



PLANNING FOR FAMILIES:

The Housing and Education Nexus

Proceedings Summary

Thursday, November 29, 2007

UC Berkeley: Alumni House

Center for Cities & Schools

University of California – Berkeley

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INSTITUTE OF URBAN AND
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PLANNING FOR FAMILIES: THE HOUSING AND EDUCATION NEXUS

Thursday, November 29, 2007 • 9am to 3pm
UC Berkeley: Alumni House

PROCEEDINGS SUMMARY

Background

The quality and availability of housing and the disparity in educational quality across the Bay Area affects choices families make, as they weigh access to quality schools and housing in their location choices. This day-long symposium provided both national and local perspectives on the relationship between housing and educational policies and practices, focusing on demographic trends, housing projections, and how housing and schools impact one another. Central to this day was learning from and engaging with innovative leaders from across the country who have pioneered best practice models of housing and educational partnerships.

Following opening remarks by Dr. Deborah McKoy, Executive Director of the Center for Cities and Schools (CC&S), Kenneth Kirkey, Planning Director at the Association of Bay Area Governments provided information about regional demographic shifts and trends in housing production/markets. Representatives from the City of San Francisco and the San Francisco Unified School District then responded to the presentations on the regional context from their local perspectives. Attendees then participated in facilitated roundtable discussions. The afternoon was devoted to hearing about promising practices from across the country, followed by a keynote address from Maria Blanco, Executive Director, the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity and Diversity, Boalt Law School, UC Berkeley.

Following is a brief summary of Mr. Kirkey's presentation; the promising practice projects in Portland, Oregon; Yuma, Arizona; and New Haven, Connecticut; and Ms. Blanco's keynote speech on desegregation.

Putting the Issue in a Regional Context: Bay Area Housing and Demographic Change – What are the Implications for Neighborhoods and Schools?

Kenneth Kirkey is Planning Director at the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the official regional planning agency for the San Francisco Bay region. ABAG's mission is



“to strengthen cooperation and coordination among local governments,” and thus addressing “social, environmental, and economic issues that transcend local borders.”

Mr. Kirkey began by highlighting how relevant the question of schools is, as in most meetings with ABAG’s constituents of local elected officials and planning staff, schools always come up as a key decision point – the “first, second, and third thing on people’s agenda” – when choosing where to live. However, these elected officials feel that they do not have much impact in school district decisions, and thus much of their conversations are futile.

Then, Kirkey outlined current demographic changes across the region, explained current regional housing policy in California, detailed current ABAG initiatives, and finally posed some questions and next steps for the group. Following is a summary of his major points:

Demographic Changes

As people decide to purchase homes, they tend to move to the outer Bay Area region and beyond, where housing prices are more affordable. Known as “drive until you qualify,” this development pattern results in long commutes, in single-occupancy vehicles – which compromises personal quality of life and exacerbates impacts on climate change. There are some counter-trends, however. Because there are increasingly more choices in the inner Bay Area, such as housing near transit and other amenities, some families and individuals who may have chosen to move out are staying put. The sub-prime mortgage crisis has also hit the Bay Area rather hard – as of November, San Joaquin County, for example, had the highest rate of foreclosures in the country.

Regional Housing Policy

ABAG is one agency that promotes policies to encourage development in the inner Bay Area. The state issues the Regional Housing Needs Allocation number – the number of new housing units that each region in the state needs to plan for – which ABAG then allocates across the 101 cities and eight non-city counties in the Bay Area. The amount of housing units per jurisdiction are distributed by income categories (very low, low, moderate, above moderate), and requires governments to plan for the additional housing, not necessarily build the housing.

FOCUS Initiative

The FOCUS Initiative, building on past smart growth efforts in the region, is “an incentive-based development and conservation strategy for the Bay Area.” By identifying places for growth (Priority Development Areas) and places for protection (Priority Conservation Areas), FOCUS aims to direct growth to areas of existing communities, near transit, and to move from development on a project-by-project basis to more comprehensive neighborhood planning. This is particularly important in encouraging family-friendly growth and development, as families require a bundle of neighborhood services, not just

an isolated housing unit. Currently FOCUS has grant money and technical assistance available for jurisdictions to use for planning, and is seeking money to provide for capital improvement projects. Ever-present is the pressing question of how to create quality development without causing displacement to existing residents, and how to ensure mixed-income stable communities.

Questions and Next Steps

Mr. Kirkey posed the following questions, as challenges to work on together across the region and across jurisdictions.

1. Will urban infill policies result in more students?
2. How can land use planning support existing schools by:
 - a. Enhancing access and safety?
 - b. Creating places to hang out?
 - c. Fostering local opportunities for new communities?
3. How can the regional agencies help cities and schools work together and reach their goals?

He ended by proposing four major areas of future work:

1. Build strategic partnerships with Priority Development Areas
2. Continue to focus public funds towards urban infill development
3. Pursue additional funding for strategies to integrate schools and land use planning
4. Ensure that regional funds are used to support the development of vibrant, safe centers of learning in infill communities

Following Mr. Kirkey's presentation, Myong Leigh, Assistant Superintendent of Programs and Operations of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and September Jarrett, Director of Policy and Planning from the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF) provided their local perspectives on collaborating across schools, cities, and the region.

Myong Leigh emphasized that the arenas of land use planning and policy at state and regional levels is a "different world" from that of the district, and that he and his staff need a more basic working knowledge of these issues. SFUSD is a complicated and often paradoxical system – where there are issues of declining enrollment, disparities in achievement, re-segregating schools, and yet the district overall is a high-achieving district. The silo-ed nature of local planning and school planning is exacerbated by misunderstanding and/or lack of understanding of the choice system, which can be confusing and unpredictable.

Mr. Leigh identified some key questions that are particularly pressing:

- What are the current demographic trends? What are the trends for five years –at district, neighborhood, and regional levels?
- What are naturally occurring phenomenon around growth or declines in the school-aged population, and what are plans of the city and county that influence these phenomena?
- Should there be new schools developed? In particular neighborhoods?
- What is the potential to draw students back?
- Who are the sources – institutions and individuals, non profits, industry, government, etc. – that possess the information?

He highlighted the reciprocity inherent in this type of information exchange: having knowledge of these trends and planning initiatives can help SFUSD make better decisions and provides the opportunity for SFUSD to contribute information to other entities to make better decisions as well. Finally, Mr. Leigh emphasized that while there is a lot of agreement that sharing information and collaborating is ideal, SFUSD and the City have a lot of work to do “to get there from here.” The basic structures of *how* work gets done are not adequate considering the “complex issues overlaid with complex relationships within complex institutions.” While optimistic about the potential for collaboration, Mr. Leigh offers a sobering reality that “before we assume we’re going to get there, we need to face the brutal facts about the obstacles, so that we can overcome them.”

September Jarrett reiterated Mr. Leigh’s final comments by articulating that it is not enough to define the working questions, but we must also be tremendously practical about the structures to move this work forward – because these large-scale issues are “completely overwhelming” from a practical standpoint. Despite this, Ms. Jarrett recognizes the political opening to engage in long- term planning with other departments and the community.

Ms. Jarrett raised a number of provocative issues, including the following dilemma: “How do we layer the fact that we are a choice-based school system with the fact that some of the best land uses and sustainable development practices call for a neighborhood school model?” Further, she questions the notion that infill development can be promoted without asking more critical questions about the type and affordability of the housing.

A driving question around planning and policy is whether or not our cities and schools are designed, functioning, funded, and operated to support our working families of today. Unfortunately, infill development without attention to family-housing or family needs in the community and a school day running on a nine to two bell schedule are not designed, functioning, funded, or operated to provide this support. “If we don’t plan for families, we are never going to have families – if you only build one-bedroom high end luxury condos, we’re never going to recruit [families] back [to the city].”



Rather than just promote a generic idea of “infill development,” Ms. Jarrett poses some interesting questions – Should every neighborhood be family-friendly, with a complete set of amenities? Or should there be a family zone – where we put all of our effort, partnership, educational reform, etc. into one neighborhood? These questions generated much discussion and provoked good thinking among attendees.

Promising Practices from Across the Nation

The Rosa Parks School, New Columbia Development Project *Portland, Oregon*

Inspiration and Project Background

The Portland area is experiencing high housing prices, and increased gentrification. With almost 90% of school-aged children attending the public schools, leaders in Portland recognize the need to address school quality in conjunction with broader community development strategies. Steve Rudman, the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) explains, “The idea is that this project is more than just housing...it is an economic opportunity for housing as a necessary but insufficient ingredient to really help people turn around their lives with a focus on education.”

The redevelopment of Columbia Villa provided the opportunity for HAP to create an integrated housing-school development that would provide lights on and doors open from dawn to dusk. Built in 1941 as shipyard worker-housing during the second World War, this development was later used to house very low-income families, with an income at about 17% of the area median income. Further, the low density housing development had little or no physical, economic, and social connections to the surrounding neighborhood, and had become a center of gang activity in Portland.

HAP recognized that when they build subsidized housing they can in part control the movement of families, and they know that a number of school-aged children will return to the neighborhood. Thus, under this shared vision of an integrated community and the mantra “The Children are Coming,” HAP provided two city blocks to the school district for a new school site. The two entities then worked together to come up with creative ways to finance and build new schools in a place where the majority of taxpayers do not have children.

Leadership and Stakeholders

Working with the school district, the regional Boys and Girls Club, and the City of Portland Parks and Recreation department, the collaborative established a Community Compact with five guiding principles:

1. Create a whole campus that is greater than the sum of its parts
2. Share equally in the vision
3. Support strong and meaningful relationships among partners, users and place
4. Identify and implement joint use of space to reduce capital costs and increase operational efficiencies
5. Compromise by envisioning what could be, rather than what is

Funding and Infrastructure

The rehabilitation of the Columbia Villa into the New Columbia Village was funded from HOPE VI money from the federal government. HAP donated the land to site the school and Boys and Girls Club, and provided cash contributions from homebuilder lot sales. The project was then structured with a mix of funding sources including:

- The use of New Market Tax Credits, the first such use for public school construction in the United States.
- Generous financial assistance in grants and bridge-loans from HAP
- Loans on a portion of the construction cost by the Portland Public School Board
- Contributions from the Boys and Girls Club for the shared space
- Contribution from the City of Portland
- Contributions from private donors, businesses, and foundations
- Completion of the financing plan and building designs from the Portland Parks and Recreation department

Scope of Work and Accomplishments

The creation of the Community Compact and the subsequent complex development activities involved not only collaboration across organizations, but also extensive civic engagement with the broader community, including communities that spoke over ten different languages. The project aimed to balance a number of goals in the construction and design processes including:

- Sustainability & green building – with the construction of new parks and the implementation of a new storm water management
- Community economic participation – with local hiring and over \$2 million in contracts to women and minority owned businesses
- Civic engagement in project design
- Affordable housing

The New Columbia Village is now a mixed use neighborhood, which includes a city-owned park, senior housing, a workforce center, the community college, a coffee shop, a grocery store, the affordable housing, the community center, and the Rosa Parks



Elementary School. It is the largest neighborhood development project in Portland's history, and currently houses 3,000 people.

Challenges

In the midst of closing schools across the city, the leadership was willing to build a new school as part of New Columbia Village. Steve Rudman from HAP recognizes the great courage on the part of the School District to undertake this project.

Asset management is a challenge for school districts. Thus, the collaboration across city agencies provided the technical expertise needed to strategically and effectively manage this new portfolio of assets.

Turf issues between organizations and agencies are very real. To alleviate confusion and ensure that everyone had clear roles and responsibilities, HAP and its partners created the Compact, which is a written agreement, to ensure that the joint use facilities and programming structures will remain in perpetuity. This agreement covered not only the initial construction costs, but also ongoing operating costs.

G.W. Carver Elementary School, Carver Park Neighborhood Yuma, Arizona

Inspiration and Project Background

The City of Yuma received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the federal government, and began to ask: What is the best way to leverage this CDBG money with other money and efforts? The City decided to select one neighborhood and provide intensive support and intervention.

The Carver Park neighborhood was selected based on the following criteria:

- Diversity of Ethnicity – Hispanic and African-American
- Unemployment Rate – higher than city at 22% (city at 7%)
- One of the Oldest Neighborhoods
- Poor Neighborhood/High Poverty Rate – generally employed in lower income service area, day laborers, field workers, etc.
- Not too Large/Small – 2,000 residents, 22 block area
- School & Park in Neighborhood
- Businesses in Neighborhood
- Several Faith-Based Organizations
- Substandard Housing Issues

The Carver Elementary School was originally built in 1947, and was Yuma's first, last, and only segregated school. In 1949 the school was desegregated. Because of the proximity to



the Mexican border, the city and school population is primarily Latino. The school population is 92.5% Latino, 95% living in poverty, 20% migrant, and 79% English Language Learners.

Leadership and Stakeholders

While the City Office of Community Development took the lead, their process was grounded in the community and in residents. Critical to the successful outcome was the commitment of long-term residents to bringing neighborhood back. The Yuma Neighborhood Development Organization was created to facilitate activities that the city was not able to do, including some home construction and program provision. The City also partnered with Arizona Western College to create a building trades program during the construction phase of the project. The collaborations were structured as both formal and informal arrangements, with some joint use agreements in writing.

Principal Deb Drysdale-Elias at the school site also demonstrated critical leadership. The model of developing an integrated set of community, housing, and school infrastructure resonated with her. Drawing on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Principal Drysdale-Elias was committed to the idea that if her students had safe, affordable, stable housing in sustainable communities, they would be more successful in their school achievements.

Funding and Infrastructure

In total, the initiative totaled \$27.5 million. Funding came from a variety of sources including:

- Federal funds
- City funds
- Local, private contributions

Scope of work and Accomplishments

The Carver Park neighborhood revitalization resulted in not only renovated housing and a new elementary school, but also an array of community facilities and programming including:

- Summer youth employment
- Neighborhood Leadership Academy to build the capacity of local residents
- Youth activities
- Family services
- Neighborhood community center
- Community garden
- Community build playground

The school has experienced a significant rise in test scores over the nine year period of revitalization efforts.

City of New Haven Schools: Building for the 21st Century

New Haven, Connecticut

Inspiration and Project Background

New Haven is a city of about 123,000 residents, and is 18.9 square miles. In 2006-2007, public school enrollment included:

- 15.1% as % of city population
- 91.6% as % of total student population
- 76.9% of students eligible for free/reduced lunch
- 28.9% of K-12 students with Non-English home language
- 20,066 students, Pre-K -12, including out-of-district magnet students
- 49 public schools: 31 elementary/K-8 schools, 2 middle schools, 13 high schools, 3 transitional schools
- Race/Ethnicity, 2006-2007:
 - African American, 52.3%, White, 11.2%, Latino, 35%, Asian 1.4%

Gilbane Construction company is undertaking the renovation and construction of schools across the city of New Haven, Connecticut. This citywide initiative is currently 2/3 finished. The district and the city reviewed its current facilities and recognized the need to do some massive upgrades to bring all of their facilities up to code. Then, realizing the opportunity before them, leadership decided to use state dollars to create facilities that went beyond just meeting codes to create innovative and sustainable facilities that not only create good learning environments but that also have a positive neighborhood impact. The focus of the initiative is citywide – as a strategy to retain families in the more stable, home-ownership, higher income neighborhoods and as a strategy to stabilize and revitalize lower-income neighborhoods.

The principle drivers behind the initiative include:

- Improved Learning Environment
- Enrollment growth – needed new capacity
- Building Age/Deferred Maintenance
- Technology Upgrades
- Code and ADA compliance
- Community/Jobs Program
- Economic Development (SBI)
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Reduction in Energy & Operating Costs

Further, the educational outcome goals aim to:

- Update and modernize all schools to allow for maximum flexibility in educational programs



- Change to a Pre-Kindergarten to 8th Grade structure
- Provide for a 2 classroom/grade “model” program
- Improve facilities for core support and specialized services
- Smaller, “themed” program high schools
- Pre-school programs for all children
- In-district and inter-district “choice” programs

The overall vision was to create schools that are safe places in neighborhoods, but also to design spaces and programming that offered enough assets at the school that students and families could really utilize.

Leadership and Stakeholders

In New Haven, the Mayor appoints and sits on the Board of Education. Thus, the collaboration from the city and the district was strong from the early stages of the project. A collaborative structure was created including a citywide School Building Committee that oversees the projects. Further, the initiative connects with every city committee and agency so that construction and development is coordinated with other city efforts. There is also a school-based advisory committee, which includes:

- School principal, teachers and staff
- School parents, students
- School administrators
- Alderperson from area of construction
- Neighborhood residents
- Community organizations
- City staff working in neighborhood
- School construction staff
- Architects

The process involves great community investment and participation. This type of initiative only works with commitment and participation from the “top down” and the “bottom up.” Thus, all plans go through the city and the board of education for approval. Plans are also reviewed by the state and are subject to rigorous community input.

For the schools that are completed, there is a permitting system for joint use through the Board of Education, and the district provides custodians and security until 11 PM.

Funding and Infrastructure

Because of the way state funding works in Connecticut, low income, urban school districts are eligible for up to 80% reimbursement on all hard and soft school construction costs (Higher-income, suburban districts are eligible for up to 20% reimbursement.) There is



no county or regional government, and school districts do not have separate taxing power. The Board of Education is appointed by the mayor, not elected.

Scope of work and Accomplishments

By design, this initiative aims to support ongoing desegregation efforts by keeping white families in the schools across neighborhoods. While neighborhood boundaries are a tool in determining school assignment, parents can keep their children in a school even if they move to another neighborhood, and similarly, are able to apply to other schools in other neighborhoods.

All schools are planned as community facilities. The state funds have allowed for a centralized district-wide field house and a central kitchen, both of which increase efficiencies across the district and cut down on operating costs.

To date the portfolio includes:

- 26 completed schools (\$802 million, 12,725 students)
- 6 Under Construction (\$278 million, 3,339 students)
- 6 In Design (\$249 million, 3,229 students)
- 9 In Planning (\$136 million, 1,416 students)

In total, there will be 47 projects, totaling, \$1.46 Billion for New Haven's 21,865 students. This prices out to be \$75,000 per student.

It is difficult to parse out what successes and achievements in the district are a function of the new school facilities, and what is due to other expanding programming and interventions now available. However, there is pretty clear information on the better learning environments, including enhanced acoustics, better lighting, air quality, etc., which contributes to quality teaching and learning.

Challenges

Of the 22 new schools, 5 of them are on brand new sites. Finding these sites in a dense urban environment is difficult. Some of them took over 5 years in the pre-construction phase to deal with zoning, civil rights, and other questions. The question of neighborhood impact is particularly challenging. In one case, the school acquired property by eminent domain; some community members felt that the loss of housing was not an appropriate trade-off for the new school building, while others believed that the housing was blighted and the new school would positively benefit their community.

Keynote: How do we address racial/economic segregation in a post-Brown v. Board of Education era?

Maria Blanco, Executive Director, the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity and Diversity, Boalt Law School, UC Berkeley, provided a provocative and informative keynote address, focused on the rapidly accelerating state of racial and economic segregation in schools across the country. Ms. Blanco framed the issue of desegregation, providing the current context in the United States. She then detailed the recent Supreme Court decision that deemed schools' voluntary race-based desegregation policies unconstitutional. Finally, Ms. Blanco articulated the implications for future school desegregation policies.

Current U.S. Context

Currently, the segregation of African-Americans in public schools is at the same rate of 30 years ago, and Latinos are the most segregated minority group in public schools. Meanwhile, whites are the most racially isolated group – the percentage of white students that attend schools with black students (which is the traditional measure of segregation) has been declining since 1988 and has not been as low as it is now since 1960. These startling facts are not due to suburbanization, as some expect – even in districts where whites live in communities that are largely minority, the white students still attend predominantly white schools. Rather, this trend is due to a number of other factors including the privatization of education, immigration, and birth rates. Today, 40% of all students in U.S. public schools are students of color. In the 1960s that percentage was at 20%. Even though we currently have more students of color, we do not have more integration and in fact see greater levels of segregation in our public schools.

Ms. Blanco then asks the basic question: Why should this segregation matter? Today, the discussion shifts from “the harms of segregation to the celebration of diversity.” The need to desegregate is not simply about the benefits of diverse people celebrating each other, but in the United States, segregation is deeply tied to poverty. Only 5% of white students attend high poverty concentration schools. Schools face not only racial segregation but also a stark economic divide. Schools with high concentrations of students of color are often located in and serve students with high concentrations of poverty as well. High concentrations of poverty of students mean: fewer academic offerings, fewer resources, overcrowded conditions, less experienced teachers, non-credential teachers, high turnover of teachers, etc.

The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court recently reviewed two voluntary desegregation policies – in Seattle, Washington and Louisville, Kentucky. Ms. Blanco described both plans as “modest” where race is only one factor among many to determine school assignment. Both were

used to equalize resources and achievement scores across the district (at either a high school or elementary level).

Five members of the Court ruled with the white parents who sued the school districts, because the district plans failed to consider “other methods other than explicit racial methods to meet their goals.” The Court decision reads: “narrow tailoring requires serious good faith consideration of workable race neutral alternatives.” Four of the justices in the majority agreed that the goal of “achieving racial balance and preventing racial isolation in the K-12 context could never be constitutional because the constitution calls for absolute race blindness. Therefore, race conscious policies can only exist to remedy intentional racial discrimination.” Justice Kennedy, while voting with the majority, dissented with the rationale by stating that the “constitution allows for consideration of race and increasing diversity and reducing racial isolation are legitimate and in fact urgent concerns.” He asserted that “all people must have equal opportunity regardless of race, and strongly rejects the notion that schools have to accept the ‘status quo of racial isolation in schools.’” Kennedy continues that

to the extent that the plurality opinion suggests that the constitution mandates that state and local authorities must accept the status quo of racial isolation, it is in my view profoundly mistaken. A compelling interest exists in avoiding racial isolation and an interest that a school district in its discretion and expertise may choose to pursue.

Implications for Future School De-Segregation Policies

As Ms. Blanco says, the good news is that “we still have five justices that believe that reducing racial isolation in schools is a compelling state interest” and a desirable goal that can be achieved through race conscious measures.

The Court has issued a caution to school districts “from identifying individual students in making decisions and policies to integrate schools,” and has been “careful to avoid notion of racial balancing,” choosing instead to focus on the issue of racial isolation. Justice Kennedy goes so far as to detail a number of options still open to school districts that would “work to reduce isolation without identifying individuals,” including:

- Identifying strategic sites for new schools in new neighborhoods with precise desire to diversify schools
- Creating attendance zones with consideration of neighborhood demographics
- Allocating resources by race
- Tracking enrollment/performance by race

While this leaves open a number of options for school districts, Ms. Blanco highlights some of the key questions that are particularly pertinent to the inner Bay Area:

- What do we do where there is little real estate to build new schools?
- What do we do in cities that are predominantly of people of color?

At this point, Ms. Blanco tied together the day's presentations, highlighting that in many ways the best approach to school desegregation is a broader city and regional policy of attracting diverse families back to cities. Rather than developing school-specific solutions, how do we work together to change the nature of neighborhoods, cities, and regions so that they are vibrant, healthy, and de-segregated places – racially and economically? While in many ways this Court decision has been disheartening to the Civil Rights community, the fact that this broader question is raised will force practitioners, policymakers, and leaders to start conversations across disciplines and agencies, in order to accomplish a more holistic approach. Finally, Ms. Blanco reminds us that our youth are an important source of inspiration and information – “they know the world they are growing up in – they know the problems of growing up in racially isolated communities,” and they are important participants in this conversation, an important addition to the experts as we work on these conversations and collaborations.