations, and these innovations are valued and incorporated, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Data-driven, Adaptive Learning:*

- When comprehensive, continuous improvement processes enable “in-flight adjustments,” including the detection and correction of mistakes and strategies to address resistance, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Penetration, Centrality, and Accountability:*

- When there is a clear, firm connection between the proposed innovation and the schools’ main core technology (teaching and learning) and its primary accountability (academic learning and achievement), adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

*Resistances:*

- When constraining and inhibiting actors, factors and forces in the school and the district have been anticipated and when trouble-shooting procedures are in place, adoption, implementation, scale-up and sustainability are facilitated.

**Fig. 14.2** (continued)

- ✓ The school and/or the district has a recent history of incivility, strife, conflict, mistrust, and faulty communications
- ✓ The superintendent, key district staff, the principal, and the school's opinion leaders, individually or in combination, do not offer explicit, consistent, and unrelenting support
- ✓ The reasons for change are unclear; and especially when the teachers do view it as a practical solution to urgent problems and needs
- ✓ The innovation causes everyone to change course and move in an entirely new direction, but we do not agree on needs for this new direction.
- ✓ The superintendent lacks the will and the skill to facilitate the change, especially the ability to explain it to the district leadership team, integrate it with other school improvement priorities and processes, "piece it out", and provide long-term supports, assistance, and resources
- ✓ The principal lacks the will and the skill to facilitate the change, especially the ability to explain it to the building leadership team, integrate it with other school improvement priorities and processes, "piece it out", and provide long-term supports, assistance, and resources
- ✓ Turf wars develop between community agency leaders and school/district leaders, making it impossible to coordinate and maximize school and community resources.
- ✓ Interprofessional teams are proclaimed and required without requisite team-building strategies, team leadership preparation programs, and feasible cross-boundary program and service information exchange and service delivery protocols.
- ✓ Community health and social service providers are co-located at schools and given job descriptions that duplicate the ones assigned to the school's student support professionals.
- ✓ School-family-community coordinators are not designated; and if they are, they are not prepared for their new roles, responsibilities, and relationships.

**Fig. 14.3** An inventory of predictable obstacles to anticipate, address, and prevent

- ✓ Instead of formal school-community leadership and governance councils that take charge of resource sharing and the development of formal contractual agreements for partnerships, always volatile “hand-shaking arrangements” characterize top level leaders’ working arrangements.
- ✓ Existing language systems are at odds with the proposed change, and change advocates and leaders fail to introduce and facilitate change as “a new way of talking”—also recognizing that everyone must be able to “walk the talk” and “talk the walk.”
- ✓ Important school and district staff are convinced that the proposed change is outside of the realm of the school’s and the district’s responsibilities
- ✓ The anticipated benefits do not offset the costs (in terms of resources, time, effort, etc.)
- ✓ The proposed users of the change have not be consulted, and the proposed change is presented to them as “a done deal” or an accomplished fact, which makes them feel like implementation puppets
- ✓ Important constituencies, especially unions, school board members, and political officials, and key opinion leaders have been left out of the change process
- ✓ The change threatens established and cherished roles and working relationships among school staff; and also among staff, students, parents, and community members
- ✓ School leaders, teachers, student support professionals, and other adults lack the requisite knowledge, sensitivities, and skills for the change
- ✓ The change requires new organizational capacities (e.g., new data systems; new linkages with community agencies), and there is no recognition that these new capacities are innovations in their own right
- ✓ It is not clear who is responsible for the innovation—there is no designated “point person” or “chief worrier”—nor is it clear who is accountable for its implementation and all that it requires

**Fig. 14.3** (continued)



- ✓ The change threatens people’s status, authority, and power in the school or district, especially the status, authority, and power of key opinion leaders and groups
- ✓ The change entails loss of control over cherished equipment and facilities (e.g., after school leaders take over classrooms; parents take over the teachers’ lounge and establish a school-based family resource center)
- ✓ Change implementation plans are faulty—e.g., insufficient communication, unrealistic timetables, inadequate “phasing in” of complex innovations, and lack of access to technical assistance, professional development, and resources
- ✓ Colleagues’ reluctance and resistance are made public with few or no safeguards and buffers against external criticisms and attacks
- ✓ When district-wide implementation is prioritized, differences among schools are not taken into account.
- ✓ The school and the district have risk-averse histories, organizational climates, and local environments
- ✓ Signs of innovative fatigue and tapped out organizational absorptive capacity are everywhere, in part because the district and its schools have been required to do so much, so fast.
- ✓ “The wrong mix” of stakeholders is assembled to plan, implement, and evaluate the change, especially when some stakeholders have questionable reputations and prior histories of exploiting others
- ✓ Change leaders assume that the expanded improvement plan (on the drawing board) “speaks for itself”; and they have neglected or under-estimated needs for professional development, consultation, and “on demand”, job-embedded technical assistance as the change is implemented
- ✓ Change leaders have neglected or under-estimated needs for barrier-busting protocols and trouble-shooting systems, leaving people on their own to “figure it out.”

**Fig. 14.3** (continued)

- ✓ Staff turnover, especially teacher and principal turnover, persists at high levels, resulting in a syndrome called “two steps forward, one step back.”
- ✓ School leaders, especially principals and superintendents, lack research-supported knowledge and competencies for facilitating planned change
- ✓ The school and the district already have embarked on an ambitious change agenda and the proposed change represents a “turning point” or threshold whereby people exclaim “enough”, “not now,” and “no more.”
- ✓ School leaders, especially principals and superintendents, have not developed change-related, infrastructure supports, including collaborative and distributed leadership structures and processes
- ✓ School and district leaders focus exclusively on individuals, groups, and new technologies, while ignoring and neglecting the development of organizational norms, structures, and operational processes conducive to, and supportive of, the proposed change
- ✓ The school and the district lack the capacity to obtain data and learn from mistakes in order to learn and improve
- ✓ The school and the district have in place organizational norms, structures, and processes for justifying and “normalizing” sub-optimal performance—“that’s just the way it is here.”
- ✓ The district’s leadership culture is widely experienced as top-down, compliance-oriented, controlling, and punitive.
- ✓ The change process proceeds with a “cemented in stone” protocol demanding compliance instead of an ever-evolving, adaptive and data-driven journey
- ✓ The change process is viewed simplistically and narrowly as a technology transfer, ignoring and neglecting accompanying emotional needs and changes in organizational culture and climate

**Fig. 14.3** (continued)

- ✓ Leaders misinterpret learning challenges and adaptation needs as resistance to change and attempt to squelch the “resistors”
- ✓ Evaluation-related, communication mechanisms are faulty and, as a result, hard-working people do not receive timely feedback about their progress and success stories
- ✓ On-time and on-demand technical assistance, mentoring, and coaching are not provided as colleagues struggle to stop their former practices and start new ones.
- ✓ The innovation or change is not matched to urgent problems needing to be solved, results do not improve, and yet another program or service is added on to an already-incoherent and fragmented planning agenda
- ✓ The state/provincial education department requires the immediate implementation of other innovations, and no one is able to make connections between the new school design and the required innovations that are school-specific.

**Fig. 14.3** (continued)

**The Conflict Management Challenge** Conflict is endemic in all collaborative initiatives, and it is tangible indicator that progress is being made in the implementation of the new design (McDonald et al., 2009). So, the trick is to draw on conflict’s benefits and avoid its negative consequences.

One way to create a positive climate for conflict resolution is by establishing explicit, form norms for how diverse people will talk to and treat each other; and also by asking these people to jointly steward these norms (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997). A sample set of norms appears as Fig. 14.4.

**The Evaluation-Driven, Learning, and Improvement Challenge** Ideally, the cross-boundary work required in the start-up, scale-up, and scale-out of this new school-related design involves one or more implementation teams (Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012), and it involves both top-down and bottom-up learning in service of four kinds of learning: Student, staff, organizational, and policy learning (Knapp, Honig, Plecki, Portin, & Copland, 2014).

Recent proposals for a new science of improvement (Bryk et al., 2015; Lewis, 2015), like some new frameworks for international development (Chabbott & Chowdhury, 2015), provide invaluable structural guidance as well as practical guidelines. Two of the most important recommendations need to be emphasized here.

Prescriptive Norms: “The Do’s” Standards and rules for how people should think, talk, act, and interact

- Treat others in the same ways that you want and need to be treated
- Communicate in strengths-based, solution-focused, culturally-sensitive language
- Use plain, everyday language that everyone can understand
- Respect the expertise that others bring, listening intently, learning alternative perspectives, and considering new personal and professional directions
- Structure communications as dialogue, avoiding divisive and conflict-producing debates
- Whenever possible, rely on data and use these data to identify evidence-based interventions
- Use every opportunity to improve communications, build trust, develop mutual respect, and reinforce the idea of interdependent relationships
- Prepare, support, and assist children, parents, family systems and community leaders so that they learn and behave in the same ways.

Prohibitive Norms: “The Don’ts”—Standards and rules that are off-limits and out-of-bounds

- Avoid finger-pointing and blaming when results do not improve or when a crisis develops
- Do no harm
- Do not discriminate against culturally diverse students, parents, and families
- Do not repress students’, parents’, colleagues’ and community members’ perceptions of needs, problems, opportunities, and aspirations
- Avoid language and practices that negatively label, stigmatize, and stereotype students, parents, families, and colleagues
- Avoid acronyms and abbreviations
- Avoid gossip and beyond the scenes criticism of students, families, and colleagues

**Fig. 14.4** Examples of prescriptive, prohibitive, and proscriptive norms to improve the quality of treatment and interaction during periods of disruptive innovation

Proscriptive Norms: Creating Supportive Classroom and School Settings

- Create safe, welcoming spaces/facilities where parents, educators, and service providers are able to interact regularly and positively
- Pay special attention to posters, signs, and bulletin boards, ensuring that the messages they convey are welcoming, supportive, and positive
- Ensure that the buildings are clean, well-maintained and configured in accordance with the community school's programs and services
- Develop solid communications bridges between the school, its community partners, families, and neighborhood leaders, relying on social network technologies and digital strategies

**Fig. 14.4** (continued)

One recommendation is to proceed with a steady pragmatism, finding out what works progressively and on a manageable scale. In contrast to today's prevalent pattern of implementing too many innovations in a short period of time and learning slowly, the recommend alternative is to implement warranted innovations slowly, using targeted evaluations and research designs in order to learn quickly (Bryk et al., 2015). The overall strategy is akin to Weick's (1984) framework for achieving small wins that ultimately result in huge gains.

The other is to form partnerships among like kinds of school communities who are proceeding with the same kinds of school designs. Alternatively called "networked communities of practice" (Bryk et al., 2015), the main idea has two parts.

First, many school communities must meet multiple new needs and solve many new problems, and if they are left to their own devices, it may take decades to do the work. This is especially the case for newcomers to community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools. By joining forces in a networked community of practice, each school community is able to benefit from the problem-solving efforts and innovations created by their partners. Design and development that might take a decade or more gets done more quickly and efficiently, and it saves lives.

Second, all such scale-up and scale-out initiatives proceed with the expectation that flaws and errors are the norm. Drawing on the research that describes high performing learning organizations, scale-up and scale-out proceed with the clear, firm expectation that participants who help to detect and correct will be rewarded (e.g., Argyris & Schön, 1996). One reason for such an incentive and reward structure is that undetected flaws and errors have the potential to cause harm (Allen-Scott, Hatfield, & McIntyre, 2014).

**The Political Challenge** The work of negotiating the politics of local adoption and also the state/provincial/national policy context is non-stop, especially so in the turbulent policy environments evident in many nations. To reiterate, some of this important work needs to be assigned to competent policy entrepreneurs (Mintrom, & Norman, 2009; Williams, 2012). In states/provinces and nations where there is a shortage of qualified policy experts (for this new design), leadership academies are an immediate priority, perhaps in tandem with school, community, university, and government “policy councils” and “policy roundtables” (Lawson, 2013).

## **Adding Accountability Mechanisms—Voluntarily**

Accountability, in today’s international policy context, typically is an external mandate imposed on schools, community agencies and, in some nations, networks of schools and entire regions in which complex partnerships and new school designs are featured (Van Veen, 2006). Accountability, defined simply, means “answerability.” Viewed in the conventional framework, accountability implies firm obligations that revolve around two pivotal questions (Acar, Guo, & Yang, 2012; Bardach & Lesser, 1996): (1) Accountability for what? and (2) Accountability to whom?

Framed in this way, external accountability mechanisms regularly specify what targeted community schools and networks/clusters of them must do to maintain their resources and policy supports. All such mechanisms involve power and authority hierarchies, particularly when policy leaders and funders are intent on achieving identifiable goals and objectives.

Moreover, these external accountability mechanisms usually include incentives (front-end inducements that encourage organizations and motivate people to achieve particular policy goals) and sanctions (varying combinations of rewards and punishments). As a case in point, a growing number of special grants that support start-up, scale-up, and scale-out of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools start as incentives but over time materialize as sanction-oriented; and understandably so. Funders have learned the hard way what can go wrong when their grants and contracts are “too loose”—i.e., they lack sufficient specification. Money, time, and commitments often are wasted when there are no firm reporting requirements for implementation progress, including how money was spent to build new capacities that are needed to achieve desirable outcomes.

## ***Internal Accountability Mechanisms***

The generic school reform and improvement literature has offered a companion accountability emphasis. The priority here is for school-specific, internal accountability mechanisms (e.g., Elmore, 2004). This important, generative idea of internal

accountability is founded in part on norms, values, and standards associated with professionalism, and it extends to two, firm ethical obligations. One is to elevate students' needs above personal interests—and with a “do no harm” clause. The other is to rely on relevant theory and research in all practice-related decision-making, all the while striving to learn and improve.

More than an individual exercise, the overall aim is a school culture and, by extension, a district-wide culture driven by professional norms, values, standards, and behavior. Perhaps above all, this conception of internal accountability is not externally mandated. *It is voluntary!* Educators choose to prioritize it, and they jointly steward its development and progressive improvement. In other words, the incentives and rewards shift from “have to” and “must do” priorities to “want to” and “need to” substitutes. This shift is a game-changer, and it facilitates scale-up, scale-out, continuous improvement, and sustainability.

### ***Bridging External and Internal Accountability Mechanisms***

Recently, Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo, & Hargreaves (2015) have made a theoretically-sound and research supported case in support of an important connection. The timing is right, these researchers argue, to redirect some external accountability mechanisms and especially accountability funding, to a new and equally important policy goal. The goal is to bridge the divide between external-mandatory and internal-voluntary accountability mechanisms and outcomes and, in the process, build the requisite capacity in schools and entire districts at scale. In the words of Fullan et al. (2015):

The first step on the new road to accountability is for policy makers to place their emphasis on the development of *the collective capacity of the profession* and its *responsibility for continuous improvement and for the success of all students*. We call this the *professional capital of teachers*, which consists of human capital (the quality of the individual), social capital (the quality of the group), and decisional capital (the development of expertise and professional judgment of individuals and groups to make more and more effective decisions over time). (p.6, emphasis in the original).

Fullan et al. (2015) emphasize that this new framework for voluntary, internal accountability is part of a formal strategy for organizational and professional capacity-building. They claim that it rests on twin pillars. One is collective, social learning, and it is predicated on two answers to an important accountability question.

The first answer is a response to the question, accountability to whom? Collective social learning makes educators responsible to each other; and by choice, not by external mandate. The other answer is that mutually accountable educators are positioned and prepared to become more accountable to students and their families.

A social developmental platform provides the second pillar for this new accountability system. Grounded in decades of research conducted worldwide, the emphasis starts with an appreciation of how much improvement capacity and professional

capital is missing at today's baseline. This gap analysis extends to the requisite time, dedicated resources, and necessary social supports needed to "move" typical and somewhat challenged schools (at baseline) to the stages where they have developed and can advance on their own the all-important professional capital resource and, at the same time, build and promote voluntary, internal accountability systems.

### ***Making the Connection to Community Agencies***

Where community health and social services agencies are concerned—and they are of special interest in this new accountability context—the same basic questions and emergent accountability innovations are salient. For example, building the professional capital of social workers in child and family services agencies is no less important than the above-mentioned framework for professional educators in schools. The same priorities obtain for the development of internal, voluntary accountability mechanisms in school-linked health agencies, driven by the professional capital of nurses, physicians, dentists, and public health professionals.

### ***Cross-Boundary, Voluntary Accountability Systems***

Community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools are complex organizational designs with many related, moving parts. However, they remain schools with respect to their core academic mission, and this mission is connected with the need to develop educators' professional capital in service of voluntary, internal accountability for student learning, collective professional development, and improved school performance.

In comparison to stand-alone schools, these new kinds of schools have several unique features. Two are especially noteworthy, and both were emphasized in Chap. 13. First, these schools are structured to achieve outcomes other than student academic learning and achievement, and so their core technologies extend beyond pedagogy to include, for example, social and health services interventions and perhaps community development strategies. Second, these schools' professional workforces are not limited to educators. In fact, the most advanced exemplars are characterized by genuine interprofessional collaboration and firm inter-organizational partnerships.

As indicated throughout this book, the old boundaries for the stand-alone school are gone, and boundary-crossing partnerships and team collaborations are the norm. Meanwhile, conventional accountability structures, both external-mandatory and voluntary-internal have been developed exclusively for the stand-alone school with its sectoral (categorical) policy.

Significantly, the same dominant pattern is manifest in community agencies, neighborhood associations, and other organizations partnering with schools. For example, existing accountability structures and reporting mechanisms for community



health and social services agencies often are limited to specialized mental health, health, and social development indicators. While interest may reside in how these indicators may influence a child's school attendance, engagement, academic learning, and overall performance, community agency professionals are not accountable for these outcomes because they are someone else's responsibility. Categorical, sector-specific policies follow suit with very specialized, narrowing reporting structures.

### ***Three Priorities for Accountability Theory and Practice***

The pioneering work that lies ahead extends to policy makers and funders. For starters: What are the accountability mechanisms for policy makers and funders, particularly with regard to policy-bridging and policy integration initiatives? Here, there is much to be gained by bottom-up policy learning and innovation mechanisms, ones developed with an eye toward their coherence with top-down strategies (Honig, 2006; White & Wehlage, 1995).

Figure 14.5 was developed in response to this need (Lawson, [work in progress](#)). It provides a starter inventory of voluntary accountability criteria for policy makers and funders.

In the same vein, two of the core features of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools open up new frontiers for voluntary accountability frameworks and reporting mechanisms. For example: What are the defining features of voluntary accountability frameworks for interprofessional teams, especially teams that must genuinely collaborate in order to achieve interdependent outcomes?

A fast-growing literature on interprofessional team collaboration is ready to be reviewed for its important contributions to a voluntary accountability framework (e.g., Daniels, 2010, 2011; Edwards 2011; Forbes & Watson, 2012; Halley, 1997; Lawson, 2014; Mellin et al., 2011). These practice-friendly, accountability-oriented reviews will be enriched if they emphasize a three-component relationship. We have in mind here the relationship among team social capital (Lawson, 2014), child and family social capital (e.g., Allan & Catts, 2012; Warren, Thompson, & Saegert, 2001), and the relational power generated among professionals, children and families when social capital is effectively mobilized across a school and perhaps an entire community to achieve shared goals (Warren, 2001, 2005; Warren & Mapp, 2011).

Inter-organizational partnerships are the second core feature. The question is: What are the defining features of voluntary accountability frameworks for inter-organizational partnerships involving schools, community agencies, higher education institutions, and private sector businesses?

We have commenced work on a companion, voluntary accountability framework developed specifically for community school partnerships, extended to university partners (Caron, Ulrich-Schad, & Lafferty, 2015). Although our research review is not done, it has achieved sufficient readiness for us for a starter inventory

- ✓ Complete research reviews and consult experts in order to develop a clear, coherent, comprehensive, and justifiable theory of change.
- ✓ Reach preliminary consensus on partnership purposes and composition, emphasizing the connection between the partnership's members and the overall theory of change you want to develop and test (e.g., developing school-linked health and social services; developing out-of-school time programs developing linking, bonding and bridging social capital; developing civic capacity and collective efficacy).
- ✓ Recognize in advance, that collaborative partnerships have a dual character: (1) At start-up, their members need an overall theory of change (which you must provide) for the complex systems work they undertake because the work will be new to nearly everyone; and (2) Later, partnership members will develop, implement, evaluate, and improve multiple theories of change focused on specific priorities, goals, and desired outcomes
- ✓ Determine in advance how best to help partnership leaders and members to accept the complexity of the work at hand, developing an experimentalist attitude needed when multiple theories of change operate
- ✓ Avoid cookie cutter planning and development. Take stock of, and make partnership accommodations for, the particularities of place and context (social geography), population characteristics at baseline (demography), and the unit(s) of analysis (e.g., two rural school districts, an urban neighborhood, a city, a county, a cross-state region)
- ✓ Scaffold the partnership's progressive development, identifying in advance the expected (and scripted) developmental phases; the key priorities in each phase; and the success markers worthy of celebration; and recommended strategies for building on successes and strengths.

**Fig. 14.5** Partnership accountability priorities for funders and policy leaders

- ✓ Emphasize leadership before implementation commences and continue it with boosters throughout, emphasizing all relevant aspects of partnership start-up, advancement, and progressive institutionalization and sustainability, including the multiple dimensions of leadership (e.g., design-oriented, collaborative, adaptive, distributed) as well as leadership succession planning.
- ✓ Identify salient facilitators, constraints, obstacles and barriers, including how the partnership will capitalize on the facilitators, accommodate constraints, address the obstacles, and cope with the barriers.
- ✓ Develop a realistic time frame, typically one spanning several years, for the progressive development of a true collaborative partnership, while emphasizing and providing resources for education and constituency-building, resource development and deployment, institutionalization, and evaluation-driven, continuous quality improvement.
- ✓ Develop companion plans for responsive, tailored consultation, technical assistance, mentoring and coaching, recognizing that people's competencies and their organizations' capacities often need to be aligned with the partnership work being launched .
- ✓ Take stock of the special needs and resource requirements associated with three kinds of partnerships: (1) Ones that involve veteran professionals working in schools and community agencies with identifiable partnership and innovation readiness and capacity; (2) Ones that expand membership to involve lay leaders and representatives, especially parents and representative youths from target populations; and (3) Ones involving schools and districts in flux and requiring "turnaround," starting with their workforce compositions and competencies.

**Fig. 14.5** (continued)

- ✓ Where multiple partnerships are involved in a given city, county, state, or region , regularly convene representative leaders and use participatory action research to identify promising innovations, shared needs and problems, policy changes and needs, and cross-site lessons learned.
- ✓ Develop a coherent, comprehensive, and integrated framework for systems change and policy learning wherein several learning and improvement strategies are prioritized and routinely assessed: (1) top-down policy development, implementation and learning;(2) bottom-up counterparts; and (3) both outside-in and inside-out horizontal (cross-sector and cross-boundary) policy development and learning.

**Fig. 14.5** (continued)

(Lawson, [work in progress](#)). Figure 14.6 provides a developmental process accountability inventory for partnership leaders and evaluators.

A third accountability facilitator is results-oriented, and it has been emphasized in several of the previous chapters. A formal logic model or theory of change, one that is theoretically-sound, research-supported, and structures evaluation-driven learning, knowledge generation, and continuous improvement, increasingly, is a fundamental requirement and a professional obligation. Figures 3.1 and 13.5 serve as examples.

### ***Back to Start-Up, Scale-Up, Scale-Out, and Sustainability***

When accountability systems for community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools and community schools are voluntary and embedded in the work; when enough leaders and front-line professionals have made knowledgeable commitments to such a new school design; and when research-supported accountability planning tools are ready to be used and are emphasized in leadership development, these several advancements have a collective impact. Start-up, scale-up, scale-out, continuous improvement, and sustainability are facilitated.

Justifications for this bold, complex claim are easy to find. For example, needs for voluntary accountability mechanisms are readily apparent in short-term, grant-driven initiatives that are widely perceived as someone else's good idea, especially grant initiatives that proceed with top-down, compliance-oriented, and replication-driven protocol. In these circumstances professional norms, values, and standards

- ✓ Use partnership leadership theory, research, policy-practice briefs, and local knowledge when selecting one or more *boundary-crossing partnership leaders*, providing them with mentoring, and coaching.
- ✓ Use partnership leadership theory, research, policy-practice briefs, and local knowledge when selecting *a neutral, credible intermediary organization* for housing and resourcing the partnership.
- ✓ Use partnership theory, research, policy-practice briefs, and local knowledge at start up, especially in pivotal decisions regarding *the right mix of the key stakeholders* as well as norms, rules, roles, incentives, and conflict resolution protocols needed to facilitate their new working relationships.
- ✓ When the partnership is structured to include representative, diverse parents, neighborhood leaders, and youth leaders, *provide training, mentoring and supports* for them and partnership members.
- ✓ Develop an achievable mission and agree on *measurable goals*, expressing them in simple language.
- ✓ Use theory, research, policy-practice briefs, and local knowledge to *choose the initial priorities wisely*, beginning with two important decisions: (1) The decision to start with just one priority or many; (2) The decision to stay focused on organization-specific priorities or to focus on new, interdependent, complex ones indicative of systems change.
- ✓ Allocate the time and resources and provide the prerequisite, facilitative leadership needed to develop perceived and highly valued *interdependent relationships among the partnership's members* alongside each member's "accountable autonomy."

**Fig. 14.6** A process accountability framework for collaborative partnerships

- ✓ Once the partnership has gained traction, *make pivotal decisions about whether and how to expand the membership*, providing as needed initiation supports to new members and also figuring out how to work cooperatively and collaboratively with constituencies not formally included in the partnership.
- ✓ Use theory, research, policy-practice briefs, assessment data, and local knowledge to *initiate sub-population identification and targeting*, taking stock of the special features of the local context and making companion decisions about where to start, how, and how best to scale-up from pilot initiatives.
- ✓ Figure out the logistics of developing and constantly updating and promoting *community report cards* (community data dashboards), including mechanisms for helping diverse people to use them in planning.
- ✓ Build new working relationships, intervention designs, and improvement systems based on partnership members' respective *responsibilities and accountabilities* (especially non-negotiable, policy and organizational "answerability"), forging new relationships among people, professions, and organizations to achieve outcomes and with an action-oriented focus on shared pathways toward desired results.
- ✓ Strive continuously to *align the partnership's formal mission and measurable goals* with the missions, structures and operations of participating people, professions and organizations.
- ✓ Develop consensus-based, quality assurance mechanisms for *facilitating resource sharing and preventing "free riding" and non-disclosure*.
- ✓ Assess the extent to which partnership members are able to proceed beyond linear and limited, one-at-a-time problem-solving strategies, building their respective *commitments, individual/team competencies, and organizational capacities* for complex, multi-lateral, simultaneous problem solving mechanisms.

**Fig. 14.6** (continued)

- ✓ “Brand” and name the partnership, emphasizing *the development of a shared partnership identity* (“we” and “our”), alongside members’ specialized identities (“mine” and “yours”)
- ✓ Use theory, research, policy-practice briefs, and local knowledge to identify and prioritize important local environmental factors, especially public policies and the mass media, which must be addressed in order to bring about *attitudinal and behavioral changes for a campaign spirit* in the targeted people and place(s).
- ✓ Design, implement, evaluate, and continuously improve a *school-family-community educational and career counseling system*, aligning it with the work of school/college counselors
- ✓ Develop accountability mechanisms for governors, legislators, and state agency heads, charging them with using partnership knowledge and lessons learned to implement both *responsive and proactive systems change facilitators* (e.g., integrated data systems; accessible data formats and protocols) and policy changes (e.g., waivers, de-categorized funding) identified by collaborative partnerships.
- ✓ Identify lead responsibilities and accountabilities for *public relations and social marketing* and develop a special partnership sub-committee charged with it.
- ✓ Identify responsibilities and accountabilities for *resource generation, pooling, and allocation* and develop a special partnership sub-committee charged with it.
- ✓ Develop, assess and evaluate, and continuously improve *theoretically-sound, research-supported theories of change* (logic models), which include the following core features:

**Fig. 14.6** (continued)

- ✓ Identification of targeted, distal (long term) outcomes, the proximal (short-term) outcomes leading to them, progress markers for both, and the causal connections among them
- ✓ Solid assessment data about the current state of affairs, including important needs, gaps, aspirations and baseline outcomes.
- ✓ Identification of the targeted, malleable priorities (i.e., ones that can be altered) that lead to desired outcomes, together with the tailored interventions for them
- ✓ Specification of lead responsibility and primary accountability for these outcomes
- ✓ Identification of priorities for organizational capacity-building as well as individual and team competency development
- ✓ Depiction of evaluation, knowledge generation, and continuous quality improvement mechanisms
- ✓ Monitor and evaluate the developmental milestones in an adaptive partnership journey guided by a key design principle: *Fit for purpose, in this context, at this time.*

**Fig. 14.6** (continued)

are at risk as the balance swings toward implementation fidelity of a particular community school model imported from a different place.

So, there is much to be gained by a strategic, coherent, and feasible combination of the Fullan et al. (2015) framework for the development of lasting, evolving professional capital with the fast-growing knowledge base about voluntary accountability systems in partnerships (e.g., Acar et al., 2012; Bardach & Lesser, 1998), extending to shared accountability among interprofessional team members.

Investments in change readiness, innovation adoption, development and implementation capacity, and workforce competencies or collaborative leadership thus do double duty. They are facilitators for start-up, scale-up, scale-out, and sustainability, and, at the same time, they are facilitators for the development of voluntary internal and cross-boundary accountability mechanisms. Such is the promise of the pioneering work that lies ahead.

## **In Conclusion: The Ten R's of Scale-Up, Sustainability, and Improvement-Oriented Systems Change**

This book is like an unfinished symphony, and all companion publications are destined to have the same status. After all, the new school design featured in this book is a fast-moving, complex innovation. More than yet another iteration of school



reform and improvement, the advanced exemplars featured here are indicative of new institutional designs for schools and community agencies alike. The work underway and the broad agenda that structures it qualify as complex systems change.

Complex systems change simply has to be made manageable, especially so when start-up, scale-up, continuous improvement, and sustainability are prioritized. One practical strategy for achieving this important improvement goal is to focus on the system for roles, relationships, and responsibilities. The ten “R’s” that follow have been developed accordingly. They have served their purpose if they structure analyses, innovative designs, and action-oriented improvement planning in support of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools.

**Rethink & Reimagine** Start with the gap between the organizational designs and social institutions structured for an industrial society, contrasting these industrial mechanisms with the needs, demands, and opportunities that characterize twenty-first century, global societies. Granting the benefits of industrial age systems, take stock of the problems they manufacture needlessly, the missed opportunities associated with them, and the urgent needs they are unable to address effectively. Without adopting an “out with the old, in with the new perspective,” imagine professions, organizations, and institutions better suited for today’s world, adaptable ones lead to the world of tomorrow.

**Redirect** All systems change initiatives, like journeys into new territory, need a targeted destination with an accompanying map. In many circles, this work is known as direction-setting. Direction-setting desirably proceeds in relation to four related questions pertaining to designs for a better future. Toward what ends? In whose interests? Who gets what, how much, under what conditions, when, and why? And, are the new design(s) achievable at scale and sustainable? Develop theories of change and logic models that specify your map and compass, and continue to improve them with assessment and evaluative data.

**Research** Do your homework before you proceed with design and implementation, drawing on relevant theory and research, while avoiding what amounts to needless and problematic “reinventing the wheel” tendencies. Look for relevant historical and cross-national evidence, including evidence that raises questions and doubts. Also explore the research that identifies and describes the prerequisite conditions, the new capacities and competencies needed, the attendant policy changes, and the required resources.

**Reconfigure** In pursuit of the more desirable destinations indicated by your planning map, and guided by relevant research, begin the adaptive work of reconfiguring roles, responsibilities, relationships, organizational structures, work protocols, and accountability systems. Gauge your school community’s change readiness and capacities and develop justifiable timetables, implementation frameworks, professional development supports, and technical assistance-consultation plans.

**Redeploy** Keep in the mind every systems change initiative depends on people power; and also that role systems can either enable or constrain systems change. Involve key people in participatory planning aimed at redeploying precious, vital human resources, also thinking differently about role systems. Question long-standing boundaries and specializations. Is there a better way? Can we combine some functions?

**Retrain** Every innovation requires, and depends on, new commitments, knowledge, skills, values, and sensitivities. While some derive from new roles, responsibilities, and work protocols—where learning is embedded in implementing and advancing the new system, in nearly every case people need new competencies. Training systems, learning systems, mentoring and coaching systems, and supervision systems are the key drivers here, and they need to be reconfigured and aligned to ensure coherence, consistency, and powerful learning.

**Reallocate** Because economic resources are predicted to remain flat and even decline, existing resources must be reallocated strategically and efficiently, with as few disruptions as possible in programs and services. In effect, resource reallocation, broadly defined, entails a three-component switch: (1) Some roles, programs, services, and functions are eliminated; (2) Others are reconfigured; and (3) New ones are launched. Important questions loom about how these decisions are made, who will make them, how and when they will be implemented, and how quickly the improvement process will advance.

**Reinforce/Reward** Because every systems change initiative depends on people power, and people being asked and required to change often encounter difficulty in getting started, staying the course, and finishing their respective parts, an incentive and reward system is a critical, often over-looked, component of systems change. Considerable planning completed with the guidance of relevant research and theory is needed in relation to front-end motivation (incentives) and, once the change process is underway, how to reward new directions, promising developments, and significant achievements. Effectiveness, scale-up, and sustainability all hinge in large part on the incentive and reward system.

**Recognize** Develop and promote awareness of the benefits and advantages of the new school design and the larger system it helps to create. Emphasize the differences that the innovation creates, emphasizing how each individual's and group's self-interest is inseparable from the new design's benefits. As people's recognition of this good fit grows, so will their commitments to advance, help institutionalize, and sustain the new system.

**Reassess and Renew** Few organizational systems change and institutional redesign initiatives proceed with complete certainty and predictability, especially in the turbulent, complex, novel, and uncertain policy and societal contexts of the early twenty-first century. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation sub-systems are a practical necessity in every part and level of the targeted system. More than a way to collect data, these sub-systems are drivers for continuous quality improvement,

adaptive learning, and knowledge generation for policy, training initiatives, future research, and systems change practice. Renewal is a special construct here because it serves as a reminder that these assessments and evaluations do not always provide reasons to change (Goodlad, 1994). Renewal also means staying the course because the data justify the new directions being pursued.

## A Final Note

Start-up, scale-up, scale-out, accountability, and sustainability planning facilitated by the new science of improvement often proceed in three ways. Risking oversimplification in service of clarity, three patterns are evident.

The first is wholly understandable and predictable, but it also is a serious constraint. Here, community schools, community learning centers, extended-service, and multi-service schools are viewed as yet another iteration of school reform. The main difference is that this new reform iteration proceeds with a school-community partnership and interprofessional collaboration agenda, one that is structured to address student barriers to attendance, engagement, learning, and academic achievement. Because this approach mainly expands the present configuration of student support services, it presents comparatively fewer disruptions to conventional schools. For this reason, it is easier to start-up, scale-up, scale-out, and sustain.

This comparative advantage is offset by the manifest limitations. Such a modest complement to conventional school reform will not produce desirable outcomes at scale when the several presenting needs and problems identified and described in Chap. 2 prevail.

The second pattern involves advancing comprehensive, multi-component versions of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools. Examples of these initiatives were introduced in Chaps. 3 and 4, and the advanced exemplars featured in Part II provide other operational details. While this second pattern retains the conventional idea of school, clearly “school” is not merely re-formed. The dominant model for a school is progressively transformed, extending all that a school site encompasses, provides and strives to achieve. The manifest complexity, novelty, and ambiguity associated with this more elaborate design complicate start-up, scale-up, scale-out, accountability, and sustainability planning. Compared to expanded school reform, all will take longer; require more technical assistance, leadership development and capacity-building; and necessitate a long-term plan for resource generation, reallocation, and sustainability.

The third pattern builds on the second, but it is not fully evident at this time. Here, the work of designing, developing, scaling, and sustaining community schools, community learning centers, extended service schools and multi-service schools is framed as a systems change agenda, one structured to create twenty-first century institutions. In this third pattern, two new partners are added, together with

two new outcomes: (1) Postsecondary education completion with demonstrated, advanced competence; and (2) Adaptive and proactive policy learning and innovation.

Universities and especially their schools, colleges, and departments of education, are one of the two partners. The other partners are national and state/provincial governmental agencies charged with all matters of educational policy, oversight, and accountability.

On close inspection, these two partners are integral parts of the education system. They have the potential to facilitate, constrain, and block planning for start-up, scale-up, scale-out, accountability, and sustainability. The final chapter provides salient details.

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# Chapter 15

## The New Design as a Catalyst for Systems Change: Forging New Relationships with Universities and Governments

Hal A. Lawson and Dolf van Veen

**Abstract** The idea of university-assisted community schools (Harkavy and colleagues chapter), together with the other chapters that attest to the importance of higher education institutions in the development of community schools, community learning centers, extended service schools, and multi-service schools, recommend a particular way of thinking and planning. Systems thinking and systems planning models proceed with the quest to identify and connect all relevant parts of a system; and with the expectation that each part influences and is influenced by the others. Higher education overall and the universities in particular merit a fresh look with this systems perspective in mind, while keeping in view a compelling idea: Closing two achievement gaps entails preparing more young people to enter and complete post-secondary education with advanced competence. To maximize postsecondary education's contributions to this important international agenda, while also benefiting higher education institutions in myriad ways, the idea of “outreach and engagement” has gained international salience. Examples of outreach and engagement strategies are provided, including many derived from the model of university-assisted community schools. A new idea called the “Quadruple Helix” builds on the idea of higher education institutions as economic development drivers and incubators for innovative public policies. Perhaps above all, the idea of “the community school-assisted university” opens new avenues for needed changes in higher education, starting with the schools, colleges, and departments of education and extending to schools and departments of social work, counselling, nursing and other professional schools. The preparation of partnership and collaboration specialists is

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a top priority, and it provides important opportunities for innovative programs, policies and research agendas. Another need is for tailor-made professional development programs for higher education faculty members because: (1) Most faculty lack preparation for the new school design; and (2) Until such time as faculty are prepared and modify their preparation programs, preservice education programs will remain out of step with the new school design featured in this book, constraining progress and slowing scale-up and scale-out initiatives.

**Keywords** Engaged university • Interprofessional education and training • Schools of education • Partnership working • Interprofessional collaboration • Policy entrepreneur • Policy innovation • Community school • At-risk youths

This chapter's title announces a systems change framework advanced by four main partners: (1) community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools and extended-schools; (2) school-linked and -based community health and social service agencies; (3) higher education institutions, including all manner of postsecondary technical training institutions and particularly the universities; and (4) governmental agencies with oversight responsibilities for educational policy, social policy, health policy, and economic development policy. This inter-organizational marriage is timely and important because all four entities are part of the same system.

All systems change frameworks are grounded in the idea of interdependence. In other words, each part of a system influences and also is influenced by the others (Senge et al., 2012). So, when school/community leaders, governmental leaders, and higher education leaders share common purposes and strive to harmonize and synchronize their respective efforts, start-up, scale-up, scale-out, improvement science, accountability, and sustainability are facilitated and accelerated.

For example, the new school-related design featured in this book ultimately depends on adaptive and proactive changes in higher education institutions as well as policy innovation led by leaders of governmental education agencies. In contrast, when the universities, and particularly their "Ed Schools" are not aligned with new school designs, and when governmental education agencies work at cross-purposes with universities, schools, and their community partners, start-up, scale-ups, and sustainability are constrained significantly, and both improvement science and voluntary accountability systems get short shrift. Most of all, outcomes do not improve for children, families, schools, clusters of schools, and entire communities.

What needs to be done to advance this systems change agenda? This broad question structures our exploratory analysis. Where governmental agencies such as national and state/provincial education departments are concerned, we emphasize the need for practice-responsive and research-driven policy learning and innovation, especially inter-sectoral policy integration. Toward this end, we recommend the development of new partnership structures such as policy-practice councils that enable governmental leaders and policy officials to interact with and learn from

school, community, and university leaders. Fast-growing private-public partnership policy councils that unite universities, business and industry, and governments provide a visible, feasible exemplar.

Center-stage in this system change agenda are the schools, colleges, and departments of education. These “Ed Schools” are charged with preservice education as well as practice- and policy-relevant research. We identify and describe briefly manifest needs and timely opportunities for the progressive redesign of Ed schools, including new relationships with other professional schools and colleges that prepare professionals for community schools, community learning centers, extended service schools, and multi-service schools.

We begin with a comprehensive framework for the university side of this systems change agenda. We emphasize the import of a university-wide agenda increasingly called outreach and engagement. Throughout we employ the concept “university” to apply broadly to all manner of higher education institutions.

## University Outreach and Engagement Partnerships

The generative idea of university-assisted community schools was introduced by Harkavy and his colleagues in Chap. 13. In a growing number of universities worldwide, this idea is part of a larger agenda called outreach and engagement (e.g., Bargerstock, Doberneck, & Zimmerman, 2007; Kliewer, Sandmann, & PaduRanga Narasimharao, 2013; Zimpher, Percy, & Brukardt, 2002). This agenda stands in contrast to the long-standing stereotype of the university as Ivory Tower—an English language metaphor meant to communicate the university’s social distancing from everyday life.

*Outreach* is a deliberate effort to develop bridges between the former university-as-ivory tower and local entities—schools, towns and cities, community health and social services agencies, governments, and businesses and corporations. *Engagement* refers to the collaborative activities undertaken by university faculty, students, and staff with local leaders and community residents, including those directed toward new school designs.

### *A Multi-component Rationale for Outreach and Engagement*

Universities have developed and advanced their respective outreach and engagement agendas to achieve as many as eight goals. These goals often develop incrementally, and their progressive development stands as evidence of a particular university’s commitments to organizational learning and improvement. Significantly, every goal identified below can be connected to the progressive development of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and

extended-service schools. This goal convergence is a critical feature of systems change because it indicates that common purposes are developing.

The first outreach and engagement goal emphasizes social responsibility. Voluntary service by faculty, students and staff members is the primary strategy. Civic engagement is a top priority, and it is connected to citizenship in a democracy. Volunteerism in service of civic engagement, in this view, is a public good to which universities make important contributions.

The second goal focuses on learning strategies and experiences for undergraduate and graduate students. Founded on civic engagement, it is based on the educational advantages of service learning and project-based learning in external settings. A two part-formula is manifest in service learning. Students learn while serving, and they serve while learning (Lawson, 2002). The philosophical school of thought known as pragmatism underpins these educational initiatives.

Meanwhile, an economic development goal drives a growing number of outreach and engagement partnerships between universities and private sector businesses and corporations. Workforce preparation, called “human capital development” by economists (Becker, 1993), is a central part of this effort. Arguably all manner of schools and universities have some responsibility for workforce preparation, and this responsibility extends to the new school-related design featured in this book.

Where university outreach and engagement are concerned, economic development proceeds beyond human capital development to strategic research and development partnerships with private sector organizations. In many parts of the world, this new direction for universities is known as “the triple helix model” (e.g., Etzkowitz, 2008). With twin aims for social entrepreneurship and innovation development (Kliwer et al., 2013), the “triple” in the title designates the three partners: Universities, private sector businesses and corporations, and governments.

These hybridized, private/public partnerships are manifested in research and development parks, many of which are co-located on university campuses. In addition to resource generation for states/provinces, and entire nations, universities that have formed these partnerships also increase their own revenue base. At the same time, these triple helix partnerships provide research opportunities for faculty members as well as career and technical education for undergraduate and graduate students.

Opportunities for knowledge generation, dissemination, and use comprise the fourth goal. As with students’ learning and development, pragmatism provides the philosophical foundation. It is based in part on Kurt Lewin’s (1951) profound claim—namely, that one of the best ways to understand any phenomenon is by trying to change it in its natural contexts. In fact, university-wide research and development missions can be founded on this compelling idea (e.g., Crow & Dabars, 2015).

So, for example, one of the best ways to understand the success of vulnerable students in challenged schools is by trying to change student behavior and school characteristics in real-world contexts. Where this fourth goal is concerned, schools, community agencies, private sector organizations, and governments provide timely opportunities for research and development, and the achievement of the university’s research mission depends on outreach and engagement in these external settings.

The fifth goal is most visible in particular kinds of universities—namely, urban universities with adjacent and nearby neighborhoods challenged by concentrated social and economic disadvantage. Two main ideas underpin this goal. One is that universities are impacted adversely over the long term as disadvantage grows. The other is that universities, like hospitals, libraries, and schools, become community development resources when they serve as “anchor institutions” and neighborhood hubs (e.g., Taylor et al, 2013; Tate, 2012; Zimpher et al., 2002). Universities engaged in local community development thus serve themselves at the same time that they contribute to efforts directed at place-based disadvantage.

The sixth goal is an emergent one, and it stems from profound demographic changes underway in many nations. Risking over-generalization, the traditional pool of university-oriented families is shrinking at the same time that the number of families with little or no prior history of post-secondary education is on the rise.

This sixth goal is founded on two pillars. One is educational equity with a strong emphasis on social inclusion, and including its relationship with equitable, sustainable, and integrated social and economic development (e.g., Briar-Lawson et al., 2001; Raffo, 2014; Sen, 1999). The other derives from enlightened self-interest, and it is illuminated by a very important question. What can universities prioritize and do in order to maintain and perhaps increase their respective enrollment levels?

An emergent outreach and engagement strategy is being mounted to achieve this sixth goal—to maintain and increase the number of qualified undergraduate and graduate students. Central to this strategy is the development of Cradle-to-Career and Cradle-through-Career systems (Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014; Lawson, 2013)—and with special interest in educational equity vis-à-vis postsecondary education readiness, access, and completion (e.g., Crow & Dabars, 2015).

This strategy, visible in a growing number of nations in the Northern Hemisphere, entails the development of partnership councils that bring together leaders of programs for infants, preschools, K-12 students, and postsecondary education institutions (Edmondson & Zimpher, 2014; Lawson & Anderson-Butcher, 2011). Twin assumptions underpin this work. Now-separate educational entities need to be joined in the same system. Once joined, leaders will collaborate in the development of education pipelines that mass produce greater numbers of students who are ready for postsecondary education (e.g., McGrath et al., 2005). This sixth goal thus serves enrollment-dependent universities at the same time that it advances an all-important educational equity agenda.

Progress on this sixth goal contributes to a seventh goal: The social integration of culturally and ethnically diverse students, especially ones challenged by the terrible trilogy of poverty, social exclusion and social isolation. Here, universities share with schools responsibilities for providing educational opportunity structures that provide pathways out of poverty and simultaneously prevent exclusion, marginalization and oppression. This goal gains importance as massive migrations of the world’s people continue. Universities, working in close partnerships with schools, are part of the solution to the question raised earlier in this book: Can we live together?

Savvy university leaders are able to join the aforementioned goals in service of an eighth goal. The goal is enhanced political advocacy and better public relations to obtain funding. This political goal is especially prominent in publicly-assisted universities whose leaders are involved in fierce competitions for governmental funding. The main idea is important and compelling. When politicians make funding decisions for higher education overall and universities in particular, they know that these funds will be used to address urgent societal needs and problems. So, for example, special funding for a school of education is directly connected to an overall agenda for new school designs and school improvement because the Ed schools are firmly grounded in local school improvement and new school design initiatives.

These eight goals are not mutually exclusive. So, for example, universities able to make contributions to the college and career readiness of succeeding generations of vulnerable students also are making contributions to human capital development for the global economy as well as citizenship preparation for increasingly complex democracies. Significantly, nearly every university outreach and engagement goal does double duty as a goal for community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools. These shared goals are lubricants and cementers for school-community-university partnerships.

### ***New Designs with Organizational Learning and Improvement in the Universities***

More than a modern day version of *noblesse oblige*—what the privileged owe to the less fortunate—an outreach and engagement agenda is becoming a practical necessity (Lawson, 2013). It enables university leaders to learn and adapt their curricula and also adjust research priorities in tandem with the changes underway in community schools, multi-service schools, community learning centers, and extended-service schools.

In fact, the multi-component rationale for new school designs (Chap. 2) and varying configurations of community schools, multi-service schools, community learning centers, and extended-services schools (every other chapter) provide research, development, and educational opportunities for university faculty and students. Beyond this inviting idea of opportunities are more compelling reasons for outreach and engagement.

University outreach and engagement with and in these new school designs are practical necessities. In this light, it is not merely a matter of what university leaders *might* prioritize and do. The several alternatives for outreach and engagement increasingly are examples of what leaders *must* prioritize and do. Together these new opportunities-as-requirements represent the new frontiers for university design, innovation development, and continuous improvement.

Framed in this way, the meritorious idea of a university-assisted community school described in Chap. 12 can be viewed as incomplete because it denotes a

one-way relationship—universities assist schools. Clearly, universities also are beneficiaries and improvement targets, and this important claim showcases the idea of how community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools may assist universities. A new descriptor announces this now-missing emphasis: The community school-assisted university!

With needs, opportunities, and mandates for reciprocal learning and development as a priority, the recommended descriptor thus is “university-assisted and –connected community school” (Lawson, 2010). Such an expanded configuration, which builds on the pioneering work of Harkavy et al (Chap. 12), offers bountiful opportunities for multiple outreach and engagement activities structured in part by the seven goals identified above.

### ***An Inventory of Outreach and Engagement Priorities and Programs***

The best examples of outreach and engagement agendas involving this new school design proceed with collaborative planning and shared leadership. Because the idea of a university-assisted and –connected community school partnership remains in its nascent stages, it is important that school, community, and university leaders are aware of their options. This need is especially apparent as cradle-to-career systems are developed among multiple schools in the same places—at which time the number of diverse stakeholders grows.

We have developed Fig. 15.1 in response to this need for a shared understanding of the outreach and engagement agenda, especially what it offers to leaders of local school-community designs, start-ups, and scale-ups. This figure provides an inventory of program and innovation opportunities.

For school and community leaders, this inventory is like a shopping list. It enables these school and community leaders to look for and request particular kinds of outreach and engagement programs and services developed in conjunction with the new arrangement known as university-assisted and –connected community schools.

For university leaders, Fig. 15.1 can be viewed as planning framework, and it can be operationalized in constituent academic departments, schools, and colleges. Schools, colleges, and departments of Education—“Ed schools”—arguably are the most important priority.

### **Toward the Progressive Redesign of Ed Schools in Engaged Universities**

Worldwide colleagues committed to community schools, community learning centers, multi-service, and extended service schools increasingly perceive needs and imperatives for the redesign of Ed schools. These redesign imperatives extend to

### Undergraduate Student Service Learning

Undergraduate students receive academic credit for their civic engagement. Three alternatives are commonplace.

- Students volunteer to help other people, and their assignments are jointly determined by the sponsoring community agency and university service learning supervisors. Here, students do not need specialized knowledge in order to serve other people and help a local agency. Sometimes students develop career plans as they engage in service learning. For example, a student who tutors school children may decide to become a teacher.
- Academic subject-centered service learning whereby undergraduates use their specialized knowledge (e.g., chemistry majors teach chemistry to students and also contribute to the professional development of teachers).
- Planned career awareness and development experiences whereby students try out alternatives for their “possible selves” (e.g., shadowing and assisting a teacher or social worker; assisting a private sector product development scientist)

### Professional Internships for Future Teachers, Social Workers, Nurses, Physicians, etc.

Field placements in professional education programs are structured so that students learn how to practice, while also helping local organizations serve their respective client populations. These placements are especially important to health and mental health agencies, social service agencies, and schools that do not have enough full-time professionals to meet their populations’ needs.

### Independent Research Projects for Undergraduate and Graduate Students

**Fig. 15.1** A basic inventory of University outreach and engagement initiatives

With faculty supervision and in close consultation with local school, community, business, and governmental partners, students complete research reviews and conduct pilot studies in response to community-identified needs and priorities. All such projects contribute to the shared goal of implemented research-supported policies and practices.

#### Interdisciplinary Faculty Research and Development Projects

A growing number of complex needs and “wicked problems” cannot be solved by researchers from a single academic discipline. In response, they have developed and supported the bold idea of interdisciplinary team science. Team-based, interdisciplinary research offers opportunities to address co-occurring needs (e.g., children’s school challenges, health problems, mental health needs) by developing multi-component interventions that combine specialist and integrative disciplinary knowledge.

#### Interprofessional Education and Training

Educators, social workers, public health professionals, and other specialized professionals learn together so they can collaborate effectively in community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools. Interprofessional education introduces requirements for new preservice education courses and also responsive professional development experiences. The twin aims workforce remodeling (e.g., interprofessional teams) and organizational redesign with due recognition that adults working in isolation will not succeed systematically, especially when poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation are among the challenges.

#### Vertical Teams for Education, Research, and Innovation Development

**Fig. 15.1** (continued)



Undergraduate and graduate student and faculty teams, typically led by one or a few faculty members, tackle a long-term priority in a particular school or community agency. For example, vertical teams working in high poverty schools develop better student engagement strategies, develop innovative ways to combine pedagogy and mental health services, and find out what works in out-of-school time programs. Teams are vertical because they are structured in relation to the expertise each kind of team member brings and provides, enabling more experienced members to help less experienced one learn, perform, and develop expertise.

Specifically, entering undergraduate students have less expertise than more advanced undergraduates. Advanced undergraduate students have less expertise than entry level graduate students. First year graduate students have less expertise than doctoral students, and all students have comparatively less expertise than faculty members who supervise them and structure the research and development initiative.

The main idea is that powerful teaching and learning occur at the same time that knowledge is generated and innovations are developed. Specifically, graduate students and advanced undergraduate students with more expertise and experience mentor and coach younger and less experienced undergraduates. Overall, team members are expected to return year after year. So for example, this year's first year undergraduate student ultimately becomes the senior student team member who mentors and coaches the next generation of first year undergraduate students. In turn, today's advanced undergraduate students ultimately enroll in graduate programs, using their vertical team experience for career development, while deepening and widening their expertise in ways that prepare them for graduate study.

**Fig. 15.1** (continued)

These vertical teams are planned to continue for several years. Each year, the team builds on the achievements of the previous year, developing innovations and evaluations that enable progress monitoring, impact evaluations, and innovation design and development.

#### Academically-based Community Service

This teaching and learning strategy is a University of Pennsylvania innovation. Professors move their undergraduate courses and graduate seminars into a local school, community agency, business, agricultural experimentation station, or governmental agency. Professors adapt their courses and seminars to show its relevance and application in the local organizational setting, providing timely opportunities to apply and use knowledge even as real world experiences illuminate and amplify course content. Significantly, this kind of academically-based community service includes arts and sciences disciplines. It is not merely an innovation for the professional schools and colleges.

#### Academically-based Community Scholarship

Academically-based community service is transformed into a knowledge generating enterprise with when joint student and faculty research projects are added to pedagogical innovations. One alternative is described next.

#### Community-based Participatory Research and Participatory Action Research

Community-based research jointly designed by community leaders is growing in popularity, and it is an important outreach and engagement priority. This kind of research involves creating a local community advisory board. Board members guide university researchers, oftentimes consulting on the research design. In fact, some board members may co-researchers.

**Fig. 15.1** (continued)

Three big ideas are at work here. The first is that community members have expertise that improves research designs. The second is that research dissemination and use are improved when community leaders are invested in, and participate in the design of, research. The third is that the best way to gain knowledge and understanding about any phenomenon is by trying to change it in real world contexts.

#### Early College/Dual Enrollment

College and university faculty work with school leaders to provide rigorous coursework that provides academic credit for secondary school leaders. These joint programs effectively shorten the time and costs required for postsecondary degrees, at the same time accelerating learning to engage talented students and build their advanced competence.

#### Embedded Professional Development Programs

University faculty members work alongside practicing professionals in schools, community agencies, businesses, and governments. Each learns from the others. So, for example, university education faculty members teach classes in elementary, middle and secondary schools, while contributing to the professional development of schoolteachers. Reciprocally, schoolteachers contribute to the professional development of faculty members in education units who need to stay current in order to prepare future education professionals.

The same pattern holds for all manner of fields and disciplines. It is a much-needed strategy in the face of unprecedented knowledge development. It is driven in part by recognition of “knowledge obsolescence”—the risk that professionals and scientists will be out-of-touch and out-of-date as the global scientific enterprise advances at a breath-taking pace.

#### Cradle-to-Career Partnerships

**Fig. 15.1** (continued)

To increase the number of students who complete postsecondary education and gain advanced competence, especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM disciplines), a special kind of outreach and engagement partnership system is being developed everywhere in the USA as well as in other parts of the world.

Universities are key leaders in these Cradle-to-Career systems, especially ones that are driven by data and require data-driven decision-making and research-supported practices and policies. Universities participating in these new systems benefit themselves because they have the opportunity to influence the preparation of succeeding generations of undergraduate students who seek admission to their programs.

#### Regional, National, and International Networks of Outreach and Engagement Universities

The social network arguably is itself a powerful innovation, and it has special importance for universities committed to outreach and engagement initiatives. Especially as colleges and universities are compelled to refine their offerings at the same time that they seek resources in support of strategic innovations, the idea of “the department store university” that offers a broad variety of programs and services no longer is tenable or sustainable.

Local higher education networks forged explicitly on the idea of complementarity and interdependence are especially timely in view of the growing expectation that higher education will play a central role in each locality’s integrated, equitable, and sustainable social and economic development. Inter-institutional cooperative agreements in support of these special, complex outreach and engagement partnerships provide timely opportunities for curricular, research and development, and service innovations.

#### **Fig. 15.1** (continued)

changes made in concert with other professional schools such as social work and public health.

However, there is less agreement on the degree and kind of change needed in universities. Two frameworks illustrate some of the choices and introduce the implications deriving from these choices. All such choices have profound impacts on Ed schools and other professional schools and colleges such as social work, public health, and nursing.

## *A Consequential Choice*

If community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools are simply a different kind of improvement strategy for conventional schools; and if these new schools do not change the roles, responsibilities, and working relationships of educators, social workers, psychologists, school and community nurses, and other professionals, then the need is less apparent and urgent for responsive and proactive changes in colleges and universities; and especially in their Ed schools.

In this framework, the daily work in these new schools amounts to a turn-taking structure; and with a heavy emphasis on the coordination of specialist professionals. For example, social workers address poverty-related child and family needs, psychologists address students' mental health needs, counselors assist students with career and curriculum decisions, and physicians, dentists, and nurses address health related needs. Later—after students barriers have been addressed—teachers are able to facilitate student learning. Academic achievement outcomes are expected to improve, and these outcomes continue to rule the day.

In this first framework, the twentieth century, inherited idea of professional specialization remains, especially for teachers, principals, district office leaders, and student support professionals. The new school design simply provides a more expansive structure for the kind of work their predecessors performed in stand-alone, conventional schools.

In contrast, if community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools are a new institutional design; and if this new design fundamentally alters everyone's roles, responsibilities, working relationships, while incubating innovative teaching/helping/service strategies, higher education cannot continue to operate on a kind of automatic pilot. Ed schools in particular will remain a formidable constraint to community schools' advancement and scale-up. For, when Ed schools are out-of-step, every new graduate hired in a community school needs to be re-trained and reoriented. Ditto the other professional schools and colleges whose graduates are essential to advanced community school designs, operations, and progressive development. All in all, when degree programs are not matched to community school demands, innovations, and opportunities, re-training is needed, and community school development is constrained.

The choice between these two frameworks and the alternatives they provide is consequential on several fronts. Policy, research and development, professional education (both preservice and professional development), and practice are impacted.

In fact, each of these two frameworks is indicative of a special system, and Ed schools and "higher eds" overall are central components in both. In the community schools-as-expanded conventional schools framework, Ed schools are system maintainers and quality assurance mechanisms.

In the community-schools-as-new institutional design framework, Ed schools currently are systems change constraints, bordering on formidable impediments—and for predictable reasons. Overall Ed school faculty members have not received formal preparation in the specialized area of community school policy, research, and practice.

The same need is manifest in the other professional schools and colleges whose graduates are essential to the operation and advancement of community schools. Absent faculty development initiatives, the innovative idea of interprofessional education and training for collaborative practice in community schools has not gained traction (Barr, Koppel, Reeves, Hammich, & Freeth, 2005; Lawson, 1996a, 1996b, 2002; Øvretveit et al., 1997; Van Veen, 2006). The main idea here is a pragmatic one. If educators, social workers, nurses, psychologists, counselors, public health professionals, and others are expected to collaborate in real world practice settings, they need to be prepared together! Stand-alone, silo-like professional education programs thus stand as a formidable constraint to practice innovations in community schools, community learning centers, extended-service schools, and multi-service schools.

What, then, is the agenda for the redesign of twenty-first century Ed schools—and with particular interest in their relationships with sister professional schools and their host colleges and universities overall? This grand question necessitates several analyses and special conferences. In the analysis that follows, we draw selectively on two recent analyses (Lawson, 2014, *in press*).

### ***A Brief Rationale for Ed School Redesign***

For a host of reasons, policy proposals for school innovations often have omitted higher education overall and Ed schools in particular. This has been a grand mistake because P-12 schools and higher education are part of the same system, which means that each influences and is influenced by the others. In the words of Harkavy et al. (2013): “No radical reform of American higher education, no successful educational reform” (p. 525).

Toward this end, the late John Goodlad (1994) provided a compelling framework, which he called simultaneous improvement and renewal. He emphasized that Ed schools and local public schools need to form sustainable partnerships that enable them to learn, renew, and improve together. Like Harkavy et al. (2013), Goodlad claimed that the future of democracy was bound up in the future of schooling, and his rationale focused on public school relationships with Ed schools.

This rationale remains in good currency, and it is relevant to the new school-related design featured in this book. Change schools without companion changes in preservice education, and one costly result will be that every new teacher, principal, district officer, and student support professional will need additional training.

Conversely, change preservice education apart from school policy and practice, and real world experience will wash out the innovative parts of educators' preparation. This same rationale holds for sister professional schools and colleges such as social work, public health, and nursing.

This rationale can be extended to faculty research and scholarly agendas. They also need to be synchronized with school policy and practice, and the best research also influences state and national educational policy.

To the extent that Ed school preparation programs and faculty research agendas are not organized in this simultaneous renewal framework, and especially when the host university does not have a formal outreach and engagement agenda, an opportunity is lost, and the development of new school designs is impeded. At the same time, a manifest need remains undetected and unaddressed. Research-oriented faculty are not able to benefit from and contribute to the new science of improvement (Bryk et al., 2015; Lewis, 2015), including the important opportunity for Ed school faculty researchers and developers in several universities to form and reap the benefits from networked communities of practice.

### ***From Adaptive Responses to New Organizational and Institutional Designs***

Community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools represent new organizational and institutional designs. Like architects for new buildings, and mechanical engineers who design new bridges, leaders for these new schools have had to imagine different and better ways to organize and conduct teaching, learning, social and health services delivery systems, positive youth development during out-of-school time, and family support interventions.

The same logic extends to faculty in Ed schools and sister professional schools and colleges. Design-oriented research and development agendas are needed for twenty-first century schools, other educational institutions, and cradle-to-career education systems (e.g. Bryk et al., 2015) and fresh conceptions of research and development designs for teaching and learning (Kram, Wasserman, & Yip, 2012; Nelson, London, & Strobel, 2015; Penuel, Fishman, Cheng, & Sabelli, 2011).

Twin ideas are noteworthy. One of the best ways to forecast a desirable future is by collaboratively striving to create it, and research is a centerpiece in all such design and development experiments. Talented university faculty and students can be positioned to help lead this all-important work of organizational redesign and, indeed, imagining twenty-first century social institutions.

## **Mapping the Work: Ed Schools as Mirror Images of Community Schools**

Stand-alone, conventional schools proceed with improvement in a conventional way, and this development strategy is instructive for leaders intent on synchronized systems changes in Ed schools and universities overall. In the conventional improvement model, leaders focus their improvement efforts inside the school's walls with the assumption that educators are the experts and are in the best position to make important determinations about how best to schedule the school day. This overall improvement approach can be dubbed "walled-in" and "building-centered." Its merits need to be appreciated at the same time that its manifest limitations are evaluated.

These limitations provide one point of departure for the new planning frameworks for community schools, multi-service schools, community learning centers, and extended services schools. Leaders for these new school designs start with the strengths of this conventional improvement approach at the same time they develop new designs that counter its manifest limitations. Aiming to gain influence over how students spend all of their time—not merely time in school—and seeking more effective strategies to address co-occurring and interlocking barriers to healthy development, engagement, learning, and overall school success, leaders for this new design effect a multi-faceted change.

These leaders recognize that isolation is the enemy of improvement, and so they cease trying to improve alone. They develop organizational partnerships with community agencies and private sector businesses, and they capitalize on these partnerships to develop sustainable collaborative working relationships with other helping professionals. Working together, educators, other helping professionals and, in a growing number of school communities, representative young people, parents, business officials, and community leaders progressively craft new school designs that improve desirable outcomes. Although the work is challenging, in the end everybody wins.

This same opportunity-rich, developmental framework is available to Ed schools. Like stand-alone school improvement models, many Ed schools worldwide have trended toward a stand-alone arrangement in which professors work alone and pre-service education students learn alone. This Ed school configuration thus has been a perfect match for industrial age schools. Conventional, stand-alone Ed schools and their inherited school partners have been worked in relative isolation from other university, community, and governmental entities.

Just as leaders of community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools have reached out to other organizations and developed collaborative working relationships with other professionals, youth leaders, parents, and community representatives, Ed school leaders committed to simultaneous renewal and improvement need to form partnerships with other organizations (other professional schools and colleges), which enable collaborative working relationships with other faculty members and students. In brief, this



research and development work by Ed school leaders is a mirror image of what happens in new school designs.

Ed school partnerships involve other professional schools and colleges such as social work, public health, and nursing. University-based, interprofessional collaboration involves faculty from these other professional schools working in concert with Ed school faculty, and it extends to the full range of activities listed in Fig. 15.1. It especially encompasses preservice education; and with an eye toward the advancement of community schools, community learning centers, extended service schools, and multi-service schools.

The main idea is eminently practical. To reiterate: If educators, social workers, nurses, counselors, psychologists, and public health professionals are expected and required to work together in these new schools, they must be prepared together! Ed schools thus assume leadership for interprofessional education and training programs, preparing all manner of educators to collaborate with specialists from other fields (Knapp & Associates, 1998; Edwards et al., 2010; Lawson, 1996a, 2002; Day, Van Veen, & Sim, 1997). Absent these new preparation programs, the idea of simultaneous improvement and renewal is compromised—with all of the attendant costs and consequences. In contrast, when simultaneous improvement and renewal are prioritized, a partnership research and development agenda, led by Ed schools, is a practical necessity.

## **A Partnership Research and Development Agenda with Ed Schools as Centerpieces**

Ed schools in universities with outreach and engagement agendas that include priorities for community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools have the opportunity to mount an innovative, complex partnership research and development agenda. This agenda also contributes to public policy learning, development, and innovation, especially when it is joined up with a university outreach and engagement agenda structured to achieve the aforementioned eight goals.

In this emergent agenda, Ed schools are centerpieces in, and initiators of, four kinds of partnership arrangements. The first is simultaneous renewal and improvement partnerships with community schools, community learning centers, extended services schools, and multi-service schools. The second is university-based partnerships with other professional schools and colleges such as social work, nursing and public health. The third is partnerships with national, state/provincial, and local governmental agencies charged with public policy learning, development, and innovation. The fourth entails engagement with local community health and social service agencies and neighborhood organizations, many of which have partnerships with community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools.

These four partnership designs are not mutually exclusive. They must be developed together. What is more, local Ed school-community school partnerships can and should be connected via regional, national, and international networked communities of practice, which are designed to contribute to improvement science (Bryk et al., 2015; Lewis, 2015) and facilitate the implementation of evidence-based interventions and policies (Riemer, Kelley, Casey, & Taylor Haynes, 2012).

## **Driller Deeper: Four Partnership Research and Development Priorities**

Clearly, this new partnership research and development agenda, with Ed schools as centerpieces, is multi-faceted and unavoidably complex. Four defining components are especially noteworthy, and relations among them merit special attention. These components are: (1) Partnerships as systems interventions; (2) Interventions and interveners to improve partnerships; (3) Partnerships as new institutional designs; and (4) Partnerships for new institutional designs. A descriptive-explanatory sketch for each follows.

### ***Partnerships as Interventions***

Partnerships are interventions insofar as they are new inter-organizational configurations developed to achieve specific aims, goals, and objectives. Notwithstanding some commonalities, partnership aims, goals and objectives vary. Consistent with intervention logic, these desired outcomes or results are consequential for partnership designs. Partnerships as interventions thus are designed and evaluated contingently—in relation to the desired outcomes.

Specifically, both Ed school partnerships and community school partnerships can be designed and redesigned with reference to the generic planning triad introduced in section “[University Outreach and Engagement Partnerships](#)”. The three priorities are demography (population characteristics), organizational ecology, and social geography (Lawson & Lawson, 2013). Viewed and configured in this way, Ed school partnership configurations will have unique features as well as commonalities and similarities. Mirroring the diversity in higher education world-wide, and reflecting these partnerships’ status as never-ending social experiments, all such configurations will be fit for purpose, in special contexts, and at particular times. Significantly, this planning triad is the same one offered for new school designs (Lawson, 2013).

The same correspondence between university Ed schools and new school designs is manifest in a second partnership planning triad. Here, the three priorities are poverty (defined as economic hardship), social exclusion (perceived and outright discrimination, marginalization and oppression), and social isolation. All were emphasized in Chap. 2.

When this second triad guides partnership development, both in universities or in community schools, a unique partnership rationale and configuration will result. For example, partnerships framed to address place-based, concentrated social and economic disadvantage with co-occurring and interlocking outcome disparities will differ significantly from a partnership formed with a best practice school district located in an affluent suburban school communities. In the same vein, university-assisted and – connected community schools are a practical necessity in the former partnership configuration, but not necessarily in the latter one.

In this partnership intervention framework, there is no “right or wrong” configuration. Partnerships are efficient, effective, and successful insofar as they are fit for purpose, in unique contexts and at particular times; and also when they add value. Chief among the values added are ones facilitated by simultaneous improvement and renewal. They include knowledge creation, innovation incubation and development, and powerful individual, group, organizational and policy learning. The ultimate aim is better outcomes for partner organizations and better results for children, youth, families, and communities.

### *Interventions and Interveners for Partnerships*

Every kind of partnership intervention is an adaptive, social experiment, especially so when needs and problems are novel, complex, influenced by environmental turbulence and change, and the policy environment is in flux. This frame provides the all-important reminder that partnerships routinely have sub-optimal features and, in the worst cases, they are plagued by deeply flawed designs and operations. In fact, harm reduction frameworks are needed in all manner of partnerships (Allen-Scott, Hatfield, & McIntyre, 2014).

When these sub-optimal indicators prevail, four significant partnership questions must be addressed. How does one fix a flawed partnership? Who is prepared for this sometimes-daunting responsibility? What extant theories, models and strategies are available to assist partnership interveners? To what extent do these same theories, models, and strategies facilitate research on these interveners and their interventions? A review of the partnership research literature fails to yield immediate, practical answers to these questions.

Fortunately, Gray (2008) has laid part of the foundation. She has outlined several relevant theoretical frameworks, and she also has provided an inventory of partnership interventions, i.e., special intervention strategies for particular kinds of partnership needs, problems, opportunities, and aspirations. There is so much more to learn and do!

In brief, “response to intervention” gains new and expanded meanings. It refers to a particular partnership’s response to improvement-oriented interventions recommended and jointly implemented by partnership specialists who serve as interveners. Ed schools have the opportunity to play pivotal roles in all such specialist preparation, deployment, and research, especially the Ed schools in research-oriented universities, and so do the other professional schools and colleges.

## *Partnerships as New Institutional Designs*

When education system building is the new priority, nascent Ed school-related partnerships are themselves new institutional designs. The implication here has been emphasized repeatedly in the previous chapters—namely, that partnerships inherited from a previous century with its industrial age configurations are themselves redesign and design targets.

Needs for changes in the inherited departmental structure of large Ed schools follow suit. To wit: Whether the focus is distributed leadership structures for professional learning communities in conventional schools, or cross-boundary (collaborative) leadership structures for community schools, or internal accountability mechanisms mounted voluntarily (Fullan et al., 2015), the same two conclusions can be derived. Long-standing departmentalized, compartmentalized boundaries that separate teacher education, leadership education and the preparation of student support professionals were configured for the industrial age school. In the same vein, organizational boundaries that firmly separate Ed schools from sister schools of social work, public health, medicine, and nursing are inheritances from universities that were configured for a by-gone, industrial era.

Today these twentieth century departmental and school divides with their specialized, separate degree programs are at odds with everyday school practices realities and needs, especially those in community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools. Viewed in this way, inherited, industrial age departments, schools and colleges with their respective “fortress disciplines” can be viewed as barriers to effective practice and also to simultaneous renewal and improvement partnerships.

Striving to keep the best of this structural arrangement, inter-departmental and interdisciplinary bridging structures are needed. In most universities, special partnership centers and institutes perform this bridging and connective function (Klein, 1990). Mirroring the cross-boundary leadership priorities in community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools, specially-prepared, deployed and supported intermediaries give life to these centers and institutes. Although some such intermediaries are faculty members, others hold critically important boundary-crossing positions. Whitchurch (2013) calls some of these intermediaries “third space professionals” because they enjoy hybrid identities as researchers, faculty members, and support staff professionals.

As with all manner of systems change initiatives, alterations in one part ultimately influence and are influenced by the other parts (Senge et al., 2012). This firm reminder illuminates a companion priority: Faculty development needs. Especially where advanced community school designs are prioritized, the prototypical Ed school faculty member has received scant, if any, special preparation. This claim also extends to faculty in the other helping disciplines such as social work, public health, nursing, school psychology and counselling.

Lacking preparation, direct practice experiences, and policy supports and resources, how will these faculty members prepare undergraduate and graduate students for community schools and related school designs? How will educators and

various helping professionals from other fields learn to collaborate with each other; and also with a local youths, parent and community leaders? Clearly, these questions and others they implicate redesign priorities.

For example, interdisciplinary research is a priority, and it depends on a critical mass of faculty prepared for a research and development agenda focused explicitly on twenty-first century partnerships. Although solo researchers surely can make contributions, partnership complexity in service of institutional redesign and entirely new designs necessitates research and development teams.

Two examples from the National Institutes of Health in the USA hold promise for the work that lies ahead for Ed School leaders. Interdisciplinary team science (Bennett, Gadlin, & Levine-Finley, 2010; Hall, Feng, Moser, Stokols, & Taylor, 2008) and translational science (Zerhouni, 2005) promise to advance this important agenda.

In the same vein, today there is a specialized body of interdisciplinary theory and research which can be earmarked as partnership theory and research (e.g., Acar et al., 2012; Bardach, 1998; Cheadle, Senter, Solomon, Beery, & Schwartz, 2005; Gray, 2008; Lawson, 2013; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). All in all, the time has arrived to prepare specialists for interdisciplinary, team-based partnership research, policy, and practice—with special interest in the relations between partnership design and redesign and the new institutional designs needed for schools and configurations of them as Cradle-to-Career systems. Doctoral programs can and should be redesigned accordingly.

### ***Partnerships for New Institutional Designs***

In addition to partnerships as new institutional designs, Ed school partnerships in tandem with those associated with community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service school are facilitators for new institutional designs, including Ed schools as new institutions.

In both cases this design metaphor is instructive, as indicated throughout this book. Although some of this system building can be framed as reform, the bulk of it is best named as “reconfiguration and design” and framed as “systems change.” Redesign is needed when entirely new systems must be created out of many separate ones.

Such is the priority with the anachronistic, institutional arrangements inherited from the previous century, especially the basic structure and operations of stand-alone industrial age schools, colleges, and universities. In this framework, design is the priority because reformist agendas will not suffice, and entirely new institutions are needed.

Partnership-structured theories of action for new institutional designs are needed for Ed school faculty and their interdisciplinary colleagues. Once again, a pivotal question arises. How will today’s faculty become more prepared, positioned, supported, and resourced for tomorrow’s partnerships and the new educational systems

they are structured to develop, evaluate, and improve? How will tomorrow’s faculty gain immediate and direct preparation in their graduate programs?

In this view, colleges and universities, and especially Ed schools are targeted for new designs, which are fit for purpose, in special contexts, at this time. Especially in Ed schools, but also in their “sister” professional schools and colleges such as social work and public health, significant institutional changes in higher education are design priorities. These changes extend to new partnership arrangements with governments.

### Expanding the Triple Helix Arrangement: Four Public Sector Partners

As indicated earlier in this chapter, universities worldwide have developed triple helix partnerships with governments and private sector organizations for economic development. The time has arrived to bring this compelling arrangement to public sector partnerships, starting with the ones identified and described briefly in the previous sections. This more expansive outreach and engagement agenda, facilitated by complex partnerships among universities, schools, community agencies, and governments, offers the opportunity to unite social development with economic development.

Compared to the triple helix arrangement with its three partners, this public sector arrangement involves four partners: (1) Schools; (2) Community health and social service agencies, broadly defined; (3) Universities; and (4) Governments. This arrangement thus can be called “the quadruple helix.” Figure 15.2 provides an introductory depiction.

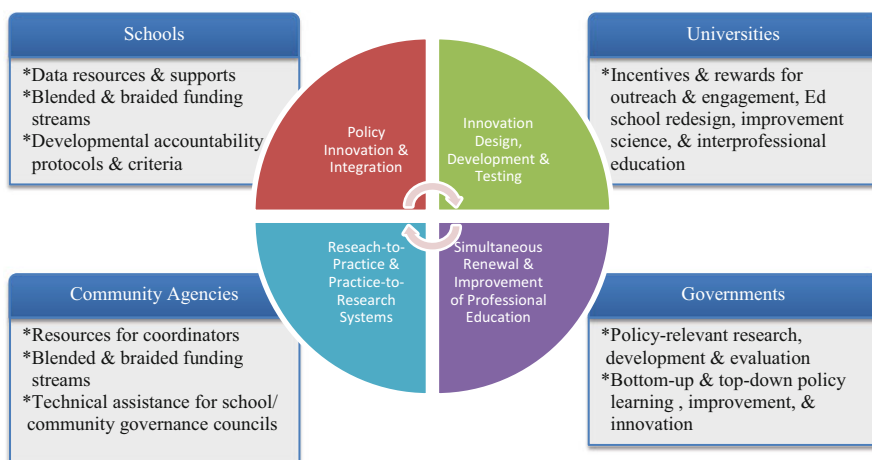


Fig. 15.2 The quadruple helix for public sector partnerships

This public sector, quadruple helix arrangement dovetails nicely with and also expands the compelling idea of improvement science (Bryk et al., 2015), especially proposals for what can be called two-way knowledge pathways (research-to-practice and practice-to-research). At the same time this new arrangement promises to improve public policy, starting with policy-relevant learning and improvement and extending to inter-sectoral, policy integration.

Furthermore, this quadruple helix model fills a gap in most university outreach and engagement agendas. Presently, most universities emphasize economic development *or* societal service. Social development, extending to planning for education's role in integrated, sustainable, and equitable social and economic development, typically gets short shrift.

Clearly all levels of the education system have the potential to contribute to integrated social and economic development. Community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended services schools surely prioritize this integration, albeit implicitly; and so do universities. Significantly, planning for Cradle-to-Career education systems is predicated in part on this same important integration. In all such cases, workforce preparation (human capital development) is combined with preparation for democratic citizenship (social integration), and both are founded on core values such as equity, opportunity, participation, and freedom.

Sen's (1999) classic framework for development as freedom is a natural fit. Accessible, potent, and aligned education systems—starting with the new school-related design featured in this book and extended to universities—is a facilitator for Sen's two, development-oriented freedoms. The best education systems ensure *freedom from* social exclusion, oppression, and marginalization and, at the same time, they help to create *freedom to* make informed choices and gain access to educational and economy opportunity pathways (Sen 1999).

Easy to proclaim and write about, the actual work of activating this new collaborative agenda is immensely difficult (White & Wehlage, 1995). After all, the work described in this book entails unprecedented cross-boundary collaborations, new organizational partnerships and policy incentives and rewards for new institutional designs.

Rarely are designers able to start with a clean slate. Inherited, industrial age, specialized policy structures serve as formidable constraints, and the same can be said of conventional designs for mostly separate schools, community agencies, and universities with their stand-alone Ed schools and sister professional schools. Arguably, this new institutional design work for twenty-first century, global societies will remain immensely difficult to start, scale-up, scale-out, and sustain in the absence of quadruple helix, partnership policy councils specially charged with cross-policy coordination and complex, synchronized systems change.

## Concluding Thoughts

We began this book with a multi-component rationale for community schools, community learning centers, extended-services schools, and multi-service schools. We did so for several reasons. Three were especially important.

The first reason was to emphasize that seemingly diverse community school exemplars belong together. They belong together because they are founded on the same, multi-component rationale. Model convergence is highly probable when the same needs and problems must be addressed, while opportunity knocks.

The second reason was to provide an explanatory framework for the manifest differences in this new school-related design. We emphasized that leaders for this new school-related design are responding contingently and developmentally to the several challenges they confront. To reiterate: Each design is fit for purpose, in special contexts, and at particular times. Viewed in this way, the advanced exemplars in this book, like others not featured, are adaptive social experiments, not finished products. They will continue to progress as their leaders respond to data-based trends and needs, and as they develop sufficient organizational capacity and workforce competencies, both of which depend in part on supportive policy environments.

The third reason was to highlight consequential changes in twenty-first century global, democratic societies. These changes pose challenges to conventional, mostly-inherited organizational designs with traditional roles and responsibilities for professionals. As new global societal conditions develop, grow and spread, conventional, stand-alone schools and community agencies are unable to systematically achieve outcomes at scale. New institutional designs are needed, and the exemplars featured in this book illustrate how bold, visionary leaders are able to seize opportunities for responsive and proactive innovations.

Our last three chapters set the stage for a fourth reason. More than a new school-community design, the work underway is a complex system change initiative that promises to yield new institutional designs. When the agenda is framed in this way, universities and governments must be central partners in this new design and development work. Presently they are not, at least not at scale or at the level of development needed.

One reason for this persistent, vexing gap is that leaders from all walks of life have proceeded with a predictable framework, one in which the language of school reform continues to dominate practice, policy, and research. Although this framework may be suitable for schools serving privileged children in places characterized by economic advantages, it is problematic when schools and community agencies serving vulnerable children, youth, and families are targeted from improvement. Where these latter schools, children, families, and communities are concerned, strict reliance on conventional school reform strategies is akin to relying exclusively on an automobile's rear view mirror while driving toward a partly-unknown, future destination with predictable novelty, complexity, and uncertainty.



Owing to the leaders of the advanced exemplars featured in this book, colleagues have viable alternatives. These alternatives facilitate the development of theory of change-oriented maps and compasses for community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended service schools, which enable colleagues to design, implement and improve more effective, efficient, desirable, and justifiable institutions, which enable them to actively co-create more desirable futures.

The other reason stems from this first one. It is the absence of organizational structures that convene school leaders, community agency leaders, university leaders, and governmental leaders. Our proposal for quadruple helix partnerships stands as one important response to this need. Local cradle-to-career and cradle-through-career partnership councils, already in place in several parts of the world, are progress markers for this quadruple helix arrangement.

Back to the beginning: While some of this work involving start-ups, scale-ups, scale-outs, and sustainability can be framed as adoption, implementation and continuous improvement, the main challenge-as-opportunity is *design*. The four design features emphasized at the outset—*invention, intentionality, causality, and contrast*—remain salient to leaders for policy, practice, and research. The quadruple helix arrangement advances this idea because it facilitates collective, coordinated design and development initiatives, and it paves the way for networked communities of practice that advance practice, policy, and research. If this book sparks these innovations, resulting in better outcomes for vulnerable children, families, helping professionals, schools and communities, we have achieved our primary aim.

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## Appendix A: Practical Resource Guides and Websites

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Germany) (German/English language) (Gantztagschule)

<http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/>

Brede School (Steunpunt Diversiteit en Leren, Universiteit van Gent) (Belgium, Dutch Language)

<http://www.bredeschool.org>

Center for Equity in Education, University of Manchester (England):

<http://www.seed.manchester.ac.uk/subjects/education/research/cee/publications/>

Chapin Hall Center, University of Chicago (USA):

<http://www.chapinhall.org/research/areas/Schools-and-School-Systems>

Children's Aid Society (2011). *Building community schools: A guide to action*. Available for download, free of charge, at:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/4473432/Building%20Community%20Schools.pdf>

7 additional guides on various aspects of youth work. Find them at:

<http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/publications/advancing-youth-work>

Cincinnati Ohio's Community Learning Centers as Catalysts for Change. View the video at:

<http://clcinstitute.org/>

Coalition for Community Schools' (USA) Multiple Publications (free of charge):

[http://www.communityschools.org/resources/coalition\\_resources.aspx](http://www.communityschools.org/resources/coalition_resources.aspx)

Communities in Schools (USA) National Office Resources:

<http://www.communitiesinschools.org/our-work/>

Department of Education (Northern Ireland), Extended Schools Guidance

<http://www.deni.gov.uk>

Hartford, Connecticut (USA) Community Schools:

<http://www.hartfordschools.org/index.php/our-schools/community-schools>

Harvard Family Research Project (USA):

<http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications>

International Centre for Excellence in Community Schools (UK):

<http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/community-schools/partnership-press/november-2013/international-centre-excellence-community-schools>

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (UK)

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/>

National Institute for Out-of-school-time (USA)

<http://niost.org/hostresources/by-type>

Landelijk Steunpunt Brede Scholen (Netherlands, Dutch language)

<http://www.bredeschool.nl/>

Nederlands Centrum Onderwijs en Jeugdzorg (Netherlands, Dutch Language)

<http://www.ncoj.nl>

Netter Center at the University of Pennsylvania (USA):

Anchor Toolkit [www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/anchortoolkit/](http://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/anchortoolkit/)

University-assisted community schools national network: [www.communityschools.org/about/universityassistedcommunityschoolsnetwork.aspx](http://www.communityschools.org/about/universityassistedcommunityschoolsnetwork.aspx)

Universities and Community Schools Journal

[www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/publications-resources/universities-and-community-schools-journal](http://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/publications-resources/universities-and-community-schools-journal)

Northern Ireland Extended Schools Information System (NIESIS) (Northern Ireland)

<http://www.niesis.org>

School-based Health Alliance (USA):

<http://www.sbh4all.org/resources/>

School Mental Health Project at the University of California at Los Angeles: Gateway website:

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>; and especially:

Working collaboratively: From school-based teams to school-community connections

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/worktogether/worktogether.pdf>

Fully integrating student/learning supports into the school improvement agenda

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fully integrating student-learning supports.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fully_integrating_student-learning_supports.pdf)

Part I of transforming student and learning supports: Developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/book.pdf>

Sun Community Schools, Multnomah County Oregon: Practical Resources

<https://multco.us/sun/sun-community-schools/sun-tools-and-resources>

Victoria State Government, Education and Training (Australia) (Extended School Hubs)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

Wallace Foundation (USA):

<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/default.aspx>